Fatal Remedies:
Child Sexual Abuse and Education Policy in Liberia

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One of the unintended consequences of international education policy is the misunderstanding of the relationship between child sexual abuse and girls' schooling. Development research indicates that education is associated with decreased rates of early childhood marriage. Yet education also exposes female pupils to sexual violence within schools. Nevertheless, international agencies and national governments are often unaware that the very policy of putting young girls in the classroom may also expose them to various forms of child sexual abuse. The relationship between schooling and sexual violence has not been well-established in development research. The field research reported in this dissertation addresses this deficiency in the literature by examining the joint-effects of education and the safety of the school environment on female child sexual abuse. Applying a mixed-methods approach, the study analyses results of a 2018 field-study using a stratified-cluster sample of 715 young Liberian women and 493 of their parents. A key finding of the study is the unintended consequence that sending girls to school is linked to nearly 35 percent of students being statutorily raped. While most child rape offenders work outside of the educational setting, approximately 38 percent of abuse cases involve teachers, staff, and adult students. The analysis further examines how the relation between education and child sexual abuse is affected by factors including the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of parents. Conclusively, the combination of higher educational achievement (e.g. university, advanced polytechnic schools) and safer learning environments significantly reduces abuse risks. For instance, a girl's odds of being raped are nearly three times

less if she has tertiary education versus primary schooling (phi= 0.24, p= 0.01). Additionally, a small increase in school safety level reduces her risk of being raped by about 10 percent (p= 0.001). Statistical findings were interpreted in light of key informant interviews (n= 16), which also helped explore causal mechanisms and potential policy solutions. The ethical and policy-relevant ramifications of this research are crucial at a time when policymakers are urging girls to enter the classroom at higher rates, yet without fully understanding how to ensure their protection and facilitate their human agency.

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Dedication

This dissertation was motivated by a young woman, Hawa, who bravely shared her tragic story of failed hope and hardship. This dissertation research is dedicated to the women and girls of Liberia and its sister nations who strive to rise above poverty and gender inequity through educational advancement, yet so many of whom face the same obstacles of sexual abuse and exploitation as Hawa did. Lastly, I want to thank my husband, Dr. Albert DeFusco, for his loving encouragement. This research is further dedicated to him and our daughter soon to be born.

1.0 Chapter 1. International Education Policy and Child Sexual Abuse: A Fatal Remedy

1.1 Introduction

One of the perilous unintended consequences of international education policy is the misunderstanding of the relationship between child sexual abuse and the schooling of girls. To date, nearly all countries have adopted the 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child, a document that includes the goals of protecting children from sexual abuse and providing universal education. Many signatory countries also have national policies in place to stem harmful gender practices and reduce educational disparities for girls. At the same time, graduation rates among young girls have increased markedly worldwide in recent years, particularly in low-income countries (UNICEF, 2014; UNICEF, 2017).

Efforts toward child protection are often intertwined with education. Scholarship repeatedly suggests that more schooling is correlated with lower levels of early marriage and adolescent pregnancy. Nevertheless, international agencies and national governments often ignore the fact that the very policy of putting females in school also repeatedly exposes vulnerable girls to various forms of child sexual abuse. This oversight is an unintended negative consequence of otherwise benevolent actions, or what Sieber (1981) has called "fatal remedies" of well-meaning public policies. Although international education policies are intended to improve human development, policies that are not properly designed can become fatal remedies for those they are meant to serve.

1.2 Hawa's Query

The fatal remedies of international development policy may be illustrated by a story that I call *Hawa's Query*. As an adult, Hawa graciously shared this story with a group of development consultants, including this author, while we conducted a teacher training program in her former school. Her story exemplifies the dilemma that many young girls face around the world. Hawa is a young Liberian woman who as a child lived in a village by the sea. In 2009, her parents, who were both illiterate, decided for the first time to send their eldest daughter to school with her brothers. Dedicated to her studies, Hawa excelled through primary school and was about to sit for the national secondary school entrance exams. She was one of only a few girls hoping to continue beyond the sixth grade.

One day, Hawa was called into a private meeting by her male teacher. He had worked in the school for many years and was a respected community elder. The teacher told Hawa that she would pass her examination if she did as he said. Despite being at the top of her class, she submitted to his sexual advances, becoming pregnant at 14 years old. Hawa specifically identified going to school as the reason her life fell apart: "My pa should have married me as a child like my sisters. I went to school instead. The teacher denied doing man-woman-business [sex] with me, and he lie I was with other boys. He say he was not the one got me with belly [got me pregnant]. People believe him. I spoiled [I am ruined]. Maybe if I not go to school, I not be shamed."

Hawa was eventually forced by the principal to leave school, and her parents turned her out. She later tried to earn a living selling smoked fish, but her status as an unwed mother and a perceived 'liar' stigmatized her in the eyes of community members who refused to buy her goods. Hawa eventually became the *kept woman* of a local businessman. He provided her and her son housing in exchange for a relationship and working in his shop for little pay. Now grown, Hawa

believes that if she had not gone to school as a child but instead had her parents arrange her marriage like other girls in her family, her adult years would have been happier and more secure. "I would have [had] a home, a husband, a pa to help for my pekin [child]. Not struggling so."

Hawa's case appears to be no outlier, nor some fluke or accident of fate. Hawa's story represents a larger dilemma of international education policy and human development. This research is dedicated to Hawa and her peers.

1.3 A View from the Human Development Paradigm

There are many ways to conceptualize *Hawa's Query*. Given the efforts to improve female educational attainment, particularly in low-income countries, understandably there is an extensive body of research on its impact in mitigating child marriage. Regrettably, however, the literature synthesis presented in the next chapter of this study indicates that there is a paucity of research on the association between education and harmful sexual practices. While literature on education and child marriage may be better understood, there is less understood about the relationship between education and other major forms of child sexual abuse outside of wedlock, such as informal/coercive unions with adults and sexual exploitation, particularly statutory rape. In Hawa's case, going to school tragically led to her being raped by the same man in a position to provide her with an education, a person whom she and her family should have been able to trust.

The problems faced by Hawa may be viewed through the lens of what is known as the *human development paradigm*, which includes two particular theories. Firstly, many of the issues that Hawa faced could be mitigated by considering Urie Bronfenbrenner (1981/1994)'s model of Human Development Ecology. His model is a systems-approach often applied in educational and

psychological research to conceptualize human and child development, community/peer relationships, and socialization. It states that an individual interacts with specific environmental systems that contribute to human development over time. As a person's position within a social environment changes, her development adjusts to changes that occur among actors within her social circles. A person's growth is not solely based on her own biological make-up but is also shaped through the systematic social interactions that she has with others, such as those within the micro and meso systems of her life (*see Figure 1.1*).
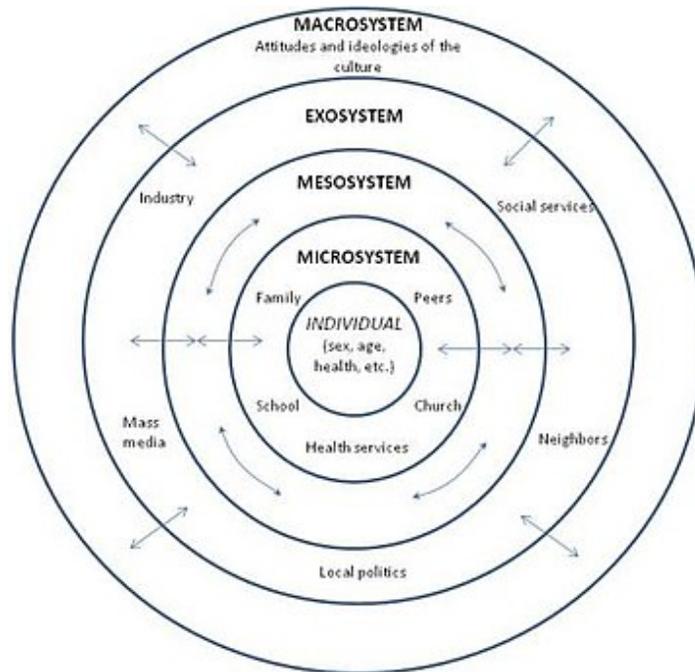
Figure 1.1 Bronfenbrenner's Human Development Ecology

The microsystem is the social environment that the child most commonly interacts with, including direct relationships between the child and people in the system like friends and family. The mesosystem is the social space where actors of different microsystems interact, such as parents interacting with the child's friends, teachers, or community. These interactions at all levels can

influence a child's development and wellbeing. Child protection literature commonly shows that victims of child abuse often are familiar with their perpetrators *(see Chapter Two)*. On the one hand, uneducated girls are often expected to marry at a younger age, perform subsistence work (including on farms and streets), and are less empowered to play a role in decision-making about their lives, including negotiating sexual practices. These scenarios can lead to higher risks of child sexual abuse, including early marriage and statutory rape.

On the other hand, education is regularly revered in international development literature and practice as a promising solution that can enhance a child's capacity and later agency, as well as improve her protection mechanisms. Many theories in the human development paradigm make this same connection. Education is treated as one essential property of Amartya Sen's capacity approach. According to his Human Development Theory, schooling is a means of unlocking human capabilities and freedoms, often associated with gender development. In 1990, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched the Human Development Report and later the Human Development Index, highlighting the work of Sen and Mahbub ul Haq. About this same time, human development theory inspired the international development community to take on the mantle of *Education for All.* Sen (2002) focuses on the inherent link between basic education and improved human security. Human security is a key requirement for safeguarding human capacity development, and thus, directly ties to education as a social obligation to ensure the individual's rights and duties. Accordingly, the relationship between human security and education are increasingly cyclical, as higher levels of education in turn foster greater human security. However, human development's adoption of education as a silver bullet for issues like preventing early marriage seemingly neglects to address issues of sexual violence in schools that appear to increase in tandem with female enrollment rates.

In identifying education as a *one-shot* policy solution for human development, as exemplified by Sen and other human development theorists, one must also consider the contexts in which new educational opportunities refer back to human development ecology. When a girl leaves her home environment to enter school, her daily social interactions will theoretically change, including exposing her to new and unfamiliar adults like teachers, school administrators, and older male students. If her family is unschooled or not sufficiently involved in her education in the mesosystem, her parents may be less aware of who she interacts with when at school. Thus, the problem emerges of potential sexual abuse of female students by men frequenting the school environment.

In the case of Liberia, this dissertation's quantitative data suggests that girls who are educated and uneducated face high statutory rape rates; men in school-based occupations make up a large percentage of their assailants. This research is likely one the first large-scale studies to establish child sexual abuse prevalence rates in country among both educated and non-educated girls while assessing their perpetrators. The qualitative data indicates that child rape historically has been an issue within society, and that the Liberian civil war may have contributed to rape becoming more rampant in recent decades. Yet before *Education for All* policies increased the number of girls in school around 2008, child sexual abuse mostly happened within the home or community and not as frequently in school, because there were essentially fewer female students then as compared to today. Tragically, statutory rape within schools seems to have increased alongside the swelling female student population.

This issue of female education and sexual abuse is also evident in many (but not all) countries in which educational policies targeting marginalized girls are at the forefront of national development agendas. Still to date, much of this research cannot adequately confirm the link

between girls' schooling and child sexual abuse. However, <u>Bronfenbrenner's</u> ecological theory can act as a general framework to examine risk factors and protective mechanisms associated with school-related sexual violence and child sexual abuse, including specific microsystem and mesosystem interactions, such as those between girls and men in their various environments. Research indicates that interactions involving peers and adults in a youth's microsystem, along with systematized cultural interactions at the meso and macro levels, can blend together to inform the socialization and risk exposure of developing children and youth (Bronfenbrenner, 1986/<u>1994</u>; Elkington, Bauermeister, & Zimmerman, <u>2011</u>; Espelage, 2009/<u>2014</u>; Reppucci, <u>1987</u>). Policies can further establish regulations and definitions for normative social interactions with children, including child protection laws. For this reason, the dissertation considers human development ecology alongside the work of human development theorists like Sen as a promising general paradigm for understanding the relationship between the education of girls and child sexual abuse.

1.4 Education in the Context of Modern and Traditional Values

Efforts to empirically test an entire paradigm, whether of human development or another general aim of development, can be fraught with complexities. Among the major difficulties are the problems of operationalizing the paradigm of human development with tools available for field studies, such as the ones employed in this research study. Alternatively, this dissertation examines several important aspects of human development, including education, human security/child protection, and the home environment that may instill or impede knowledge, values, attitudes, and behaviors (KABs) related to human development. Among these values, attitudes, and practices are those measured by what Alex Inkeles terms *overall modernity (OM)*, which is captured in a robust

survey measuring participant self-reported behavioral and psychological elements of individual KABs (Bengtson, Dowd, Smith, & Inkeles, 1975, 688-693; Inkeles & Smith, 1974; Inkeles, 1983; Smith & Inkeles, 1966). The OM survey scales measure numerous categories, namely self-efficacy, women's rights, family planning, active political participation, educational aspiration, and citizenship, which this study's survey instruments include. Most of these scales are thoroughly tried and tested in nearly a dozen countries, including multiple studies in the same nation, for over five decades, and with an aggregate of almost 9,000 participants (Bengtson et al.; Ghonsooly & Ashrafi, 2012; Inkeles, 1983; Inkeles, A., Broaded, & Cao, 1997; Leong, 2000; Smith & Inkeles; Zhang, Zheng, & Wang, 2003). *Chapter Four* elaborates on their reliability in this study.

While historically the paradigm of modernity often associates these properties with *modern values* (also referred to as modern culture), this research recognizes that various traditional values, attitudes, and behaviors may also be a source for human development. Research on the Inkeles' OM Scale finds that high rates of education are frequently correlated with many variables of modern culture. While the study does not espouse modernity, it finds the OM survey as a well-established and still relevant survey, covering a variety of sub-categories like efficacy and women's rights which can potentially help inform casual mechanisms for increasing female student enrollment and completion rates. The questions used in the OM survey are very similar to those used in the contemporary versions of development surveys, like the USAID Demographic Health Survey (DHS), yet offer fewer leading question techniques, are quite user-friendly, and have received positive feedback in the pilot testing phase of the dissertation research. For this reason, the OM Scale offers an informative method in this study to assess education against a variety of elements sociologically influencing individual culturalism, whether modern or traditional. However, as this dissertation examines for the first time, modern culture may not

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necessarily be associated with stopping child sexual abuse. An analysis of the modern-traditional dynamic then may lend some insight into better understanding child protection and the home environment. This dissertation attempts to theoretically reconceptualize the way that modern and traditional knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors (KABs) (often referred to also as culture) can be viewed sociologically in promoting human development in an effort to espouse a multi-ethnic perspective more tolerant towards traditionalism *(see final chapter).* While survey questions from the OM Scale are applied in this study, modern culture is only one of the secondary variables included in this study, which will be discussed in more length further on in the research methodology.

1.5 The International Policy Context

In recent decades, the international community has committed to two particular global initiatives. This pledge is fueled by the knowledge that girls' potential can decrease when they experience sexual violence and/or are denied quality education, which can negatively affect human development overall. The first initiative was the launch of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the largest ratified international human rights treaty in history focused on children's rights and protection of those rights (UNHR, 2019). The second was *Education for All* (EFA), a worldwide movement initiated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to improve learning for all children, especially girls. EFA was formally adopted in the 2000 Dakar Framework at the World Education Forum, and also informed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in the form of MDG2 to achieve universal primary education and MDG3 to promote gender equality in schooling (UNESCO, 2014/2017). These

movements coincided to advance education for girls while at the same time stemming child abuse. The next section explores these initiatives and their policies inspired by the human development paradigm, which serve as backdrop for the literature informing this dissertation, much of which is presented later in the literature review and synthesis.

1.6 Child Protection Sector

Nearly all child protection policies of UN member states that follow the CRC in an effort to stem negative gender roles and define illegal sexual practices, particularly stopping child sexual abuse, have been directed toward females. The principal aims have been to delay risky and harmful early sexual activity, whether consensual or forced, and to promote a safe environment for fostering growth. The delay of early sexual activity minimizes the physical harm (e.g., fistula, birth complications, etc.) and long-term psychological damage (e.g., depression, suicide, and social isolation) caused by sexual violence (Mullen, Martin, Anderson, Romans, & Herbison, 1996; UNICEF, 2011; UNICEF, 2014).

Child sexual abuse is only one form of human insecurity. To date, nearly all nations have signed the CRC, which promotes the rights of children under 18 years of age (Baxter, 2015). Core CRC commitments include child protection against harmful practices such as child sexual abuse, and the promotion of universal education (UNICEF, 2014; UNICEF, 2017). The goal for children is to secure agency over their own lives into adulthood, increasing their potential to be active agents of change in their own lives and within their communities, which is at the heart of human development. Yet global abuse remains rampant.

A comprehensive meta-analysis of prevalence figures (reported in 217 publications from 1980-2008, counting 331 independent samples with a total of 9,911,748 participants) estimates that global child sexual abuse averages nearly 12 percent. This average ranges higher in some regions like Africa and amongst female populations, including about 150 million girls unlawfully raped before the age of 18 (Stoltenborough, van IJzendoorn, Euser, & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2011). Yet, it is important to debunk the idea that only low-income children are affected by abuse. Violence affects all children despite their ethnic background, socio-economic class, location, or religious affiliations. Many sexual assault victims (survivors) know their attackers before the incident (Meyers, 2016; Mouszos & Makkai, 2004; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). We must examine how systemic violence is integrated into a child's environment and ecology, the reasons why it remains hidden, and what solutions can mitigate pervasive forms of violence (Bhabha, Bhatia, Gibbons, Wong, Adhia, & Shin, 2019). Legal concepts of child sexual abuse are also necessary to help set specific parameters of what qualifies as abuse (Bhabha et al.; Wright, 2017).

The tragic irony of *Hawa's Query* is that about the time Hawa was sexually victimized, there were new Liberian national policies just enacted that both redefined rape and its consequences, as well as prohibited any relationships between school staff and underage students. However, awareness of these laws and systematic mechanisms of enforcement were severely limited. Child sexual abuse standardly is defined as "the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violate the laws or social taboos of society" (Worldwide Health Organization (WHO), 2004, 3). Most countries ban harmful relationships between adults/older partners and children, by establishing age-of-consent laws; enacting rape policies, including defining statutory rape, which requires parental consent of any sexual relationship with a minor; or banning sexual abuse through *quid-pro-quo*, including in academic settings. Such relationships can involve the violation of power dynamics, inducements, coercion, prostitution, illicit sex practices, and transactional sex or exchange of sex for favors like protection, money, or food (MSF; WHO; Wright). Many CRC-signatory countries overlap in their legal definitions of child sexual abuse, such as age of consent and definitions of rape. Minors (or people under the legal age of

adulthood) are considered cognitively, psychologically, and physically immature or still-developing, and thus may not be able to fully consent to sexual practices. They may require adult guidance and authorization to safeguard them from abusive situations. (UNICEF, 2018). In accordance with these global efforts, Liberia has made considerable strides in the last decade to update its human rights policies to comply with major global standards like the CRC, including its definitions of child abuse (*more details provided in Chapter Two*).

1.7 International Education Sector

In the case of Hawa, it was a novel concept in her village for girls to even attend school, let alone progress to secondary or university levels. The decision by her parents to enroll her was to benefit her future and that of their family, even though this investment likely came with a heavy cost burden involving schooling fees, forgoing of a dowry, and less daily household labor. Educational programs are promoted to narrow the socio-economic gender gap and end practices of early marriage and illicit union. Today, it is commonly accepted in international education policy that promoting schooling for girls is a key to ending early marriage. Indeed, literature on child rights and education demonstrates a strong correlation between a female's education level and lowered risk of child marriage. Education rates among girls have been steadily increasing, largely due to international initiatives like the 2000 Millennium and 2015 Sustainable Development Goals, and the Malala Campaign. Education such as improved literacy and mathematics skills increases cognitive capacities, like problem-solving and decision-making (Cartwright, 2012), and improves socio-economic opportunities such as in the workforce (Sen, 2002).

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The mission of contemporary education has moved beyond improving economic development of nations to the promotion of individuals' human development, based on human development approaches achieved through equitable policies and programming targeting marginalized populations, particularly impoverished women and girls (Basu, Maddox, & Robinson-Pant, 2013; Sachs, 2006). For nearly 40 years, each sequential generation of international education policy and development support at global and national levels can be characterized by three key goals propelling this mission: 1) universal basic education access, 2) improved quality learning outcomes, and 3) quality learning and secondary school access. These three generations differ in their prioritization of ensuring child protection in education.

During the 1990s and early 2000s, multilateral institutions like the World Bank and global initiatives like the MDGs first promoted basic/primary schooling access for all in the developing world, particularly for girls (Heyneman, 2003). This period typically references two movements: *Education for All* and MDG 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education. Like many development theorists writing at this time, Sen states that ensuring an individual has basic education and literacy skills may further guarantee that the instrumental freedom of human security and other potential freedoms can be unlocked:

> Human security is integrally connected with securing human capability, and thus applies directly to the contribution of education in removing the "downside risks" among the general class of objectives included under the broad hat of human development. Human security stands, thus, on the shoulders of human development…[applied] to the critical role of elementary education (4).

Likewise, MDG 2 has successfully raised primary school enrollment by nearly 10 percent and basic literacy rates to nearly 90 percent, closing the knowledge gap between men and women (UN, 2017).

During the EFA and MDG era, holistic school approaches like UNICEF's Child Friendly Schools (CFS) gained speed worldwide. Evaluations of their effectiveness in many high- and low-income nations indicate the importance of incorporating child-centered spaces, gender-responsive education, and safe, supportive learning environments into universal education. CFS programming seems to be one of the most effective means of maintaining school completion rates, improving gender equity, and ensuring learning for all children, especially girls. However, the focus on boosting educational access for all and later education quality improvement take center stage among donors, causing other educational programs like CFS to receive declining support as the years progress (ChildFund, 2010).

In 2016, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) formally adopted the objectives of both high-quality learning and secondary *Education for All* children, particularly adolescent girls (Arubayi & Arubayi, 2016; Boni, Lopez-Fogues, & Walker, 2016). This focus reinvigorates modern international initiatives like the Malala Fund to lead the global agenda forward for international education development, promoting educational attainment as a pathway for sustainable human development. These contemporary movements urge that sending girls to school empowers them in a number of ways, including improved self-esteem, knowledge, and decision-making. However, one of the core weaknesses of the international education sector is its embrace of girls' education as a *silver bullet* solution, not only for early/forced marriage but other forms of human security as well *(refer to Appendix 3).*

1.8 Conclusions

With this background in mind, this dissertation research seeks to examine how the prevalence of female child sexual abuse is affected by the education (level and environment) of girls in households that occupy different levels of modernity and traditional values, attitudes, and behaviors. This general question is further expounded in *Chapter Three: Research Design & Hypotheses*. In addition to the practical policy significance of answers to this research question, there are potentially important theoretical and methodological contributions to a fifty-year tradition of research on modernization and modern values, attitudes, and behaviors in developing countries (Smith & Inkeles, 1966; Bengston, Dowd, Smith, & Inkeles, 1975; Ghonsonly &Ashrafi, 2012; Inkeles, Broaded, & Cao, 1997; Zhang, Zheng, & Wang, 2003).

This study first-and-foremost focuses on uncovering the relationship between education and different forms of child sexual abuse, particularly statutory rape. This research will further test how this relationship relates to additional factors of household modernity and traditionalism, demographics, and safe learning environments for both educated and non-educated girls. Additionally, it will explore how all these variables interact within the process of enabling female agency into adulthood. The goal is to offer a more direct and robust understanding of to what extent education and sexual violence are linked and how they correlate with other key variables.

The next chapter presents a synthesis of the literature, in which there are competing narratives on how girls' education affects human security of children into their adulthood. This chapter also explores key policies and concepts promoting *Education for All* and child protection from sexual harm, and how they relate to socio-economic and cultural factors. Major findings of the literature synthesis inform the dissertational research methodology and hypotheses, presented in *Chapter Three*. *Chapter Four* will explore the details of the research design and mixed-method

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study in Liberia, as well as critical lessons learnt and best practices for mitigating threats to validity in data collection and analysis. The final chapters present the results of the data analysis from the quantitative survey, indicating the size and magnitude of *Hawa's Query*, as well as the qualitative analysis from key informant interviews of key stakeholders that informs potential causal mechanisms behind the link between female education and child sexual abuse. Finally, conclusions from data analysis, policy ramifications, and research implications of this study are offered, including practical and theoretical steps to be taken in the future to better ensure girls excel at school while being protected from harm—shaping her capacity and potential into adulthood, and most importantly, a life with dignity.

2.0 Chapter 2. Synthesis of Research on Education and Child Sexual Abuse

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a synthesis of the most frequently-cited research on the relationship between child sexual abuse and girls' education, including the key variables of culture, demographics, and geographic location. First, this chapter presents a summary of key policies relevant to the dissertation, including child protection policies on sexual abuse. The synthesis shows that this body of scholarship can be divided into three distinct and conflicting categories. The *first category* suggests girls' educational access as a *golden solution* for mitigating child sexual abuse, particularly in early marriage. Girls who are enrolled in school tend to face lower rates of early wedlock and adolescent pregnancy than their peers who are illiterate. Thus, sending girls to school likely lowers other forms of abuse as well. The rationale is that girls in academic settings are more supported and empowered through their learning. Yet, a girl's education and early sexual engagement (the age at which she first becomes sexually active) are also often linked to her cultural background, including modern or traditional knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors at the household and community level. In contrast, the *second category* of literature focuses particularly on studies of student populations. This research indicates that there are large issues of sexual violence in schools worldwide, which actually place female students at risk of gender-based sexual abuse in the classroom. Schoolgirls may face a number of issues, including gender discrimination, sex-for-grades schemes, sexual harassment, and teasing. Comparatively, the *third and last category* implies that a girl with positive, non-misogynistic cultural support mechanisms (such as a family that supports women's rights and participation) often has brighter academic

opportunities. However, educational access is simply not enough to safeguard her from sexual harm. Schools must provide safe and supportive learning environments, or else risk exposing girls to different forms of sexual insecurity during their education.

2.2 Overview of the Process of Research Synthesis

This literature synthesis identifies key variables linked to girls' education and child protection. The chapter also provides an initial research synthesis drawing on findings from crucial empirical research analyses and findings in social science that aim "to present the state of knowledge concerning the relation(s) of interest and to highlight the important issues that research has left unresolved" (Cooper, 2015, 5). To assess research based on relevance to the topic, an analysis is performed of top-listed articles in *Google Scholar*. This analysis is used to generate a preliminary list of key variables identified in research as major influencers of child sexual abuse and girls' education. This list informs the inclusion of crucial variables in the dissertation field research study, including education level, individual and household knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors (as measured by modernity scaling from Inkles' OM Scale), demographics like socio-economic status, and school safety levels (as reflected through modeling on child-friendly schooling). It also provides important research methodological considerations related to reliability and validity of data.

This analysis first reveals that child sexual abuse research is frequently linked to demographics like age and socio-economic status, legal definitions of abuse and consent, early sexual behavior and engagement, and schooling level. In comparison to child sexual abuse literature, girls' education scholarship typical considers issues of policies, parental education

history, schooling environment, and cultural influences of her social ecology including peers, family, and community. For this reason, this chapter will also explore in more detail the literature on culture and education.

Based on the frequent influencers identified in the generated list of variables, the analysis further applies search criteria for the literature synthesis using specific terminology such as: girls' education and child sexual abuse, education and human development, and child sexual abuse and demographics like age or socio-economic status. This chapter summarizes this synthesis from the resources in the search engine based on the identified terminology. It also incorporates findings from key reports by lead international development agencies and government partners, and electronic platforms developed by university and research entities, such as *EdX*. This synthesis informs the key research question, hypotheses, assumptions, and theoretical causal model, presented later in the next chapters.

2.3 Research on Child Sexual Abuse Policy

Building on the issue of global child abuse, this next section provides a summary of key child sexual abuse policies to establish common definitions, standards, and actors pertinent to this study. The international development community in recent decades has sought to mitigate threats to girls by means of new and more humane policies focused on children and youth. This community comprises local and national agencies, nonprofit organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), regional and international actors, international nonprofit organizations (INGOs), think tanks, and donors, who all share in efforts toward this same endeavor. Most nations, like Liberia, follow the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and other

international human rights standards, incorporating most elements of these precedents into their own national level policies and protocols. It is the responsibility of nation-state authorities to enforce these policies; however, their capacity to do so can vary considerably, particularly in low-resource countries (Baxter, 2015; UNICEF, 2014; UNICEF, 2017). Despite these efforts, global child abuse remains rampant, particularly for vulnerable girls (Stoltenborough, van IJzendoorn, Euser, & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2011). A mixed-methods study by Moore, Awusabo-Asare, Madise, John-Langba, & Kumi-Kyereme (2007) measures high rates of abuse in early sexual engagement:

> Using nationally representative surveys from 12–19-year-old girls in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Malawi, and Uganda collected in 2004, we examine the prevalence of sexual coercion at sexual debut among unmarried girls and its correlates. In Malawi, 38 percent of girls said that they were "not willing at all" at their first sexual experience followed by Ghana at 30 percent, Uganda at 23 percent and Burkina Faso at 15 percent.

Many contemporary child protection scholars and advocates emphasize that violence like sexual abuse affects all children regardless of their background. Additionally, patterns of abuse that are found in western countries are often similar to those in low-income nations, including that most sexual assault survivors know their attackers before their ordeal (Meyers, 2016; Mouszos & Makkai, 2004; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Research should assess how systemic violence integrates into a child's environment and ecology, the explanations for why it remains concealed, as well as solutions to prevent pervasive forms of violence (Bhabha, Bhatia, Gibbons, Wong, Adhia, & Shin, 2019). For this reason, understanding human development ecology is prioritized in this study's data analysis.

Child abuse can be preventable, especially when a nation-state sets formal policies or laws that mandate specific forms of sexual practices to be illicit and illegal. These policies can foster public awareness and establish legal mechanisms of accountability for perpetrators. However, child abuse legislation can contextually vary, so it is also necessary to explore legal concepts of child sexual abuse in their framework to set specific parameters of what qualifies as abuse (Bhabha et al.; Wright, 2017). Regularly, many of these policy precedents are first defined by major experts, policymakers, courts, and human rights advocates in the global North, then adopted by international stakeholders, and may later spread into national policies in the global South.

Although child protection literature can vary in its taxonomy, there are legal constructs that are widely accepted (Andrews, Corry, Slade, Issakidis, & Swanston, 2004; Heflin, Deblinger, & Fisher, 2000; Wright). *Chapter One* first provides a globally-applied definition of child sexual abuse used by the World Health Organization (WHO). Additionally, child abuse is legally categorized as any form of physical and/or emotional maltreatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligent treatment, or commercial or other form of exploitation that leads to actual or potential harm to the child's survival, health, development, or dignity (WHO, 2004). The definition of sexual abuse includes rape, molestation, and sexual exploitation. Rape is any sexual intercourse activity that is non-consensual and can include invasion of bodily parts with a sexual organ, as well as vaginal or anal penetration with an object or body part. Rape can employ violence, force, threat of force, or coercion (Médecins Sans Frontières [MSF], 2009), including statutory rape.

Child sexual abuse definitions are regularly established by international and national legislation, as well as informal systemic definitions represented by societal and ethnic taboos (MSF; WHO), all of which can further influence policy and policy amendments (Weatherred, 2015). These formal and informal taboos further influence girls' sexual interactions within their social micro and mesosystems. For instance, a girl living in a society where child marriages are legally banned is less likely to face marrying before her age

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of maturity. Likewise, countries that ban sex between a teacher and young students set precedents that indicate to citizens that such relationships are unhealthy and illicit. Even in countries like Liberia, Malawi, and India where arranged marriage is customary, in the last decade or so, most CRC-signatory countries have banned many to all forms of harmful relationships between adults/older partners and children by establishing age-of-consent laws, although these amendments can be seen as loopholes for child wedlock. These bans sometimes include outlawing early/forced marriages for girls altogether, but mostly they establish legal age standards for wedlock or different types of sexual unions that must involve parental consent (Murdie, Park, Hart, & Mullinax, 2019; Wodon, 2015).

There are many reasons why parents arrange marriages for their children, some of which can be financial like securing a dowry, but also as a means of ensuring their children's future happiness and security (Anukriti & Dasgupta, 2017; ChildFund; Montazeri, Gharacheh, Mohammadi, Alaghband Rad, & Eftekhar Ardabili, 2016; Wodon). In impoverished countries where adult life expectancy is low, and women are typically resigned to domestic positions and less likely to enter the workforce, it can be a driving concern for parents to ensure their daughters are properly wed young to good husbands in case of their premature death. A 'suitable' spouse may be a man who is well-educated or holds a position of status; whose family is well-respected or holds kinship ties; and who can adequately provide for her and her children (ChildFund; Wodon). Given these latter reasons, arranged marriages in certain circumstances may be considered from a sociological perspective a form of child protection and parental compassion.

Parental concerns like poverty, religion, and tradition that are common among a people or population can be driving factors for why some governments do not fully ban child marriage but create loopholes like parental consent (Wodon). Yet, while some parents' intentions might be good, arranged child marriages often place girls in vulnerable positions. If a girl is violated outside of marriage, her vulnerability status might worsen if her culture places high value on misogynistic

gender norms like virginity and purity, lowering her likelihood of a good marriage (ChildFund, 2010). Even in cases of statutory rape, families out of concern for her future (and other motives like honor) may obligate a girl to marry her assailant. These concerns can diminish willingness of a victim or her family to report a rape case (Moore et al., 2007; Ojo, Abisoye, Fawole, & Chikezie, 2017). Naturally a girl's wellbeing should always be the paramount concern. Yet, when a man rapes a girl from a low-income household, it can sociologically be viewed as a *double-violation*: firstly, tragically against her, the rape survivor, and secondly, as an injury against her societal worth and her family. In cases where the family chooses to send their daughter to school rather than arrange her marriage, the cost of a rape can be devastating not only emotionally but economically. As in the case of Hawa, if she is forced to drop out of school, this can come at a major opportunity cost to her potential future income and the investment her family has already made. In the case she becomes pregnant, this may mean another child to care for under an already-impoverished household income, especially if the man or his family refuses to help. Rape laws can help mitigate the prevalence of risky adult-child sexual practices (Wodon). These relationships are dangerous because they frequently involve abuse of power dynamics, bribes, coercion, exploitation, unlawful sex practices, and transactional sex or exchange of sex for favors like protection, money, or food (MSF; WHO; Wright). Research on coercive or exploitative rape in low-income countries such as that by Moore et al and Ojo et al. indicate that transactional patterns like sex-for-grades arise in academic institutions. For this reason, understanding sexual abuse through *quid-pro-quo* is vital.

Sexual violence through *quid-pro-quo,* including in educational settings, often involves planning by the perpetrator, grooming of the victim, emotional manipulation, and the use of psychological tactics to coerce her to submit to sexual demands, wanted and unwanted. Even if

the girl consents in any relationship with an adult in a power of authority, such as a boss and young staffer, or faculty and a student, there are regularly difficulties of power dynamics, such as differences in age and negotiation control. These relationships often involve an abuse of power by the perpetrator who can more easily manipulate the situation. More often than not, the negative effects of the relationship fall on the shoulders of the victim/survivor, often interfering with her ability to thrive, including in her educational progress. Frequently, the cost of sexual violence may threaten to shatter her quality of life, including causing psychological harm like depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); physical implications like sexually-transmitted infections (STIs) or unplanned pregnancy; academic delay like lower performance or school dropout; and emotional effects such as drug use, risky behavior seeking, and even suicide (Law Room, 2018; Mahlangu, 2017).

In cases of child: adult sexual relationships, the power imbalances are statistically linked to the girl's decision-making being weakened, as well as her facing higher rates of psychosocial trauma, coercion, and abuse, all of which can further hinder her ability or willingness to report the crime (UNHCHR, 2016). Additionally, this initial power imbalance can affect her future ability to establish 'healthy' relationships/interactions with peers and sexual partners within her microsystem in adulthood (Bhabha et al.; Hébert, Langevin, & Daigneault, 2016; Small, 1994; UNICEF, 2018), involving elements like trust, independence, respect, and equality. In other words, when a girl is abused by an older partner, she is more likely to enter into emotionally-dysfunctional or abusive relationships in the future, often due to her previous injury causing psychological disorders. *Quid-pro-quo* sexual abuse between teachers and pupils is present in education systems worldwide, including in high-income countries, as seen in American high schools (Fineran, 2002). Yet these issues are increasingly found in low-income nations like South Africa, including in primary and secondary schools, and most victims tend to be female students abused by older men (Prinsoloo, 2005; Prinsoloo, 2006). While sex between teachers and students may be viewed by society as repugnant, it only becomes illegal government policies set parameters defining age of consent, illegal

forms of child sexual practices, and career restrictions for public servants like teachers. It is common for their national policies to follow international precedents.

Many low-income countries use international standards that codify age of consent and definitions of rape, even though these definitions may contrast with local ethnic, cultural, or religious practices. Some traditional cultures believe a girl is of age to marry once she is physically able to become pregnant. Yet, national age of consent laws range worldwide, but transnationally they often center around 16 to 18 years of age (late adolescence) (UNICEF, 2018). Statutory rape is any sexual activity with a minor below the age of consent and often includes an adult partner or perpetrator who does not have proper established parental consent as required by law. Parental consent can be lawfully given to a child or youth to engage in early sexual acts, including marriage or a sexual union, typically based on common law; however, the minor must be mature enough and the conditions of the relationship must protect the individual from any form of harm, coercion, or exploitation that would violate her rights (Baxter; Bhabha et al.; Maclure, 2016; Weatherred; Wright; WHO). In regard to these universal policies, Liberia has given considerable effort in the last 15 years to update its human rights laws to comply with major global standards. Still, issues of enforcing standards like set age of consent, and banning early marriage or *quid-pro-quo* relationships, can clash with local customs and norms (Hudson, Bowen, & Nielsen, 2011; Mubangizi, 2012; UNICEF, 2017).

The Government of Liberia (GoL) states that an adult is a person who is in his/her majority of 18 years or older, while a child or minor is below this age and legally the responsibility of his/her parents or legal guardian. Evolving over the generations, the Liberian Rape Law as of 2018 defines 18 years old as the minimal age at which a person is legally considered to have the sufficient capacity to personally consent to participating in sexual activity. Early sexual initiation cases involving minors may be legally classified as statutory rape in cases with an adult who has no prior parental or guardian consent to the relationship (Agali, 2018). The Rape Law and the 2013 Liberian Youth Act state that the age of consent for early sexual relationships including marriage is 16 with parental or legal guardian consent.

After its long civil war when rape was a frequent weapon of terror, Liberia still suffers from heightened, endemic gender-based sexual violence (Danjibo & Akinkuotu, 2019; Gbowee, 2019; Hanson, 2016), including a *child-rape epidemic*. Rape in Liberia has always been a social issue, but it has been more rampant since the end of the war (Deline, 2013; Hanson). Public awareness about rape as a systemic issue grew with the 2006 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia (TRC) and the Liberian women's peace movement, called the Lapa Movement (Gbowee) *(see Appendix 4).* While statistics of child rape in country can vary, it is estimated that nearly 40 percent of Liberian women give birth before reaching maturity, and 20 percent of these cases are caused by rape (Stuart, 2013). Rape is the second most reported serious crime, with estimates of thousands of cases a year. Of all the reported rapes in 2015, nearly 80 percent involved survivors who were underage. These reported cases likely represent only severe, life-threatening or violent rape cases. Overall, the Liberian rates appear relatively higher than girl sexual abuse rates reported in studies of other African nations, such as Stoltenborough et al., Moore et al., and Ojo et al. However, statistics of girl rape in Liberia are not highly accurate, so this finding needs to be further tested. Today, the Criminal Court "E" tries most Liberian rape cases. However, there is limited human resource capacity. In 2015, there were 137 cases on docket, of which only three were tried. Law enforcement, health systems, and the national Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Crimes Unit tasked to handle rape cases are striving to slowly make improvements with the support of UN peacekeeping and international development actors (Blair, Karim, & Morse, 2019; UNHCHR, 2016). However, formal government agencies are not the sole institutions to which citizens turn for justice.

As Liberia has over 20 distinct ethnic groups *(see Appendix 2),* there are recognized informal, traditional and customary dispute resolution (justice) systems that also handle sexual

gender-based violence (SGBV) deemed illicit by traditional norms and practices. In some cases, local law enforcement and politicians will respect these tribunals, as many of them may be part of the ethnic Poro or Sande societies. During its long civil war, many Liberians "took recourse in customary institutions" (Blair et al., 366) as formal institutions like the police were perceived as disorganized or corrupt. This practice has continued since the war's end in 2003. A victim's family may present a case to community elders, the zoe (spiritual leader), and/or the chief to hear both sides, a process colloquially called *palaver*. Palaver is in other words intergroup dispute settlement led by ethnic or communal structures established over generations in an area (Abramowitz & Moran, 2012; Flomoku & Reeves, 2012; Zwier, 2017). This issue of justice is imperative to understand from a psychosocial perspective. Every rape survivor deserves justice which can also help her recovery process, yet there is debate of palaver as a means of serving justice. Palaver is often highly embedded in the macrosystem of a young woman's development and the formation of her concepts of *justice* if she lives in a community with deep and historical ethnic ties.

> Chiefs, elders or spiritual leaders resolve disputes based on widely accepted cultural paradigms. But some traditional approaches are at odds with formal mechanisms, and can be highly controversial. A rape may traditionally be 'talked through' [palaver] because it is seen as a problem between families and it is for the perpetrator and his family to make the victim and her family whole again; this can include payment, or sometimes even marrying the victim. The statutory system, by contrast, sees rape as a crime against the individual, which requires individual punishment (Flomoku & Reeves, 44).

So how can educational development help mitigate child sexual abuse? The next section presents a synthesis of the literature on the linkage between girls' education and human security.

2.4 Synthesis of Research on Child Sexual Abuse and Education

As previously introduced, it was around the same time that the human development paradigm grows in popularity that the international development community took on the mantle of two specific global initiatives, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and *Education for All (EFA),* also known as universal education. Both served as foundations for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), measurable goals set by the global community at the 2000 UN Millennium Summit in 2000, with a target date of 2015. These movements promoted girls' education while at the same time restricting child abuse in efforts to advance an individual's capacity and agency into adulthood. Both movements led to improved policy setting and programming support for these two sectors. Countries like Liberia pass child protection policies defining illicit forms of sexual abuse, while also furthering compulsory *Education for All* policies meant to improve school enrollment for marginalized children, including impoverished girls historically denied access to school. Unfortunately, about 20 years later, many countries worldwide start to experience deteriorating attendance rates, including among girls, often due to the low quality of education provided, as well as issues with environmental insecurity (ChildFund, 2010). One clear example of this is the issue of girls' education in Afghanistan.

Since the 2001 U.S. military intervention, Afghanistan has received intense international intervention in partnership with its national government to pass CRC and EFA-based legislation and implement related multilateral-funded programs. But, only one-third of Afghan girls are in school today. A main reason for this is that gender-biased traditional practices continue to limit females to household duties. Furthermore, as human security worsens due to conflict, including attacks, kidnapping, and rape, female enrollment rates have seen a sharp decline, with fewer families willing to risk their daughters' safety so they may simply learn their ABCs (Bronstein,

2017). One solution to stem this attrition is by improving approaches to schooling that ensure inclusiveness, child-centered learning, and the provision of safe, healthy, and protective educational environments (UNICEF-Afghanistan, 2018). The case of girls' education in Afghanistan is one illustration of how education is vitally tied to human security, or in this case, insecurity.

This next section provides a synthesis of the literature related to child protection and education. This synthesis posits that this body of scholarship can be divided into three distinct and conflicting categories. The first categorical body of research posits girls' educational access as a golden solution for mitigating child sexual abuse, including early marriage. The second category of literature, specifically studying student populations, shows that female pupils face increased threats of sexual abuse, as there are widespread issues of sexual violence in schools. In contrast, the third category indicates that a daughter with non-misogynistic cultural support mechanisms frequently has better academic opportunities. However, educational access is simply not enough to safeguard her from sexual harm. Schools must provide safe and supportive learning environments or else risk exposing girls to different forms of sexual insecurity during their education. As the following literature review will reveal, there is a clear disconnect between the various bodies of thought. This dissertation examines how scholarship over time paints our understanding of the interaction between education and child protection to promote female agency.

2.4.1 Category One: Education Stops Sexual Abuse

There is an ample body of evidence-based research assessing the relationship between education and child sexual abuse, predominantly arranged/early marriage. Despite some difference in interpretation, a synthesis of the most relevant scholarship over the last 30 years on the

association between early marriage and educational attainment (or completed grade level) indicates a consistent phenomenon of research identifying a positive association between these variables, not only among low-income populations but worldwide (Amin, 1996; Bumpass, Martin, & Sweet, 1991; Heaton, 1991; Lowe & Witt, 1984; Montazeri, Gharacheh, Mohammadi, Alaghband Rad, & Eftekhar Ardabili, 2016; Raymo, 2003; Thornton, Axinn, & Teachman, 1995; Sivaram, Richard, & Rao, 1995; Smith, Stone, & Kahando, 2012). This pattern in research emerges as far back as in the mid-20th century, including in the United States, when the number of women gaining higher levels of schooling grew rapidly and adolescent marriage rates fell (Moore & Waite, 1977). Most of this literature includes a body of quantitative research in the least developed countries (LDCs) largely dating from the 1990s through the MDG era, including numerous development economic studies by large institutions like the World Bank, UNICEF, and leading INGOs. In fact, this finding is one of major ties made between education and human security, fueling both research and policy on a global scale for decades.

The first body of research indicates that women who wed young often have less education or are illiterate, give birth earlier, hold less decision-making power within their household, and experience higher rates of domestic violence (Jensen & Thorton, 2003; UNESCO, 2015). Early marriage often includes large age differences between the girl and her partner, in which she has less chance of her voice playing a role in determining and maintaining the relationship. This scholarship suggests that in low-income countries, one of the best interventions to minimize child marriage is providing literacy and schooling opportunities to females, the effects of which multiply, showing long-term generational benefits even for her daughters' quality of life. Education increases a young woman's cognitive abilities, like problem-solving and decision-making, as well as socio-economic opportunities, such as in the workforce readiness (Brien &

Lillard, 1994; Hahn, Islam, Nuzhat, Smyth, & Yang, 2018; IRCR, 2006; Jensen & Thorton; McClendon, McDougal, Ayyaluru, Belayneh, Sinha, Silverman, & Raj, 2018; Montazeri et al.; Santhya, Ram, Acharya, Jejeebhoy, Ram & Singh, 2010; Smith, Stone, & Kahando; UNICEF, 2005). Entire global campaigns are built on this finding. For instance, the 2018 Malala Fund website advertises that girls' completion of secondary school results in a 64 percent drop in the child marriage rate. The Malala Fund typically presents this association as a causal relationship, a narrative which has become more common among development organizations.

Despite this common narrative, there is a divide in the literature of whether education and child protection are associated or instead causally-related. Nearly half of top-cited literature on education and child marriage specify this relationship as correlated or cyclical, each continually affecting each other or occurring at the same time and influenced by other factors like increased family socio-economic status or schooling access policies (Jensen & Thornton; Miller, Forehand, & Kotchick, 1999; Moore & Waite, 1977; Sivaram et al.). On the other hand, other researchers indicate that increasing educational attainment directly causes a girl's marital age to increase (Brien & Lillard; Heaton; IRCR, 2006; Malala, 2019; Santhya et al.; UNICEF, 2005; UNESCO, 2014/2017). Although research confirms the correlation between low education and early marriage, correlation is not necessarily causation. While this may seem like a minute difference in research, narrative matters a great deal in policy-making. Causal narratives based on research directly affect how a policy issue is understood and solutions are formed, such as whether programming takes on a siloed-approach or a robust application. Moving improperly from correlation to causation can gravely change policy agenda setting, design decisions, budgeting, policy implementation, and program effectiveness (Duncan & Magnuson, 2012; Heckman, 2000).

According to this first body of literature, education is a golden solution for issues of child sexual abuse, including preventing child marriage. Supporters who hold this view, like the Malala Fund, strongly advocate for more girls to be enrolled in school and to have access to higher tiers of education. Yet, some actors often portray school in global South with a romanticized lens while also overlooking additional factors like learning quality, environment, and safety levels. Research on student populations contradicts some of the key points of this first body of literature, including that schools can be sexually violent spaces for children, especially girls.

2.4.2 Category Two: Students Face Sexual Violence

In contrast to the narrative that education minimizes human insecurities like forced marriage, there is growing scholarship identifying school violence as a social problem steadily spreading at the global level (Adams & Hannum, 2018; Astor & Benbenishty, 2018; Bhabha et al.; Brennan-Galvin, 2002; Brown, J., & Munn, 2008; Landis, Yu, Tanner, Karungu, C., Mallinga, Falb, & Stark, 2018). This second body of literature indicates that school-related gender-based violence affects millions of young students, often disaggregated between peer perpetrator-on-peer victim and adult perpetrator-on-student victim. This violence includes teasing, harassment, molestation, and rapes perpetrated through coercion, exploitation, or force, and is also affected by changing culture and gender roles (Adams & Hannum; Burton, 2008; Landis et al.; Myburgh & Poggenpoel, 2009). There also appears to be a tendency for school violence to develop in tandem with rising school enrollment and girls' attendance.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, a series of reports first emerge on sex abuse scandals. Some involve news articles, but others are influential qualitative publications identify a growing pandemic of SGBV in schools in various countries that are experiencing large socio-economic

shifts, like Nigeria, South Africa, and Kenya. Numerous case studies eventually appear recognizing the policy issue of increasing girls' enrollment as potentially linked to horrid reports of female student rapes on school grounds and during long-walks between school and home. Most case analyses recognize specific factors affecting school violence as associated with changing cultural norms of gender, rapid urbanization, low socio-economic status, unsupportive schooling environments that are aggressive against girls, and peer pressure among young men to assert masculine dominance. Repeatedly, this second body of literature shares a key conclusion: that as countries develop and enrollment rates grow, school systems and national agencies become too taxed to adequately respond to issues such as increasing student populations and overfilled classrooms, clashing gender changes in communities, and increasing rates of sexual violence among youth, especially for girls (Ajayi, Clark, Erulkar, Hyde, Lloyd, Mensch, Ndeti, Ravitch, Masiga, & Gichaga, 1997; Alakija, 1984; Davies, 1993; De Bruyn, 1992; Nissen, 1992; Obbo, 1995; Omale, 2000; Omaar & De Waal, 1994; Reuters, 1991; Russell & Mabaso, 1991; Vally, Dolombisa, & Porteus, 1999). These qualitative case studies such as Ajayi et al. first circulate in news reports and other public forums, and eventually draw international attention to this growing phenomena, specifically within low-income schools (Reto, 2009; Weatherred).

This media attention into the 1990s seemingly catalyzes support for more robust quantitative studies to be conducted to test the validity of the case studies and also assess the scope of the issues of student premarital pregnancy and school sexual violence. These studies attempt to gauge whether these cases are simply outliers or are in fact the tip of an iceberg. In the 2000s and 2010s, the number of quantitative publications informing educational policy research grow drastically. Most of these studies focus mostly on students, with little comparison of experiences of violence between educated and non-educated populations. The field research by Mensch, Clark,

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Lloyd, & Erulkar ([1999](#)) is one of numerous quantitative reports verifying that although girls who enter schools may face less risk of early/forced marriage, they are still increasingly engaging is risky early sexual engagement outside of marriage. Their sexual activity may reflect newer patterns among minors in low-income regions and among traditional cultures where girls previously were not educated (699-703). For instance, the Mensch et al. (1999) study indicates that while there is a general decline in fertility rates in Kenyan adolescents, the ratio of premarital birth to the population of adolescents is on the rise, which may be connected to schoolgirl pregnancy and higher rates of school dropout. The research asks whether the rise in school enrollment rates in country has "lengthened the period of exposure to the risk of premarital sex" (11). The study further assesses odd-ratios of the detriments of premarital sex. If her schooling environment is fraught with gender discrimination and pressure to become sexually active, the study finds a female student is more likely to be exposed to risky behaviors and face pregnancy.

Over the last 20 years, quantitative studies in South Africa, Nigeria and other urbanizing LDCs experiencing enormous growth in girls' education, further indicate stark patterns of growing rates of SGBV, including premarital rape of female students by teachers (up to 40 percent of rape cases in some schools) and older male peers (Harber, [2010](#); Harber & Mncube, [2011](#); Jewkes, Levin, Mbananga, & Bradshaw, [2002](#); Meier, [2002](#); Modisaotsile, [2012](#); Leach, [2002](#); Owuamanam, [1995](#); Prinsloo, [2005](#)). A major issue is *sex-for-grades*, schemes in which school staff violate their position of authority by coercing students into illicit sexual relationship in exchange for passing exams. Sex-for-grades is a prime example of transactional child sexual abuse through *quid-pro-quo* that has become an emergent systemic problem in countless sub-Saharan African countries and other world regions. Transactional sex, including in higher education institutions (both secondary and university level), is significantly associated with risks like abusive

sexual engagement, HIV/AIDS, depression, fistula, and unplanned pregnancy (Drivdal, 2011; Law Room; Morley, 2011; Stoebenau, Heise, Wamoyi, & Bobrova, 2016). Another prevalent issue linked to premarital sex in schools is the presence of adult learners attending the same classes as young students.

In many LDCs, new compulsory *Education for All* policies are responsible for gross primary enrollment rates increasing, such as in countries across sub-Saharan Africa (Bold, Filmer, Martin, Molina, Stacy, Rockmore, Svensson, & Wane, 2017). EFA also rises to forefront of national policy agendas, motivating citizens of all ages to enter school for the first time. Mostly these new student populations are children, but also include older adolescents and young adults who never previously had the chance to enroll. Many public schools and private institutions face classes with a large age range of students (ChildFund; Reimers, 2000), for instance a sixth-grade class with students 9-30 years of age. Large student age ranges can lower teaching quality and individualized learning, since older and younger students have distinctive learning needs and styles.

Slowly, the student age gap is decreasing in primary classes in many countries, but the problem of large class age ranges in secondary school still remains a major education policy issue (UNESCO, 2014). Likewise, having adult learners in the same class as younger pupils can lead to issues of risky early sexual engagement and sexual abuse. Older male pupils may prey on students who are minors. While this relationship type may not *entrap* girls as vulnerably as the sex-for-grades phenomenon involving educators, it still involves transactional sex in which material goods are provided in exchange for sexual favors. Transactional sex can be conceptualized as 'sex for basic needs', 'sex for improved social status', or 'sex and material expressions of love.' Transactional sex between an adult and a minor often is coercive or exploitative and can involve

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gender imbalances related to hegemonic masculinity (Stoebenau, Heise, Wamoyi, & Bobrova, 2016). Liberia is one of the nations whose classrooms often are overcrowded and have students of various age groups in the same grade level. During the war, schools often were closed, which delayed the entry or educational progress of many students. Since reconstruction, Liberia's Ministry of Education (MoE) has allowed students of any age to enter class as needed on an individual basis. The country offers night schools and alternative/accelerated programs for adult learners, but they are less frequently available in some areas. One major concern of this study is whether Liberian girls' education policies influenced by EFA may have overlooked how systemic sexual violence is outside of the school. Has this external violence entered the academic environment as the number of female students increase in these previously male-dominated spaces?

A quantitative analysis by Steiner, Johnson, Postmus, & Davis (2018) illustrates a common narrative of recent investigations in Liberia, uncovering the extreme levels of sexual violence and child abuse that girls are exposed to in school:

> Sexual violation was the most common form of sexual violence experienced, followed by sexual coercion, and then transactional sex. Findings showed statistically significant differences in experiences of transactional sex and sexual coercion, with girls more likely to experience both forms of violence. Further, girls were more likely to experience sexual abuse by a teacher and religious figure. Perpetration by teachers, school staff, and religious figures were all linked to transactional sex (1-2).

Yet like many similar studies, this analysis only assesses sexual violence among student populations, with no comparison of experiences among their peers who are uneducated. This is a problematic pattern among this body of studies, which limits testing whether uneducated females

experience similar or different forms and prevalence rates of child sexual abuse. Schools may be hostile environments. But, without established comparative data, it is difficult to dissect the true nature of SGBV that girls face in and out of school. Potential rival hypotheses are harder to identify and test. Likewise, why this second body of literature contrasts other educational narratives like that promoted by the first body around stopping human insecurity like early marriage, and how to prevent sexual abuse of minors. This second body of literature offers a crucial competing narrative about female education related to child protection issues. This second body of literature, which includes studies conducted in Liberia, further highlights the need to consider the factors of both culture and the provision of safe, supportive schooling environments. For this reason, this synthesis delves deeper into examining the literature on culture and female student sexual violence.

SGBV and harmful early sexual engagement can occur in all cultures among all peoples and their communities, religions, ethnicities and nations. Additionally, all cultures—urbanized or traditional, liberal or conservative, monoethnic or diverse—have practices and definitions of sexuality and gender that both positively and negatively influence an individual's sexual identity, freedom, initiation, and experiences. It is crucial to understand how specific traditions, social interaction, and cultural shifts can affect a child falling victim to harmful early sexual engagement. Even well-intentioned policies designed to support gender equality and human development may cause unintended consequences that affect children's sexual health. This dissertation is concerned that *Education for All* policies without proper protection mechanisms in schools may inadvertently place girls at risk of new forms of sexual violence, like premarital rape and statutory rape. With these parameters in mind, this section explores the literature on culture influencing females' early sexual engagement and education.

A synthesis of over 30 top-cited publications on female education and early sexual behavior reveals that nearly all consider the factor of culture on gender and sexual identity, practices, and experiences. Traditional practices, cultural norms and context can heavily influence sexual behaviors among children and youth, similar to daily interactions with peers and adults (Alemu, Mariam, Belay, & Davey, 2007; Arnett; 2000; Gage, 1998; Higgins, Zheng, Liu & Sun, 2002; Rice & Dolgin, 2005; UNESCO, 2015; Viner, Ozer, Denny, Marmot, Resnick, Fatusi, & Currie, 2012). Any parent with an adolescent girl can attest that peer influence can be just as influential as family traditions and norms in her development. New and adapted gender rights policies (such as compulsory female education) that are shifting traditional gender roles may be more likely to experience aggressive backlash in heavily patriarchal societies. Male-dominant culture systems thus may experience higher rates of SGBV including intimate partner violence and rape than societies where gender sexuality is more equitable and liberal (Jewkes, 2002; Quark, 2016), which is also the case for school-based sexual violence (Jewkes et al. 2002).

Additionally, global research implies that changing modernity/traditional cultural patterns in country also influence differences in both educational and sexual norm perceptions, especially among males, and influence female decision-making capacities and gender scripts (Gerhards, Schäfer, & Kämpfer, 2009; Higgins et al., 2002; Khurshid, 2015; Moghadam, 2003; Rogers, 2008; Talbani & Hasanali, 2000). In situations of cultural misogyny, "[v]iolence is frequently used to resolve a crisis of male identity" (Jewkes, 2002, 1). Patriarchal cultures often negatively view female premarital sex, especially those cases falling outside of cultural union practices or without established family consent, as both illegal according to national laws as well as illicit by traditional norms. Even an educated girl who is raped or impregnated outside of marriage will likely face severe social consequences similar to those of illiterate peers. A girl engaged in non-traditional

sex often may be seen by her society as violating multiple taboos, being dirty, and doubly shameful (Delius, & Glaser, 2005; Hanson; Pramanik, Chartier, & Koopman, 2006). In Pakistan, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, and other nations with historical misogyny issues that often rate low on the Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI), girls who have premarital sex frequently face abandonment and ostracization by family, mandated expulsion from school, forced marriage to her partner or rapist, beatings, and even honor killings. While Liberia's GGGI performance has improved, its female citizens are still affected by the cultural and educational inequalities between genders (World Economic Forum, 2018). The country has high adolescent pregnancy rates and low rates of female secondary schooling completion compared to other nations. Likewise, Liberia, like many LDCs worldwide, bars adolescent mothers and pregnant female students from accessing equal education opportunities afforded to their peers. For these reasons, it is imperative to examine factors that negate school sexual violence.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory can help examine risk factors and protective mechanisms associated with involvement in school-related sexual violence and child sexual abuse, including specific microsystem and mesosystem interactions. Research indicates interactions involving peers and adults in a youth's microsystem, along with systematized cultural interactions at the meso and macro levels, can blend together to inform the socialization and risk exposure of developing children and youth (Bronfenbrenner, 1986/1994; Elkington, Bauermeister, & Zimmerman, 2011; Espelage, 2009/2014; Reppucci, 1987). This association may also apply to sexual abuse within schools. For instance, a female student who lives in a nurturing home environment may still theoretically be exposed to sexual violence like rape if her microsystem includes interactions with misogynistic men who are against new gender roles, like male teachers or older students resentful of girls in the classroom. Again, the consequences of SGBV toward

children fall mostly on the shoulders of female victims, including girls in school. It is for this reason that evidence-based research including factors like culture and modernity can better inform policy and practice of the magnitude and reasons behind child sexual abuse in schools across countries like Liberia.

2.4.3 Category Three: Importance of Safe School Environments

The third body of literature suggests the urgent need for measuring school safety levels that children face in academic environments. This research considers educational environments to be child-centered spaces. This third category of literature iterates the cruciality of ensuring that the learning environments that we substitute for children's time otherwise spent working at home, on the street, or in fields, are gender responsive, child-friendly, and conducive to keeping harm out of school.

Common influencers that appear in the synthesis are policy addendums and programs addressing issues of unsafe learning environments. Safety levels can differ across educational contexts. Social norms and inequalities that invade child-centered spaces may give way to gender-based violence. For instance, there is the worry that the systemic sexual violence in Liberian society has infected school institutions. However, educational child protection programming can specifically target these issues. Since the mid-1970s, safe school models like the UNICEF child-friendly school (CFS) model have been historically proven to improve schools through a holistic approach focused on establishing child-friendly, student-centered, and gender responsive environments. These initiatives take on multi-pronged approaches such as involving parents/community in school administration support and accountability, child protection awareness trainings and prevention, student/teacher codes of conduct, and reporting and

monitoring mechanisms, all while creating a supportive and welcoming learning environment for children. By establishing protective mechanisms, issues of school violence and SGBV can be significantly decreased (Bisi-Onyemaechi, Akani, Ikefuna, Tagbo, & Chinawa, 2018; ChildFund; Fay, 2018; Febriantina, S., & Wijayanti, 2018; Heslop, Parkes, Januario, & Sabaa, 2019; Higgins & Paul, 2019; Mannathoko, 2008; Steiner et al.; Thomas, Jose, & Kumar, 2018; Young, Michael, & Smolinski, 2018; UNESCO, 2015; UNICEF, 2011; UNICEF, 2014; Wilson, 2006; WHO, 2003/2004). Notably, these support mechanisms frequently require efforts that cut across sectors and involve diverse stakeholder collaboration. "[S]afe and supportive families, safe and supportive schools, together with positive and supportive peers are crucial to helping young people develop to their full potential and attain the best health in the transition to adulthood" (Viner et al., 1641).

The literature indicates that the efforts put into making schools enabling environments typically take on a checklist approach of useful target interventions like parent-teacher association (PTA) activation, community leaders and police involvement in school monitoring, codes of conduct, reproductive and life skills education, gender-equitable infrastructure, and children's clubs to address actual and perceived risks to students. Key examples of whole-school approaches include the Safe Schools Programme and UNICEF's CFS program, in which supportive environments help to ensure children's emotional safety, physical safety, and intellectual safety. The cost and effectiveness of these programs can range (Chabbott, 2004; Themane & Osher, 2014; Thomas et al.), yet the literature synthesis indicates there is a general consensus that child-friendly school models are effectual when properly piloted to be contextually relevant to children and community needs, and then diligently expanded in phases. The CFS model is highly responsive to gender-based violence in schools, and it offers different tried-and-tested techniques to minimize sexual violence in learning environments. In relation to Bronfenbrenner's ecology approach, the

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literature frequently discusses issues of child development through socialization, and the creation and maintenance of safe environmental spaces with healthy interactions asserted at the microsystem and macrosystem level by local stakeholders. At the micro-level, these actors include PTA or school management committee members, parents, police, school staff, and students. At the macro-level, it includes the enforcement of child-friendly and gender responsive policies by governmental agencies and actors across all levels (Smith, Connell, Wright, Sizer, Norman, Hurley, & Walker, 1997; UNESCO, 2015; UNICEF, 2011; WHO, 2003).

Whole-school models tend to support qualitative and quantitative evaluations that help establish prevalence rates of abuse in schools, as well as impacts of different treatment models. Hundreds of studies using safe school and gender responsive instruments (like UNICEF-CFS surveys) have been conducted worldwide. CFS surveys collect data that can be reliably used in cross-national and country-specific analysis, and the creation of both school quality and child protection indicators applicable globally (Godfrey, Osher, Williams, Wolf, Berg, Torrente, & Aber, 2012). Debatably, there is not enough global attention given to adolescent health, including sexual abuse. Evidence-based programs like CFS can fill research gaps while engaging adolescent students' perspectives (Diers, 2013). However, CFS evaluations still can come with their own research design flaws.

As presented earlier, most quantitative reports, including CFS evaluations, tend to survey only educated populations, interviewing or observing participants either as children or later as adults, and fail to compare data results among non-schooled populations. UNESCO (2015) states:

> [M]uch of the scale and scope of gender-based violence in schools remains hidden. There is a lack of global comparable data on the various forms of SRGBV [school-related gender-based violence]. Evidence across and within countries is uneven and incomplete. Wider

studies on school violence have tended to focus on physical violence and bullying and do not always apply a gender perspective. Serious obstacles for documenting violence exist in many countries, and social taboos and fear of repercussions limit the safe spaces available for children to acknowledge and report experiences of school-related gender-based violence (9).

Thus, generalization of findings on sexual violence in schools is often limited and can only provide an insular view of this troubling issue. As a result, it may be hard to distinguish if a girl not in school is at more risk for certain forms of child sexual abuse compared to a peer enrolled in school, and vice versa. Additionally, many of the quantitative surveys fail to capture prevalence rates and the specific link between education and child sexual abuse (UNICEF, 2011). Rival hypotheses are left untested in uncovering prevalence rates of different forms of child sexual abuse, and studying whether education has a direct influence, as it does with early marriage. More thorough research is needed to explore how the variables of child sexual abuse and education relate, which may inform understanding of the process of female agency through a wider lens. How we understand the relationship between these two variables can highly affect research analysis, policy, and programming interventions employed, as shown in the next section.

2.5 Models of Education, Child Sexual Protection and Other Variables

Since the expansion of global education, a critical issue has arisen in how the development community explains education's effect on human development. As previously demonstrated, there appears to be congruency in research indicating education's effect on transforming marginalized women's lives in many ways, including improving human security by delaying early marriage and

early pregnancy. However, these findings have been questionably applied to linking education to the mitigation of *other forms of child sexual abuse*, even though the literature does not seem to fully support these causal claims. This dissertation refers to this scholarly phenomenon as *presumptive theoretical application*, when one or more assumed relationships are planted (either erroneously or prematurely) into disseminated theoretical causal models, likely as a direct result of transferring patterns established in related research without proper evidence-based research tested through falsification. In other words, because research conclusively proves education is related to delayed early marriage, experts then make the claim that education must also be linked to lower rates of female premarital rape and statutory rape, without first rigorously testing this relationship and all rival hypothesis for consistent validation of the claim *(see figure below).*

The relationship between education and early marriage may have been inflated, likely contributing to overly simplified models that often present a limited set of life paths available to impoverished girls, each leading to different developmental outcomes in her adulthood. An archetypal example of this modeling is a 2014 cartoon presented in *[Child Protection Baseline Summary Report](#)* used for educational policy advocacy by UNICEF and countries like Ghana (34). This modeling often is found in the first body of literature in the synthesis. This cartoon depicts an average West African girl who faces *one of two possible lives*: deprivation or education. The first life path shows her never entering school, thus placing her at higher risk of emotional and physical abuse. As a young adolescent stuck on the path of no education, she eventually is married off to an older man and quickly becomes pregnant, later ending up abandoned and impoverished with many children depending on her. Eventually, as a young mother in this state, she will fall into deprivation, likely turning to degrading means of survival like prostitution *(see image to right).* On the other hand, she can be placed on a second course. If educated at a young age, the girl instead will become safe

from violence because of her schooling. In this alternative life, she gains self-esteem and other social benefits like access to healthcare. Later, as an adult with higher education, she applies her skills to earn a living while also choosing for herself when to marry and start a family (34).

A child and family who are supported at the right time, can change the course of a life and of intergenerational patterns of deprivation.

GIRL CHILD FACING MULTIPLE PROTECTION ISSUES - A FUTURE OUT OF HER CONTROL

Considered a woman — AGE 12
At risk of sexual, emotional, and physical abuse — AGE 14
Married — AGE 14
Pregnant — AGE 15
Sells her body to support her family- at risk of HIV and mental ill-health — AGE 18

2 POSSIBLE LIVES

IN EITHER SCENARIO HER CHILDREN WILL REPEAT HER DESTINY

AGE 12 — Safe from harm at school
AGE 14 — Valued with self esteem
Stays in school. Has access to healthcare — AGE 15
AGE 18 — Uses education to earn a living   Marries and has children when ready

▶ WITH SUPPORT THERE IS A DIFFERENT WAY

Figure 2.1 Image from 2014 UNICEF Child Protection Baseline Summary

This *simplified female human development model* theorizes that the single input of education can empower a girl to better mitigate harmful sexual practices in her life and have a future full of possibilities. There are many such models that take on an almost superficial or romanticized assumption of how girls' education will smoothly alter their lives for the better. In this model, education seems like a *golden solution* for human development, including all forms of child protection. But there are other education development models that contradict those like the

2014 UNICEF model. They instead include added critical variables that interact with early sexual engagement, like demographics, age of first pregnancy, spousal violence, and importantly, indicators of positive efficacy and supporting women's rights. In social science, *efficacy* is the ability to produce a desired or intended result, often associated with self-esteem, self-determination, decision-making power, and empowerment. It is a key measurement found Inkeles's OM research.

There is a comparative archetypical model presenting the importance of female education in Kenya that depicts low education as only one of a number of influences lowering returns in income, early marriage, and early pregnancy *(see Appendix 5)*. Furthermore, limited schooling is associated with additional sociological variables like efficacy and health, as also indicated by Inkeles's OM research. This second model explains that illiterate girls are more likely to believe that a husband or male partner is justified in beating his spouse or girlfriend, and that there is no justification in a woman asking her husband to use contraception like a condom to prevent against sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). This model is based on more current research by international agencies like the World Bank and World Economic Forum (Otieno, 2018), and sheds much-needed light on the complexity of education's effect on female human security, including stopping SGBV.

More recent development economic and intervention studies, like the systematic review of educational programs by Kalamar, Lee-Rife, & Hindin (2016), examine the complex mechanisms behind the relationship of education to factors of human security for women, such as lower fertility rates among women and lower rates of early marriage. Education access policies and programming are not the only weapons needed to stop child sexual abuse. Alternatively, evidence suggests that various crucial factors, like demographics, culture, learning environment and support systems,

affect implementation of effective programming and policies influencing human security issues like early pregnancy (Basu, 2002; Kalmar et al.). Important demographic variables listed in the review are diverse, accounting for poverty levels, household/family factors, legal definitions and enforcement, and culture and traditional practices. These innovations in theoretical modeling identify critical patterns, all of which help inform the *key assumptions* in this dissertation study *(see Appendix 1)*.

Firstly, female education rates (such as grade completion) are higher in urban areas than in rural settings, and these rates are moderately correlated to socio-economic status, which tend to be on average higher but more varied in urban areas (Brahmapurkar, 2017; Cochrane, 1979; Hamman, 1999; UNICEF, 2005). Secondly, early sexual engagement practices often relate to traditional or cultural patterns. Early sexual engagement practices may differ in rural settings where homogenous ethnic groups are more pervasive. As cultures evolve and societies undergo dramatic change, cultural practices of sexual relations must too readjust over time, the effects of which will be heavier in rural settings (Greenfield, 2016; Hsu, 2017; LeVine & White, 2017; UNICEF). Thirdly, household modernity rates are likely higher in urban centers, as these areas have more media, infrastructure, and associated amenities. Additionally, modern culture is positively associated with education as well as women's empowerment. However, modern knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors (KABs) link to mitigating child sexual abuse is not as well established and some forms of traditionalism may also yield positive effects in child protection.

The literature synthesis validates the importance of culture and cultural shifts on SGBV against minors. In addition, more complex models that include additional variables, like efficacy and educational attainment, stem from a deep historical thread in international development literature still present today related to *modern and traditional cultural attributes.* The study of

education and marital status is rooted as far back as the mid-20th century (Burchinal, 1960), such as in modernism-based research that establishes that the more educated a person is the more they display modernistic values and practices, and the more supportive they are of women's rights, including decision-making power in marriage, as well as her ability to seek higher education and enter the work environment (Bengtson, Dowd, Smith, & Inkeles; Chanana, 1990; Chang, 2010; Mehran, 2003; Smith & Inkeles; Zin, 1980). Yet education is not always a consistent predictor, with correlation patterns that change over context and time (Bengtson, Dowd, Smith, & Inkeles, 1975; Smith & Inkeles, 1966; Inkeles, A., Broaded, & Cao, 1997; Leong, 2000; Zhang, Zheng, & Wang, 2003; Ghonsooly & Ashrafi, 2012). Again, the literature questions the treatment of female education as a golden solution for stopping all the hardships and risks that vulnerable and marginalized girls face. This dissertational research secondarily measures modern and traditional culture among young women participants and their parents/guardians of their childhood households to test how culture may influence other human security outcomes like education and statutory rape prevalence yet in context of misogyny or gender biases against women and girls.

Additionally, as established earlier in the literature summary, educational environments often differ in type and by level of commitment to child safety, such as integration with child protection agencies, and awareness and prevention programming of school staff and the community. The understanding of *harmful sexual practices* in documents such as the CRC may differ in relatively traditional societies, clashing with historically accepted conceptions of sexuality among the local population. Sexual and gender-based violence in Liberia for instance often receive impunity related to cultural and traditional practices (UNCHR, 2016). This can lead to compliance issues and contrasting evaluations of policy effectiveness among public servants and citizens. The

safety level of an environment in which a child lives in influenced by household modernity and community practices.

The literature synthesis reveals how education may not be a simple, direct climb resulting in improved social capital, as many educationalists and development experts hope. Instead, it may be more like playing a game of 'snakes and ladders,' with many possible rungs for a girl to climb out of poverty and marginalization through schooling and empowerment, but with each path also attached to unfortunate pitfalls that can cause her to slip backwards in her life journey.

2.6 Conclusions

A female child's potential can decrease after experiencing sexual violence, as well as when she is denied equitable opportunities to education. Empowered by the human development paradigm, contemporary international development aggressively champions child protection through the promotion of policies mitigating harmful practices including child sexual abuse. Furthermore, the development community heralds education as one of the keys to unlocking human development including human security. The literature synthesis indicates that education attainment is highly correlated to lower rates of early marriage and early marital pregnancy. However, there are competing narratives of the relationship between education and early marriage, including the questionable assertion that they are not simply correlated but that education is a causal mechanism for stopping child wedlock. This assertation gravely influences education policies and programs to only target universal schooling access with little to no support for inclusive child protection measures. Initial *Education for All* (or universal education) policies and programs that focused on primary school access are associated with female literacy rates and

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preventing arranged marriages, yet their effects eventually stagnate due to limited learning quality. As student populations rise in LDCs, school systems are not only burdened with overcrowded classes and student age gaps, but suddenly face growing issues of school violence, particularly against girls. This situation indicates potential issues with *fatal remedies* of these international education policies.

Evolving research on school violence in recent decades has helped identify issues of SGBV, from those qualitative case studies that first drew international attention to quantitative research that examines prevalence rates. This research further identifies key factors, including culture influencers like misogynistic reactions towards changing gender roles and sexual norms. New and adapted policies promoting the Convention on the Rights of the Child principles may challenge some elements of patriarchal/traditional practices and belief structures. From a human development ecology perspective, these changes may ripple through the micro, meso, and macrosystems informing a girl's socialization and thus her development. If not properly examined, these shifts may have unintended consequences such as exposing her to new forms of sexual abuse. Revisiting the fifty-year tradition of modernity and traditionalism through a new contemporary lens may offer insight to how education, culture, and child sexual abuse interact. Additionally, these evaluations uncover impactful interventions to stop sexual violence in schools, like CFS and safe school approaches that holistically address the schooling needs of female students and foster safe, supportive learning environments. As the synthesis of the three categories of this scholarship previously shows, the literature on safe schooling leads the author to validate the importance of measuring school safety levels that children face if they are enrolled as a central tenet of this dissertation.

In the face of measurable global achievements, the international education sector continues to be saturated by inflated and overly-simplified models of education's effect on human development. The literature review and synthesis demonstrate inconsistencies within the scholarship that education mitigates other forms of child sexual abuse like coercive or physically-dangerous early sexual practices, and statutory rape. Schools can be hostile places for girls when holistic educational approaches are not applied. Therefore, it may be misguided for experts to support the pervasive and presumptuous notion that education is the silver bullet for all forms of sexual insecurity. This narrative has permeated development literature, seeding with it the steadfast *belief* that education is the causal solution to many social and individual policy problems.

There is a systematic issue within the body of literature examining the relationship between female education and other forms of child sexual abuse outside of early marriage. "Far less research has been carried out on sexual violence in schools [compared to other forms of school violence] …Significant gaps in knowledge exist regarding the nature and extent of the impact of sexual forms of SGBV on children's participation in education. This neglected area of research needs to be addressed in order to identify mechanisms, policies and programmes to support girls – and boys – at risk of poor progress or dropout, as a result of sexual violence" (UNESCO, 2015, 11-13). Furthermore, most qualitative studies of school violence can only identify instances of SGBV affecting female students. Most qualitative evaluations also only target student populations and are thus limited to identifying child sexual abuse prevalence rates among educated girls only. These findings therefore cannot be contextualized or generalized beyond this study population. For this reason, major research gaps and rival hypotheses are left untested. Research to date cannot fully attest to whether Hawa's case is simply a tragic outlier in the realm of girls' schooling and human security, or if it is in fact symptomatic of a larger systemic problem caused by school sexual

violence against female students. This large, looming question is thus captured in the term *Hawa's Query*.

The findings from this literature review set the backdrop of this dissertation topic, as well as introduce key variables affecting girls' education and protection from other forms of child sexual abuse beyond early marriage, including statutory rape. The synthesis helps inform literature gaps that this dissertation study can attempt to address by using a mixed methods approach to assess a central question: *How is the prevalence of child sexual abuse among girls affected by their level of education, the safety of their schools, and the modern/traditional knowledge, attitude, and behaviors of their household?* The research methodology informed by this review will be presented in the following series of chapters, which introduce the mixed methods approach applied in this study.

3.0 Chapter 3. Research Question and Hypotheses

3.1 Introduction

Hawa's Query, which tells the story of the young female student forced by her teacher into a sexual relationship, reveals a shocking deviation from the intentions of education policies for marginalized girls. This dissertation considers to what scale the case of Hawa may represent the issue of child sexual abuse associated with girls' education as advocated by national *Education for All* (EFA) policies. International standards frequently help shape national policies promoting human rights and human development, including defining sexual abuse as well as mandating compulsory education for children. *Chapter Two* indicated the conflicting bodies of literature on how education relates child rape rates: whether school access mitigates sexual insecurity, schools are instead violent spaces for girls, or whether safety environment can play a critical role. Additional factors also come into play, including how cultural factors, demographics, and normative sexual practices can influence policy effectiveness at the local level. Unfortunately, most initial EFA policies in many nations may overlook these concerns, instead focusing on access opportunities that swell classroom enrollment, and in the case of many low-income nations like Liberia, vastly increase the female student population for the first time. While this change heralds a victory for gender equality, at the same time it creates a situation ripe for disaster, as it overlooks the potential unforeseen consequences caused by child sexual abuse running rampant in schools, devastating the lives of young female students like Hawa.

3.2 Human Development and Modernity Paradigms

For generations, education is regularly sold as a golden solution to empower and protect women's rights: send a girl to school and her future will be brighter. However, *Hawa's Query* calls into question the failure of EFA policy to guarantee her human development potential through education. As a child, Hawa is on the educational ladder that most of her peers never climb, on her way to developing her potential. But like the game 'Snakes & Ladders', she slips off the rung when raped by her teacher. The effect has devasting consequences even after she is forced to drop out of school.

Historically, there are two theoretical paradigms that consider the promotion of education worldwide: modernization and human development. Modernity is the first major development theory to espouse education as a key to unlocking human progress. Emerging in the mid-20th century, it continues to inform many later development theories well into the present. Modernity is academically antiquated and too ethnocentric to be used as a theoretical framework, yet some of the research from this literature can offer certain applications for assessing educational progress for girls linked to culture. The overall modernity (OM) Scale provides a unique and still-relevant method for identifying individual socio-psychological knowledge, attitudes, and practices that influence a person's sociology and capacity development, including educational achievement (Smith & Inkeles, 1966). In comparison, the human development paradigm values education as a means to expand individual potential and well-being. This second paradigm of human has two theories- Human Development Theory and Human Development Ecology- that offer further theoretical insight into the importance of educating girls, as well as factors that can affect the developmental outputs of schooling.

The Human Development Ecology model is a systems-framework that explores how an individual's socialization and development is affected by routine interactions with people around her like parents, peers, and teachers, as well as values and customs that she develops, often influenced by macro societal interactions and environmental conditions. Likewise, the Human Development Theory demonstrates the intractable relationship between the rights or freedoms that individuals need to further their potential, capacity, and agency. In fact, Sen's Human Development Theory draws from modernity concepts in its economic postulation of education as a tool for bettering individual capacity. Yet like modernity, its perception of education as a simple solution to human progress may be limited, rendering the theory by itself inadequate as a theoretical framework for this research. This next section briefly presents a supplemental summary of these theories that are first introduced in *Chapter One*. The purpose is to explore how these paradigms influence contemporary educational and child protection literature. But, first of all, it is necessary to concretely specify critical methodological considerations of this research, affecting both the theoretical framework and key variable concepts.

Theoretically, this dissertation may make reference to the modernity paradigm but only in concern to its historical influence in the promotion of education in the development sector. The author disagrees with its historically linear and narrow view that places modern culture above traditionalism. The dissertation applies the OM Scale but as a secondary independent variable along with other key factors identified in the literature synthesis, including demographics. As will be explained in more detail, the OM Scale is a useful survey instrument to assess knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of individuals in reference to support of girls' education.

Firstly, this study examines 'education' as two different constitutive definitions: educational attainment (by grade level) and the perceived safety level of the learning environment.

While they are correlated, they are independent of each other. Secondly, the concept of 'culture' is defined as consisting of the knowledge, attitudes, values/beliefs, and practices of an individual that are often shared by a group of people with whom she belongs. This description of culture incorporates common standing constructs in sociology, which frequently recognizes culture as playing a vital role in human lives by influencing social relationships, social order, everyday experiences and actions, and our sense of reality and even rationality. This study tries to distinguish 'modern culture' beyond the typical modernist definition instead as progressive or liberalistic knowledge, values, and practices, which can be tolerant and not prejudiced of values and practices of other people. Comparatively, 'traditional culture' is associated with individual tendencies towards conservative views and practices historically held by a group such as strong religious, ethnic, social, or socio-economic groups. Yet like modern culture, an individual's traditional cultural views can either be inclusive or discriminatory towards others, such as being gender-equitable versus misogynistic. Later in this chapter will further introduce the main variables of the study, and *Chapter Four* elaborates on their definitions and measurement.

3.3 Modernity Paradigm and Education

Modernization is one of the first paradigms to equivocate the importance of education with the developmental progress of any nation and its people. Its promotion of education is likely one of the main reasons that this sector is historically considered one of the building block solutions for underdevelopment, giving it an almost mythical quality. However, modernity is lacking as a theory in that it tends to be a facsimile of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors mirroring that of the metropole (global North) at the exclusion of the periphery (global South).

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Modernity remains controversial particularly due to its ethnocentrism, although this theory debatably never fully fades from scholarship (Parekh & Wilcox). Critical elements of modernization promotion continue to filter into latter development theories (Knöbl, 2003), including overlapping with the Human Development Theory. Still, modernity and human development are separate paradigms (Chiappero-Martinetti, von Jacobi, & Signorelli, 2015). Yet some concepts of development used in modernity studies are similar to those used today in international development research and programming. The international development community, practitioners and academics alike continue to frequently promote many of the same elements of modern culture in contemporary endeavors in the name of human development. Under the guidance of international agencies, many national partners use these measures to evaluate their policies while ensuring relevant contextualization for the socio-economic needs, political environment, and cultural diversity of their citizens. Schooling may unlock human capital, but the type of education promoted in low-income nations appear to employ westernized academic models that can displace indigenous, cultural, or religious forms of education (Altbach, 2004; Crossley & Watson, 2003; Fiala, 2007; Thew, 2012), as historically is the case in Liberia (see *Appendix 6*).

Some development studies (e.g. Ameh (2017) and Kainuwa & Yusuf (2013)) go as far as to flatly imply most traditional cultural beliefs and practices deter female rights, education, and sexual protection. Other experts make the distinction that not all traditional practices/beliefs are 'harmful' against girls, but those that are should be modified by policies and advocacy (OHCHR, 2017; Gebre, Hagos, Teklu, Fisseha, & Abera, 2019; Glover, Liebling, Goodman, & Barrett, 2018). Research by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2016) suggests there are two-sides of the argument when it comes to child development and household knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. On one side higher levels of parental knowledge and

education are regularly associated with better child cognitive and social development, education, and wellbeing. On the other end, there are a variety of ways that parents act as teachers to their children, helping their acquisition of such competencies like language and literacy skills that are related to progress in school and society. Some qualitative research indicates cultural variation in parents' aspirations for their children's development and learning. Knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors can either hinder or support children in a mirid of ways (para. 5-13). For instance:

> Anglo American mothers stressed the importance of their young children developing a balance between autonomy and relatedness, whereas Puerto Rican mothers focused on appropriate levels of relatedness, including courtesy and respectful attentiveness (Harwood et al., 1997) (para. 9-11).

Such traditional cultural practices can develop foundational skillsets that are useful to human development capacity, such as being respectful and attentive in the classroom and having positive social skills boosting self-efficacy. The opposite may also occur especially if knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs hurt or discriminate against gender. However, while parental illiteracy is often linked to lower participation in children's formal schooling, contemporary educational studies frequently imply there are numerous traditional/ethnic-cultural practices that can be tapped as a resource like the promotion of mother-tongue language in early grades, oral storytelling, and religious book reading at home to promote language & literacy skills. Naturally, there are limitations as how far these traditional techniques can develop child learning (ChildFund, 2010; Dubeck & Gove, 2015). Still, properly blending formal education with traditional/cultural practices may enhance a child's learning opportunities (Niamer, 1993) *(see Appendix 7).*

3.4 Human Development Paradigm

One of the theories within the human development paradigm is Amartya Sen's *capacity approach* to human development (Sen, 1979; 1999). In *Development as Freedom*, Sen (1999) asserts that freedom or positive achievements of people require enabling conditions including basic education (Padgett & Warnecke). Human Development Theory heavily influences the Human Development Index, which numerous international agencies increasingly use in determining their programming and research priorities worldwide (Kpolovie, Ewansiha, & Esara, 2017), including institutions like the Malala Fund and its programming and studies. This theory is heavily laden in the first body of research that seemingly depicts education as a one-off golden solution to human insecurity. The capacities approach lists five freedoms, including ensuring *social opportunities* involves offering education to improve an individual's quality of life and human capital; and secondly, *protective security* refers to the social security networks systematically established to support groups afflicted by poverty (Evans, 2002; Nussbaum, 2003; Sen, 1999). Yet of these factors, education is identified as one of the most important, and thus is one of the most funded development sectors by international agencies to date. EFA policies often focus on equitable access to school and learning quality, but disregard child protection mechanisms in academic settings. Yet this narrative may be somewhat inaccurate in its assumptions, as shown by the research synthesis in *Chapter Two*. However, understanding the *human ecology* of an individual's development can potentially compensate for the limitations of both modernity and HDT.

Comparatively, the Human Development Ecology model is often applied in educational and psychological research to systemically conceptualize human and child development, community/peer relationships, and socialization. Of the five systems in this model, the dissertation mainly focuses on three: micro, meso, and macro. Within the microsystem, an individual mainly

interacts with groups that directly impact her development as a child or youth, like family members and acquaintances, neighbors, school members, community networks, or peers. The mesosystem considers the interactions between those in a child's microsystem, for instance the relationship between teachers and parents, or parents and the child's friends. Lastly, the macrosystem focuses on the culture and context that the individual and those close to them experience, including shared identity, ethnicity, heritage, knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviors (Bronfenbrenner, 1979/1994; Darling, 2007; Espelage & Swearer, 2009). There is value in merging Bronfenbrenner's Human Development Ecology with Human Development Theory.

The ecology model is frequently used in education research to understand an individual's social interactions that affect issues of school violence like bullying (Espelage & Swearer), as well as in understanding the relevance of social circles like peer relations in an individual's early sexual engagement and risk behavior (Small, 1994). It is used to examine risk factors and protective mechanisms associated with involvement in school-related bullying of students (Espelage, 2009/2014), child abuse, and early pregnancy (Reppucci, 1987), including specific microsystem and mesosystem interactions. Thus, the model may also be applied in this research to understanding school-based sexual violence.

From a human development ecology perspective, policies establish or reset norms and ethical concepts of what different interactions should be for children to ensure healthy socialization and well-being, yet are often highly influenced by culture or shared belief structures represented in macrosystems at national and international levels (Wright, 2017). For instance, Liberian education policies written around 2008 suddenly mandated that all children including girls should complete primary school. These policy changes redefined the microsystems of thousands of girls to suddenly include interaction with teachers and school peers, compared to previous generations

when girls did not frequent academic institutions. Unfortunately, this policy change may not have adequately defined the mores of appropriate instructor-pupil interactions, and often female students and their uneducated families were unfamiliar with what entails a healthy, appropriate teacher-student relationship. However, child protection laws can define legal and illicit forms of social interactions between children and adults, including what practices are appropriate versus harmful, such as early marriage or statutory rape. Policy effectiveness within this context can depend on how well these laws are implemented. When policies fail or experience *fatal remedies* (as defined in *Chapter One*), it may be linked to a lack of awareness and systems support, and/or the policy being unnaturally forced in its execution and meant to prompt societal change. Imposed policies that are globally popular but not democratically selected by national citizenry may clash with traditional value structures and institutions, and vice versa (Kamoto, Clarkson, Dorward, & Shepherd, 2013; Lutz & Linder, 2004). Often in developing nations, contemporary policies on education and child protection struggle to balance between national ethnic norms and the sometimes-conflicting ideologies of human rights placed on nation-states by the international community, which typically funds their development agenda and provides institutionalized benchmarks and regulations for monitoring compliance.

3.5 Research Question

The literature presented in previous chapters helps to inform the research question. The literature synthesis in *Chapter Two* identifies three competing bodies of literature on the association between girl's education and child sexual abuse. These bodies of scholarship are theoretically rooted in the paradigms of modernity and human development and have also heavily

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influenced contemporary development policies like *Education for All* and the CRC. Movements influenced by the Human Development Theory often romanticize education as a golden solution to mitigate human insecurity for vulnerable girls. Yet studies indicate that schools can be sexually violent spaces if proper child protection mechanisms are not put in place to ensure safe, gender-sensitive learning environments. Bronfenbrenner's Human Development Ecology offers a theoretical lens to understand this contradiction. With this background in mind, this dissertation research seeks to address the following question:

How is the prevalence of child sexual abuse among girls affected by their level of education, the safety of their schools, and the modern knowledge, attitude, and behaviors of their household?

This research investigates whether sending girls to school may have unintended consequences of exposing them to higher risks for different forms of child sexual abuse.

This study first-and-foremost focuses on better uncovering the relationship between education and different forms of child sexual abuse. This research will further test how this relationship relates to additional factors of household knowledge, attitudes and behaviors and a safe learning environment for both educated and non-educated females, while controlling for factors of demographics. Additionally, it will explore how all these variables interact within the process of enabling female agency into adulthood. The goal is to offer a more direct and robust understanding of to what extent education and sexual violence are related and how they interact with other key variables within the process of female agency. The theoretical framework guiding the primary focus of this research is presented in the Research Problem Causal Model (*see figure 3.1 below*). In addition to the practical policy significance of answers to this research question, there are potentially important theoretical and methodological contributions to a fifty-year tradition of research of the OM Scale in sociology (Smith & Inkeles, 1966; Bengston, Dowd, Smith, &

Inkeles, <u>1975</u>; Ghonsonly &Ashrafi, <u>2012</u>; Inkeles, Broaded, & Cao, <u>1997</u>; Zhang, Zheng, & Wang, <u>2003</u>).
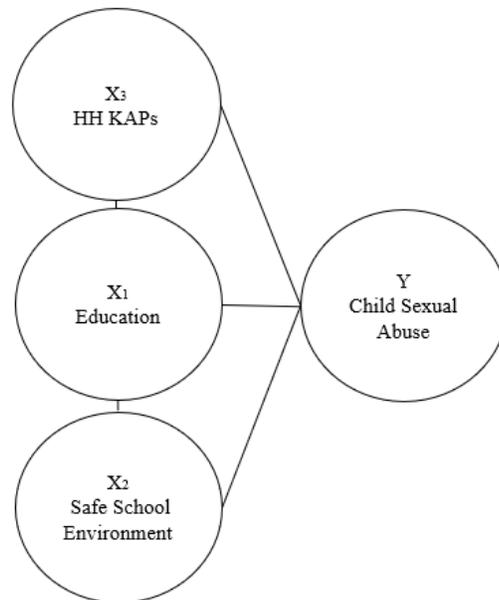
Figure 3.1 Key Research Problem Causal Model

3.6 Hypotheses

As shown, there are multiple critical factors investigated in this research. Education level of a girl, her safety level of her educational environment, the household knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors (KAPs) influencing the individual female's ecology, and child sexual abuse (prevalence) are the main variables of interest. These variables are represented below in five main bivariate hypotheses. Analysis of these bivariate hypotheses will also be included in multivariate regression modeling assessing for possible joint effects of all the variables on the dependent variable. Likewise, this dissertation includes additional factors related to demographics (e.g. socio-economic status, ethnicity, location- rural vs. urban setting, marital status, family planning, age)

that literature often associates with child sexual abuse and education. More details of the research variables, design, and methodology will be presented in the following chapter. In relation to the research problem, this study examines the following initial hypotheses deduced from this framework:

H_1: **Overall female child sexual abuse is moderately correlated with levels of education.**

This first hypothesis examines whether girls' educational level is associated with different levels of child sexual abuse prevalence rates. Child sexual engagement can easily become child sexual abuse, especially if illegal and places the child at harm. According to Liberian law and most international human rights standards, child sexual abuse involves as any unlawful early sexual engagement practices, including between an adult and minor, that have no established parental/legal guardian consent, and can be particularly risky to the child the younger she is at time of the incident. Thus, this research measures child sexual abuse in terms of scaled legal sexual engagement (using a five-point scale of legal sexual activity, traversing the gray zone where it can place a child at risk yet is still legal, and when a case becomes highly risky and illegal, at which point it qualifies as child rape). Additionally, this hypothesis factors in that girls in rural areas may differ in support of traditional early marriage compared to those in urban centers, so both urban and rural areas will be accounted for in the research analysis. This hypothesis also accounts for young women with higher levels of education who may have differences in demonstrated knowledge, attitudes and behavior associated with delayed sexual engagement and child sexual assault. Likewise, young women with higher levels of education may have variations in reporting experiencing child sexual abuse, which this research will try to measure.

H₂: Female survivors of child sexual abuse who attend school are more likely to have an adult perpetrator who is associated with an educational occupation than female survivors with no education.

This second hypothesis builds on child protection scholarship that states that many sexual assault victims (also called survivors) are acquainted with their offenders before the incident. Perpetrators may often frequent a girl's socialized micro and mesosystem, and so when her environment changes from the home/community to school, the profile of her abuser may also change. This hypothesis compares female students (with 1 or more years of schooling) to non-educated peers, additionally disaggregating this analysis by schooling level (primary, secondary, tertiary) to see if there is a pattern in victims' profiles of their perpetrators associated with the school environment.

H₃: Households with higher measures of modern culture than traditionalistic values are moderately correlated with higher rates of education (for both parents and daughters), and different types of efficacy and other attributes of adult agency.

The third hypothesis builds on the key findings from research employing Inkeles's OM Scale. This research recognizes the importance that variables of demographics (like SES levels) and households' culture can have in different geographic areas. *Efficacy* is the ability to produce a desired or intended result, often associated with self-esteem, self-determination, decision-making power, and empowerment. Ethnic connections tend to be stronger in rural communities than in urban, although community blocks in urban centers are shown to replace the communal influences that ethnic groups and traditional cultures used to have. It also considers whether households with low SES demographics are less likely to be able to afford higher levels of education for family members.

H₄: Modern knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs are not correlated with higher rates of child sexual abuse/rape.

While literature often associates higher levels of modern culture with educational attainment, women's rights, and family planning—all of which can aid in a girl's development—there is little to no empirical evidence specifically comparing modernity/traditionalism to child protection against sexual abuse. According to this hypothesis, no matter their household modernity/traditionalism, parents ideally want to protect their children from sexual abuse in relation to local customs and laws. In most nations, including Liberia, child rape is usually defined as sexual practices that do not involve consent, including parental or family consent. Children of households with high traditional knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors may have higher rates of early marriage, but early marriage is only illegal if the child is under the legal age of marriage and/or the parents do not consent. This research hypothesizes that other prominent forms of child sexual abuse like statutory rape are not influenced by cultural knowledge, attitude and behaviors, as child protection research indicates sexual violence affects all children no matter their background.

H₅: The safety of the learning environment of the education that a girl receives is moderately correlated with delayed sexual engagement and lower prevalence of child sexual assault.

This fifth hypothesis examines how safety levels of educational environments can lower rates of sexual abuse. The more engagement by school staff, students, parents, and the community to improve the provision of a safe and child-friendly schooling environment, the more likely there are safeguards and means of monitoring and accountability to protect female students (and all students) from harm. It also considers whether modernity/traditionalism and location influence this relationship. In theory, households with lower modernity may be more likely to be less

engaged in school and community participation, including child protection. Urban areas may have different rates of child protection in schools than in rural areas.

3.7 Conclusions

The theoretical background, research questions, and hypotheses presented in this chapter serve as the foundation of the research design in the dissertation field study, in Liberia. The next chapter summarizes the mixed-method research design, including the planning, pilot-testing, data collection, and analysis phases. Quantitative data is collected using a survey technique based on the instruments introduced in *Chapter Two*. Likewise, qualitative interviews are conducted with key stakeholders using a key informant interview instrument. Unique research strategies are applied by the Principal Investigator (PI) in field, based on research on mitigating threats to validity as well as feedback from a consultant team of Liberian professionals who provide valuable cultural and contextual insight.

4.0 Chapter 4. Research Methods and Design

4.1 Introduction

This fourth chapter presents the research design used for the dissertation to measure education and child sexual abuse among young women. Its mixed-method design applies 'convergency modeling,' which Creswell (1999) states is a model in which both qualitative and quantitative bodies of data are gathered, and then examined together in context to determine the findings and conclusions of the research (463) *(see figure below).* The dissertation's quantitative analysis indicates *if* and *to what extent* the problem of child sexual abuse exists in association to female education, as well as confirms important variables influencing this relationship. The qualitative data can also be used in even greater depth to explore the reasons why this relationship exists, how it came to be, who is involved, new perspectives to consider, and different causal explanations.
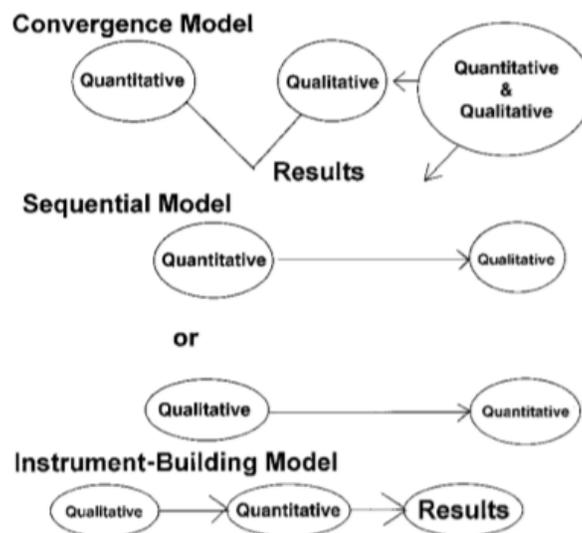
Figure 4.1 Three Models of Mixed Method Designs by Creswell

The chapter first summarizes the quantitative methodology by including a summary of the key variables, two-survey instruments, research design, planning and pilot test phase, and implementation of data collection. Additionally, this chapter will offer best practices and lessons learnt with a) instrument development; b) pilot testing and localized contextuality support; c) data collection, including unique cluster sampling techniques; d) human resourcing considerations; and e) data entry and analysis. Next, the chapter summarizes some of the unique approaches employed to minimize quantitative validity issues such as social desirability biases and construct validity. One key concern of the study design involves building trust and transparency with the young women participants to ensure robust consent processes. Lastly, this chapter details the qualitative method employed through key informant interviews involving 16 key stakeholder types. Their quantitative inputs help explore potential causal mechanisms of the key variables measured.

4.2 Research Methods and Design

This dissertation employs a cross-sectional survey design drawn from empirically supported theories grounded primarily in the human development paradigm, as a basis for making causal inferences about the relationship between child sexual abuse rates and girls' education level and environment. Firstly, the 2018 field research includes a quantitative field study approach, focused on one county in Liberia, that surveys approximately 719 young women participants as well as 493 parents/legal guardians of the young women. Secondly, the study conducts key informant interview of one representative from each of the 15 stakeholder groups. As presented in the previous chapter, the research seeks to explore a central question: *How is the prevalence of child sexual abuse among girls in Liberia affected by their level of education, the safety of their*

schools, and the modern knowledge, attitude, and behaviors of their household? Therefore, this

dissertation empirically measures the following key variables as outlined in the *Table 4.1* below.

Table 4.1 Main Research Variables

Variable	*Description*	*Instrument*	*Participant/ Method*
Child sexual abuse- Child Rape Status	Prevalence of self-reported early sexual engagement practices, involving a female minor (below legal Liberian age of consent of 18 years old) and adult vs. youth (under 18) perpetrator; Binary variable of child rape/non-rape cases for each individual young woman with parental consent	Primarily USAID- Demographic & Health Survey (DHS) & key UNICEF Sexual Violence surveys	Young woman/ interview
Education	Associated with level/ years of education completed, and tier	DHS survey	Young woman/survey
Socio- psychological knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors (KABs)	Disaggregated and scaled by active participation, educational and occupational aspirations, public participation, citizenship, efficacy, identification with nationalism, reproductive health, and women's rights	Modified OM scale; disaggregated analysis by sub- scales and individual items as variables	Young woman/survey, 1 Parent of young woman/survey
Safety level of educational environment	Measured by scaling the quality of individual participants' schools for child protection awareness and prevention programming as self-reported perception by female and her parent based on individual experience/history	UNICEF-CFS scale	Young woman/survey, 1 Parent of young woman/ survey
Demographics	Including age, socio-economic status, rural vs. urban community, ethnicity, marital status, family planning	DHS survey	Young woman/survey, observation

In following with the work of Dunn & Peters (2018), this research purposefully uses

converging modeling as a means to ensure that conventional large-n survey analysis is

supplemented by "within-case analyses that permit the investigation of what goes on" (2) or is

happening contextually, as a large-n analysis may be able to measure average effects of one or

more independent variables but can discount context, by which the qualitative interviews can fill

in the blanks. One benefit of triangulating–or examining these variables using two theories—is to

validate theoretical constructs (8-9). For instance, it can help validate the construct of child sexual

abuse, in which the composite measure of *statutory rape* would converge or correlate with patterned factors like an adult-minor relationship involving coercion, *quid-pro-quo*, or exploitation, while discriminating with excluding-variables, such as having parental consent for a sexual relationship or being sexually inactive. As the qualitative analysis in *Chapter Six* will explain, concepts of 'rape' have legal definitions but mostly known by government officials or professionals like policy implementors, and less known by people at the community level like parents who may have different constructs of rape informed by communal/traditional/ethnic informal definitions. The quantitative analysis measures child sexual abuse based on legal parameters of early sexual engagement as legal vs. illegal, based on factors including age of minor, age of partner/perpetrator, and parental consent. Each case is categorized based on deduction of the information reported by the individual woman of her early sexual initiation experiences. As her concept of 'rape' may differ from the legal definition as well as the potential psychosocial impact of her experiences being negatively labeled, the survey purposefully excludes the term of rape, yet still discerns suspect and confirmed cases of child sexual abuse that could be tried in a Liberian court as the case definitions constitute illegal sexual engagement with a minor.

The mixed-method design purposefully utilizes triangulation at various levels throughout the study, which will be described throughout this chapter. The field research first conducted the quantitative method in late June to August 2018, including data entry, before conducting the qualitative assessment in late September-October 2018. The quantitative research was mainly funded by multiple academic grants from the University of Pittsburgh, including the Nationality Rooms Scholarship, the Professional Development Fund, and the Global Studies-International Studies Fund. The qualitative phase was funded by personal fundraising by private donations and

the UK-Foreign & Commonwealth Office of the British Embassy in Liberia. The next two sections

present the quantitative method and then the qualitative method.

4.3 Quantitative Method

The quantitative methodology includes survey data collected from young Liberian women

and one of their adult parents or guardians living within walking-distance proximity of the young

woman. No underage minors were surveyed, and participation was anonymous and confidential,

using a triple-step informed consent process due to the sensitive nature of the research. Data was

collected by a team of 15 trained enumerators and a research monitor, in 15 randomly selected

sites, in Montserrado County, where the capital city of Monrovia is located. This next section

presents the details pertaining to the quantitative phase of the dissertation research including the

following sub-sections- instrument design & planning, pilot testing, sampling & data collection,

analysis of data, reliability & validity, and strategies for minimizing threats to validity.

4.3.1 Instrument Design and Planning

In total, there are three study instruments used in the two-phased dissertation. This first

section of the chapter specifically presents the two survey instruments developed by the principal

investigator (PI) for the quantitative phase. The surveys seek to answer the main research question,

which was stated in terms of measurement: How is the prevalence child sexual abuse (as measured

primarily by the USAID-Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) and UNICEF Sexual Violence

surveys) among girls in Liberia affected by their level of education, the safety of their schools (as

measured by the UNICEF Child Friendly Schools scale), and the Overall Modernity (OM) scales that measure knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors (KABs)? The survey instruments include one for the young women and another survey for the parents/guardians living in close proximity to their daughters:

1. Survey of Young Women: capturing self-reported data on all five variables listed above from young Liberian women (ages 18-35), based on the Liberian legal categorization of young adult); using a full survey capturing self-reported data on demographics, early sexual initiation, education (disaggregated by education status, grade level, and tier); a shortened 11-item OM scale (disaggregated by sub-scales and individual items); and 9-item Child-friendly School (CFS) scale questions on their perceived schooling experiences for former students;

2. Survey of Parent/Guardian: (when possible) one parent or legal guardian of the young female participant in the same household or living within proximity, using a shorter survey capturing demographic indicators; a more thorough 27-item OM scale (disaggregated into sub-scales and individual items); and the 7-item CFS scale questions for parents/guardians of students. The CFS scale measures the perceived experiences of parents and guardians with their daughter's education and environment. The CFS scale items are also combined for students and parents into a 16-item scale to assess total household perception of the schooling experience related to child-friendliness and gender sensitivity.

Research for the survey instruments first occurred during the planning phase of the project in early 2018. The survey instruments are mostly comprised of questions and indicators developed, piloted, and used in statistical research worldwide. Some language modifications are made by the principal investigator in consultation with Liberian research experts to ensure the instruments are

both contextually and culturally relevant. All instruments are approved by IRB-University of Pittsburgh (PRO17120125) and the Government of Liberia/IRB-University of Liberia (UL-PIRE IRB# FWA00004982) before data collection.

The main resources for the development of the two quantitative surveys comes from instruments previously created by experts in international development for both program evaluation and research studies. These instruments include the USAID-Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)'s Sexual Violence surveys, UNICEF-Child Friendly School Scale, and the Inkeles's OM Scale, as shown in the table above. The DHS Toolkit is a prominent health research instrument series that has been tested and used in dozens of formal statistical evaluations worldwide in recent decades, including in Liberia. Variables, their constitutive, and operational definitions are presented in the toolkit's core instruments, including the Household Survey and Domestic Violence Survey, 2013 DHS Program Codebook, and 2017 Guide to DHS Statistics. The DHS Toolkit is mainly used in this study to measure demographics and child sexual abuse including questions about harmful early sexual initiation such as rape.

In top-cited scholarship on child protection, child sexual abuse is typically measured in terms of frequency rates or prevalence rates (Glaser & Frosh; Glaser, 1991; Stolenborough et al.). This dissertation research focuses on prevalence rates instead of frequency as its key measurement. Comparatively, the UNICEF Child Friendly Schools (CFS) interview scale has been used by UNICEF, international and national development organizations, and other multilateral and governmental agencies worldwide, including in Liberia. Most of variables utilized in this research are additionally tested for reliability and validity, and applied in statistical analyses like a 2012

NIH cross-national analysis, which serves as the key scaling guide for the dissertation CFS Scale (Godfrey, Osher, Williams, Wolf, Berg, Torrente, & Aber, 2012).

Moreover, literature on international development and child abuse historically recognizes the importance of demographics, culture, and modernized practices vs. traditionalism of communities. As introduced in *Chapter Three*, the Inkeles's OM Scale is a well-established instrument for measuring knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAPs) among individuals. Its measured variables include active public participation, educational aspirations, change orientation, efficacy, religion, sexual practice rights, women's rights, and mass media. The first cross-national study in six developing nations using the OM scale demonstrates how education arose as the most distinctly powerful input affecting the process of modernization yet recognizes the need to further explain how the process of schooling works at the microlevel. The instrument has since been used in social research, as recently as studies in 1997 and 2003 in China, a 2000 study of Singapore, and a 2012 study contrasting traditionalism and modernity among linguistic translators. These studies demonstrate the relevance of the OM scale's design over time and context (Smith & Inkeles, 1966; Bengtson, Dowd, Smith, & Inkeles, 1975; Inkeles, Broaded, Cao, 1997; Leong, 2000; Zhang, Zheng, & Wang, 2003; Ghonsooly & Ashrafi, 2012). To date, the OM sub-scales are thoroughly tried-and-tested in nearly a dozen countries, including multiple studies in the same nation, for over five decades, and with an aggregate of almost 9,000 participants (Bengtson et al.; Ghonsooly & Ashrafi, 2012; Inkeles, 1983; Inkeles, A., Broaded, & Cao, 1997; Leong, 2000; Smith & Inkeles; Zhang, Zheng, & Wang, 2003). This dissertation's quantitative survey includes scaled OM questions for young women participants, as well as one of their parents or guardians (Smith & Inkeles, 1966). Yet specific considerations should be given to instrument design.

A strength of a KAB (or KAP) survey is that the data can be generalizable to a large population beyond a sampled body of participants, and the quantitative nature of results allows for some description of the scale, magnitude, and prevalence of certain indicators. But the survey is only useful if the data is reliable (Holman, 2013). This dissertation pilot tested each survey including the OM scale multiple times and had Liberian professional assess its design and implementation to ensure better reliability. In the dissertation, all survey instrument scales were tested in the pilot phase for their reliability and validity using alpha testing in Stata. Cronbach's coefficient alpha is the most generally used in social sciences (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). The internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of the survey instruments, which range from 0.22 to 0.73, is presented in *Appendix 6*. Most major scales meet the threshold of reliability of alpha= 0.60. Prior research using the *total OM score* as Inkeles' research finds the scale often maintained consistency with the original uses of the OM scale in more than a dozen countries. Nevertheless, in this dissertation study, a number of scales including the aggregated *total OM score* have low the internal consistency reliability (less than alpha= 0.50) (see *Limitations* section).

The quantitative analysis includes assessing *total aggregate OM scores* on female education and child protection, but only uses aggregated OM sub-scales with alphas above this threshold, as well as each disaggregated OM item as separate variables on education and child rape rates, prioritizing associations. The KAP survey method can identify an association between two variables but may not establish causality, since it may not explain the logic mechanisms behind adoption of certain behaviors/belief structures. Thus, triangulating KAP findings with other data sources can help explore more behind potential and effect relationships (Holman, 2013; Launiala, 2009), which can also be applied to KAB surveys like the OM scale. Additionally, the dependent variable child rape (a binary of if a girl's case involves statutory rape or not) is related to the

variable of the risk of early sexual engagement. This variable combines sexual engagement with parents' permission. Correlations will be lower due to face validity problem.

This dissertation study considers a range of issues to ensure reliability and validity, two of which in particular: construct validity and social desirability. The input provided by the Liberian consultant team helped immensely in minimizing these threats to validity in data collection. *Construct validity* refers to the degree to which a survey question measures what the instrument designer intends, claims or purports to be measuring, as well as the internal reliability of survey data (Shadish, Cook & Campbell, 2002). Liberians speak English as a primary language, yet there is a strong colloquialism, referred to as Liberian-English or simple-English, that is used in daily interactions in most parts of the country. Terms standard in the West may not have the same meanings, interpretations, or context in country. For this reason, while developing the instruments, the principal investigator purposefully consulted with professional Liberian research experts (consultant team) including representatives from two major universities on each survey, and also sought feedback from the enumerator team who are mostly trained social workers familiar with interacting with the target survey population. Secondly, taxonomy used in the survey that may be confusing to participants was paired with colloquial phrasing. For instance, the term *sex* was also referred to as *man-woman business*; *a little* was combined with *small-small;* sexual engagement or *first sexual activity* was also termed as *coming into life*. By pairing standard English terminology with colloquial phrasing, internal reliability and construct validity increased. Likewise, the study was cautious of internal consistency reliability, or measuring how well items on the surveys and their scales measured the same construct or idea. This is one reason the research tested all survey instruments and their relative scales for internal reliability during the pilot testing phase and the data analysis phase. Still the OM scales varied in alphas.

Another key threat to the survey data is *social desirability* bias. Social desirability is a frequent source of bias affecting the validity of quasi-experimental and survey research, particularly when involving self-reporting, which can be affected by a participant's self-deception or desire to present what is perceived as a satisfactory response to data collectors (Nederhof, 1985; Shadish, Cook & Campbell). Survey questions related to private/taboo topics like sexual behavior, illegal activity, or socially abnormal or offensive attitudes like gender discrimination or racism, can engender inaccurate survey estimates. Instrument designers can take steps to increase the validity of data by *choosing appropriate data collection strategies* in the research project, particularly to diminish participants' discomfort in answering sensitive questions (Krumpal, 2013). The strategies taken to minimize threats to validity is presented later.

4.3.2 Pilot Testing

At the heart of this scholarship is the important need to respectfully include and validate the perspective, expertise, and experiences of national partners and stakeholders in any international development research. Often this field is dominantly produced by scholars and institutions from high-income nations investigating issues like inequality and poverty in the least-developed countries, with limited collaboration and production by local or regional representation (Boshnoff, 2009; Dahdouh-Guebas, Ahimbisibwe, Van Moll, & Koedam, 2003). The inclusion of national-level academics and practitioners, and even local research participants, can further advance the potential of scholarship to expand insight, understanding, and opportunities to meaningful empower communities and sustainable change beyond peer-reviewed publication (Malik & Pereira, 2015) *(see Appendix 15).* This chapter presents some of ways that the dissertation research design addresses these needs.

The principal investigator has long-established professional partnerships with Liberian experts in this field. She was a program consultant and monitoring & evaluation (M&E) specialist for international development organizations for over 13 years, conducting data collection and statistical analysis reporting, including five years of work experience in Liberia, often collaborating with national experts. She has authored research published in major academic journals on Liberia, including jointly with professional national colleagues. For the dissertation study, the principal investigator specifically follows recommendations from a *national consultant team* that includes Liberian social welfare agents, several research experts, a professor, as well as governmental and nonprofit specialists in education and child protection, throughout several research phases. In addition to following guidance from the dissertation chair, Dr. William Dunn, the principal investigator further collaborates with a Liberian sociological expert, selected as the dissertation research assistant, Professor Ernest G. Smith, Jr., to review research materials, support data collection, and monitor and mentor the enumerator team in field for quality data collection (*see Appendix 13*). His voluntary assistance was vital. As this work is for an individualized PhD dissertation, research design, data entry, analysis and writing are conducted by the principal investigator with feedback from Liberian experts during the drafting phase. The investigator would like to acknowledge their valuable contribution to this work.

Preparation for the field research happened from January-May 2018, concerning the finalization of evaluation instruments, grant writing, selection of the field team, and Institutional Review Board (IRB) process *(see Appendix16: Gantt Chart)*. Upon completion of this phase, the principal investigator then traveled for six months to Liberia to lead the final planning, pilot testing, and data collection phases of the dissertation. The surveys include self-reporting and informant studies strategies, accounting for possible threats to validity based on literary research and nation

expert feedback for cultural contextuality, which will be elaborated on later in this chapter. An *operations survey guide* was also created for data collection training, and the enumerator team and their monitors were thoroughly trained to use its standardized procedures. For three months, selected enumerators voluntarily underwent intensive training and mentoring by the principal investigator and the research assistant on the survey guide, instruments, and basic IRB orientation, including ethical data collection practices. Most enumerator candidates were female, and all candidates were required to have university education in social work, education, or health services, as well as previous experience in data collection and/or interacting with target respondent populations on sensitive topics like child abuse and rape. The list of enumerators was shared with the Ministry of Gender, Children & Social Protection (MoGCSP) as part of the background check process.

Pilot testing occurred over multiple phases: 1) within enumerator team practice implementation, with post-feedback by the enumerators to principal investigator; 2) practice implementation with family and friends; 3) enumerators paired together to conduct first-week survey implementation in field with supervision and comparing their survey evaluations to ensure consistency. Survey data was excluded from the first two phases of pilot testing but included for the third, as monitoring in field and testing data inter-rater reliability demonstrated a sufficient level of consistency and accuracy. All instruments and their scales were pilot tested, which included testing for statistical reliability/internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha analysis of pilot data.

Applying a three-phase pilot provided enumerators both the opportunity to become more familiar and reliable in implementing the surveys to standard, and the chance to provide feedback on the instruments and survey guidelines. Enumerators provided valuable, relevant cultural insight

suggestions that led to several surveying protocol changes, which considerably improved ethical considerations and the survey experience for survey participants. Some examples included ensuring proper spaces for male and female enumerators to conduct surveys with female participants that protected both her honor as well the information that she shared. Furthermore, enumerator insight gave light to potential socio-political issues not identified in the planning phase, including needed steps to ensure enumerators could transparently and safely do their work with community support (see *Appendix 10*).

4.3.3 Sampling and Data Collection

This research utilizes a stratified cluster sampling (Miller, 2002; Kerlinger & Lee, 2000), conducted in Montserrado county in Liberia, which holds approximately a quarter of the total population of Liberia. The selected county has an extensive variety of ethnic populations *(Appendix 2).* Survey data was collected from participants of every major ethnic group in the country. The county has a variety of urban and rural communities, towns, and villages representative of those throughout the country, as well as diverse socio-economic and political representation found nationwide. The county is divided into 15 official distinct urban and rural districts, within which stratified, multi-stage cluster sampling was performed. The cluster sampling technique is based on key recommendations from the literature review, including the 2014 UNICEF research reviewing quantitative studies involving sampling households related to child sexual assault. Unique modifications were also included by the principal investigator.

Calculating for a robust sample size power with a five percent confidence interval, a five percent margin of error and a population of about 1.18 million residents, the study initially planned for no fewer than 384 participants to be selected. The sample is first calculated using the following formula (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970):

$$n_1 = \frac{X^2 * N * (P*(1-P))}{((ME^2 * (N-1)) + ((X^2 * P*(1-P)))}$$

Secondly, the principal investigator padded the sample power by 20 percent of the original sample size to account for issues of possible attrition or data collection error (*Appendix I*).

$$n_2 = (384+(384*0.2)) = 461$$

After calculating the sample size, enumerators were assigned often in pairs to randomly selected clusters closest to their home location. A unique cluster site approach was applied in which streets from each cluster were randomly selected for data collection, and every house on the street was visited to survey participants who fit the research profile. This approach had revealed many benefits, including minimizing anticipated research costs and ease of data collection *(see Appendix 17).*

Sites were ranked as either urban or rural based on governmental categorization defined by population density, with a distribution representative of the ratio of urban to rural districts in Montserrado County. Sites ranged from the tightly-packed urban slums of West Point and suburban town centers like Paynesville, to remote tribal villages and small farming communities with only a dozen or so families. Due to the costs being lower than anticipated for research travel expenditure, the enumerator team was able to extend data collection by an additional three weeks,

allowing for 715 households to be included in the study, reaching a confidence level of over 99 percent. Enumerators:

- privately surveyed one voluntary young female participant (ages 18 years old and up, English-speaking, Liberian citizen) using the Young Woman's Survey Instrument

- surveyed one parent (English-speaking, Liberian citizen) of young female participant (when possible) using Parent/Guardian Survey Instrument

All enumerators were frequently monitored including on randomly selected days by the principal investigator and lead mentor/research assistant. Every week, the enumerator team also gathered together for follow-up training and feedback sessions led by the principal investigator. At the end of the project, enumerators provided feedback to the principal investigator on their experiences that can help improve research best practices and areas to be addressed, such as the following insights:

- thorough training and ongoing mentoring helped minimize data collection error, and improved their capacity and motivation to do high-level evidence-based research

- pairing enumerators, particularly in the first weeks of data collection, improved capturing survey data consistently among the team, and allowed them to travel more safely, monitor each other's work continuously, and share experiences and lessons learned

- prioritizing recruitment of professionally-trained female candidates to serve as enumerators was a recommended survey strategy within the cultural context.

Hard-copy data forms were stored by the principal investigator, and their information entered in a coded and secure Excel spreadsheet. Cronbach's alpha analysis testing was also performed weekly during the two months of data collection and at the end of data collection for all scales and sub-scales. Based on the results, all entered data was included for analysis. All paper

surveys and consent forms were eventually destroyed. Electronic files including consent forms are stored by the principal investigator per IRB requirements. All personal identifiers of participants have been coded numerically to protect anonymity. Of the surveyed participants, only four young women and no parents failed to complete the survey. Their data was discarded from the analysis.

4.3.4 Analysis of Data

The main analysis is conducted by the principal investigator with feedback consideration from the dissertation chair, dissertation committee, and the Liberian consultation team. A statistical analysis of quantitative data from 715 surveyed households is conducted in Stata, with interpretation of the causal model supported by qualitative findings. The quantitative analysis offers summary data, correlation matrixes, t-tests, contingency analysis, and multi-variate and logistical regression analysis This analysis takes on a pragmatic view that the findings represent the county population within the time period of evaluation, and that further research could help establish more general findings based on the research question. The potential extraneous variables are included in the analysis as attribute variables based on the literature review. As recommended by Kerlinger & Lee (2000), triangulation data points are also purposefully incorporated into analysis such as capturing child sexual abuse prevalence to minimize error variance (453-466). Triangulation using two or more theoretical methods can supplement the weaknesses of each other, for instance, including a qualitative approach to explain the quantitative results of a large-n survey. Likewise, triangulation using multiple points of measurement or assessment for within cases can help verify the accuracy of variables and their constructs (Dunn & Peters, 2018).

For instance, triangulated analysis reveals a relevant pattern of women who were pregnant in pre-adolescence providing inaccurate or mismatching responses. This discrepancy was found

among nearly 8 percent of respondents, the great majority of whom gave birth as young as 8-10 years old, indicating an implicit (even if unconscious) desire to misreport or hide cases of very early/pre-adolescent sexual activity. This example of triangulation provides new insight to better assessing levels of social desirability and incongruency of self-reported data related to taboo/private topics of early sexual engagement and child rape *(see Appendix 18)* and is accounted for in the study's quantitative analysis.

In *Chapter Five*, the principal investigator implements a statistical analysis of all data officially into an Excel spreadsheet with all indicators from variables and scaled variables. Correlation matrixes, t-tests & contingency tables, multi-variate regression, and logit regression models are developed and presented in the next chapter. The data analysis will examine the quantitative statistics testing the research's main hypotheses, presented below (and summarized in *Chapter Three)*:

Main Hypotheses of Study to be Tested
H_1: Overall female child sexual abuse is moderately correlated with levels of education.
H_2: Female survivors of child sexual abuse who attend school are more likely to have an adult perpetrator who is associated with an educational occupation than female survivors with no education.
H_3- Households with higher measures of modern culture than traditionalistic values are moderately correlated with higher rates of education (for both parents and daughters), and different types of efficacy and other attributes of adult agency.
H_4: Modern knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs are not correlated with higher rates of child sexual abuse/rape.
H_5: The safety of the learning environment of the education that a girl receives is moderately correlated with delayed sexual engagement and lower prevalence of child sexual assault.

4.3.5 Data Collection Strategies for Threats to Validity

As stated previously, researchers designing field instruments can take steps to increase the validity of data by *choosing appropriate data collection strategies* in their research projects, including to reduce participants' discomfort in answering sensitive/taboo/invasive questions (Krumpal, 2013). As much of this dissertation research focuses on collecting sensitive information on topics of sexual practices and engagement, gender norms, and sexual violence, the principal investigator carefully researched strategies recommended by similar scholarship and their survey design recommendations, in particular UNICEF's *Measuring Violence Against Children - Inventory and assessment of quantitative studies*: 2014. This chapter presents some of the most crucial strategies applied to the dissertation study*:*

Pre-Survey Community Awareness & Approval Process: One important data collection strategy entails raising awareness of the research among community leaders and gaining local buy-in before the work begins. During the planning phase of the project, representatives from all proposed survey sites gather to review documents, meet with the research leadership, and after careful consideration, grant permission to proceed. Local partners may even collaborate in informing neighbors about the research process, including holding formal community information sessions or home-visits prior to data collection. Ensuring community-based participatory research and collaborative research approaches, particularly in the planning and data collection phases of the work, can improve data quality and lower threats to validity (Cashman et al.), especially in West Africa.

Triple Informed Consent Procedure: Another key survey strategy employed in this research is using a thorough informed-consent procedure. The young woman's survey includes a three-phased consent process, ensuring the participant verbally consents to being willing and

comfortable participating before, during and after the survey, and is provided with detailed instructions on how she could withdraw her responses at a later date, if she so desired. Feedback from participants during the pilot phase indicates that having the three-phased consent makes them feel more secure in their understanding of the research and their rights as participants, as well as generally creates an overall sense that the research team is considerate and respectful of their feelings.

Ethical Considerations of Questioning: The surveys were purposefully designed to use sensitive questioning techniques to mitigate potentially offending, embarrassing, harming, or shaming participants on private or socially taboo topics like sexual activity. The questioning techniques come from recommendations found in the literature review of survey resources, including 2014 UNICEF research reviewing quantitative studies involving sampling households reporting child abuse. "Research ethics [including when interviewing children or conducting sensitive lines of questioning] was seen as a challenging area that needs to be addressed" (9). Likewise, the dissertation survey questions are designed to capture relevant information from the participants without specifically using contextually abrasive terms like *rape* or *abuse* that may trigger psychological trauma. To protect participants from unnecessary harm, the questioning avoids naming or labeling prior experiences of abuse, instead *deducing* rape incidences based on general information reported, such as the age of participant at sexual induction and her partner, and whether or not parental consent was given. Sociological theories, including feminist-informed ethical perspectives, can better inform researchers of their ethical obligations to carefully reflect on the impact of conducting emotionally-charged research on personal topics like violence and rape in social science, particularly weighing the potential costs to their subjects who may be asked

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to relive their trauma in detail (Ackerly & True, 2008; Campbell, 2013; D'Costa, 2003), *(see Appendix 12).*

Building Familiarity and Transparency in Surveys: This dissertation specifically created, pilot-tested and implemented a new technique, termed *Answering for Your Confidant*, as a means to inform the participant ahead of time about sensitive questions that she will soon be asked about regarding her own experiences, build her awareness and context of how to respond, and provide time to consider deciding to answer. This novel approach asks young women participants to first practice answering specific questions about the sexual engagement history of an anonymous close female confidant about the same age, such as a sister or best friend. This data on the third party is used in some of the statistical analysis as control variables, as its inter-rater reliability (using Cronbach's alpha) indicates sufficient accuracy. The enumerator takes the respondent through the series of sensitive questions, and then asks if she would be comfortable answering the same questions based on her own experiences. This technique improved general participant response rate during the pilot and was approved by field experts for its potential value in lowering self-reporting bias as well as improving ethical transparency for participants.

4.4 Qualitative Method

The qualitative method of this research applies key informant interviewing with a representative sample of 16 specific stakeholder groups in Liberia whose roles are closely affiliated with girls' education and child protection. The purpose is to 1) explore the background behind the link of child sexual abuse and girls' education, and 2) inform understanding of the causal model through localized knowledge and experience, as well as policy problems and recommended

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solutions. Instead of relying solely on the judgment of the principal investigator, this additional contextual input is collected and taken into consideration in the synthesis of the findings into the dissertation results and conclusions.

4.4.1 Key Informant Method, Instrument and Planning

The key informant interviewing design is a qualitative investigation involving a specific group of persons in the position to offer necessary or relevant information, experiences, or insights on a policy issue. Typically, 15-20 informants are selected, representing a diverse representation of stakeholders (Kumar, 1989; Ranson, Law, & Bennett, 2010; Sonalkar, Mody, Phillips, & Gaffield, 2014). For this dissertation, a list of the informants is determined prior to the interviews based on five groups of stakeholders that the researcher determined as playing a role in education and girl's protection in Liberia. These groups consist of international community members, national policy & decision makers, policy implementors, community actors, and direct beneficiaries, whose roles will be discussed in *Chapter Six*. Interview guidelines including the list of open-ended questions were selected, pilot tested, and received feedback from the Liberian consultant team. The PI determined to carry out all interviews one-on-one often in the work settings of the individuals when possible, keeping the atmosphere more informal and allowing the conversation with each participant to happen as naturally as possible while trying to ask each question from the list. Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed within a month of the interview into an Excel spreadsheet, and the interviews were then deleted. All personal information including the person's name or affiliation was stricken from the data, for instance the European ambassador's name and country of origin are not used. The PI guides the topics and issues during

each session, while subtly probing participants to provide more detailed information when deemed necessary. Interviews last no more than an hour and often shorter.

> [These] interviews are excellent for documenting…people's understandings or misunderstandings of issues… [they] may tell of incidents, local happenings, or conditions that explain implementation problems… provide flexibility to explore new ideas and issues that had not been anticipated in planning the study but that are relevant" (Kumar, 2-4).

There are of course weaknesses in this method including collecting data that is biased because informants are not especially careful, a frequent error if the investigator is not familiar with the local context. Yet the PI for this research has spent nearly half a decade in Liberia, working with many of the stakeholder groups, and is well-immersed in the culture and context of the country. To prepare for the qualitative interviews, the PI:

1. formulated the questions with an emphasis on drawing open-ended responses

2. reviewing available data including reports, publications, and statistical reports often included in the literature review

3. developing a conceptual framework or causal framework (presented in *Chapter One*)

4. select key informants (with recommendations of dissertation chair)

5. carry out interviews one-on-one when possible in professional/occupational settings, not pre-arranged yet following IRB protocol.

Influenced by Patton ([2008]), one of the purposes behind the study's qualitative work is to focus primarily on the use by primary intended users and stakeholders who have a set interest in the evaluation and policy, including people with decision authority and responsibility for the policy, intended beneficiaries, and people excluded by the policy. Participation in this evaluation fosters stakeholder commitment to this process, giving them the chance to help determine what

the research involves, while evaluating and exploring meaningful policy-based questions that engender honesty and transparency. Key questions in the qualitative phase ask stakeholders to reflect on what policies prevent child sexual abuse for school-age girls in country, how well they are working, and why.

The *Key Informant Interview Instrument* was developed by the principal investigator using the following questions asked of key stakeholders at the community level:

- *What do you know about the policies promoting girls' education? What do you know about the laws/policies regarding rape of a child?*

- What are the objectives of these policies?

- What is acceptable evidence to you that these objectives have been achieved?

- What resources and staff are available to achieve these objectives?

- What activities (e.g., teacher training) and outcomes (e.g., percentage of teachers trained or informed) do you believe affect or do not affect the objectives being met?

- *According to your knowledge and perspective, how does a person report child rape within the legal system? Does this process differ for reporting rape of a girl in a school setting?*

- Would action "A" (having child sexual abuse reporting mechanisms and advocacy/awareness of laws), lead to objective "O" (girls who complete their schooling and are protected from harm into their adulthood)?

- *To what extent is your personal or position's level of commitment or prioritization to supporting policies on child sexual abuse protection and girls' education?*

- How do those in your role perceive when expectations are consistent?

- What is the most serious obstacle to achieving objectives?

- What performance information do you need in your work? Why?

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- Is there enough information now? Why? Why not?

- What is the most important information you will need in the next year?

- What key issues should the evaluation address?

During the planning phase, the questions above were modified from two key resources (questions in italics are from Patton; non-italic are from Dunn (2015)) with consultant feedback.

4.4.2 Selection, Data Collection and Analysis

In August 2018, the key informant interview questions are pilot tested on several members of the consultant team. The list of stakeholders is first drafted by the principal investigator with feedback incorporated from the national consultant team to ensure key participants are not overlooked. In fact, because of this step, three additional stakeholder groups are added to the original draft. The final facilitated list included the following stakeholder categories: nurse, clinician, social worker, official from the Ministry of Gender, Children & Social Protection (MOGCSP) or Ministry of Education (MOE), police, parent, teacher, school administrator, recent female graduate, religious leader, community leader, academic, European diplomat, civil society organization member, and international nonprofit worker. Unlike the quantitative data collection process performed by Liberian enumerators, the informant interviewing is conducted by the principal investigator orally with individual stakeholders. Interviews occur from September to October 2018, using the scripted questions above.

Interviews range from approximately 30-60 minutes. In total there are 15 interviews that are transcribed into Word files, and then later mapped into Excel by question. Analysis of the interviews is performed by the principal investigator using primarily Excel coding to assign labeling to sections of data (e.g. specific questions) of the interview transcript, applying key words

and short phrases relative to the research. The analysis and key findings are presented in the next two chapters. Their purpose is to inform the meaning behind the quantitative analysis and fill in any gaps of insight about the causal mechanisms behind the relationship between child sexual abuse and female education, providing multiple lenses of contextualization and understanding.

For the data analysis in *Chapter Six*, the 16 stakeholders are first organized into specific groups by their similar interaction with the policy process, based on the roles and attributes often assigned by contemporary international development theory. While each actor may be placed in a certain group, the individual may in fact hold fluid roles, such as a mother who also works as a school administrator, a police officer who is a father, or a ministry official who is part of a civil society group such as a church or advocacy group in her community. Participants are asked in the interviews to consider their specific role as a member of one stakeholder group. Additionally, this assessment assumes that while stakeholders' experience may frequently relate to certain policy processes and influence social interactions in specific systems of [Bronfenbrenner's human development](#) ecological approach. The actions and interactions of each player can have rippling effects between groups and systems, affecting cyclical policy processes.

4.5 Conclusions

In general, the carefully selected mixed-methods approach used in this study design delivers the sensitivity and validity of results necessary to successfully meet the objectives of the dissertation. Specifically pertaining to the qualitative phase, the two survey instruments capture data to assess the size and magnitude of the research problem. The instruments also demonstrate satisfactory inter-rater reliability so that no variables or scales are excluded from the statistical

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analysis. Secondly, by conducting nearly double the anticipated household surveys, the sample size of the study increases the reliability of the results with improved precision and power, and at little additional cost than previously budgeted for the field research. Thirdly, the study design helps minimize key threats to validity, including social desirability bias and construct validity, in a variety of ways. This is achieved primarily by utilizing a Liberian consultant team and national enumerator team effectively to improve the instrument design and implementation of data collection, providing better cultural and contextual knowledge and perspective. Additionally, the inclusion of specific data collection strategies such as the triple-consent procedure and the pre-survey community awareness and approval process further engender trust and transparency among the communities and participants, who may have otherwise been reluctant to participate.

The quantitative data analysis helps test the research question and main hypotheses of this research, establishing to what extent the problem of child abuse exists in relation to girls' education, as well as confirming important variables influencing this relationship. The analysis offers important statistical insights, including a high percentage of all young women in Liberia are involved in confirmed or suspected cases of statutory rape as minors, and that girls in school face higher chances of being raped by a male adult with a school-based occupation than a peer who is illiterate. Such results indicate a rape epidemic within the country permeating even into schools that should be safe spaces for children. Also, factors like socio-economic status, ethnic, or geographical location have no significant impacts on changing these prevalence rates. Yet there is one potential variable that has a significant positive impact on lowering sexual abuse prevalence rates among girls in school: ensuring a school is a safe and friendly learning environment for females. The more a school is perceived as child-friendly and gender-equitable, the less likely a

girl in school faces risky sexual engagement, including being a survivor of rape. The extended quantitative analysis is presented in the next chapter.

While the quantitative analysis indicates the extent to which child rape is prevalent among educated and non-educated populations, the qualitative data better explores the reasons behind the relationships. The key informant method uses open-ended (semi-structured) interviewing of key stakeholders to ask why the relationship between abuse and education exists, how it came to be, who is involved, as well as the various interpretations and perspectives to weigh, and different causal explanations. The qualitative inputs, provided by the stakeholders, help infer potential causal mechanisms of the key variables measured. The analysis shows that most national entity stakeholders, whether policy decision makers, implementors, or beneficiaries, are somewhat aware of the statistics of rape in the country. Yet at all levels, there is a stark range of people's awareness of the Liberian and international policies, and what they actually know about legal details ensuring girls attend school and are protected from sexual abuse, their rights as citizens, workers, and parents, and how to report issues of abuse. The various interviews provide different explanations for why policies are failing, whether it is the police commander and ministry officials in social services pointing to a lack of funding to enforce justice, the diplomatic and international actors who agree child protection programming is not highly ranked on the current international development agenda, or the parent and civil society organization members unfamiliar with the regulations against teachers and adult students having illicit relationships with students legally underage. The findings of the qualitative analysis are introduced in part in *Chapter Five*, and fully presented in *Chapter Six*.

Overall, the results of this mixed-methods research are already bearing fruit even before publication. The quantitative survey instruments are provenly effective at testing the relationships

between child sexual abuse, education level and environment, demographics, and early sexual engagement. The surveys demonstrate that measuring the perceived educational experiences of young women and their parents is an efficient and effective means to rank the schooling environment for children in terms of gender equity and child-friendliness. Moreover, the two surveys imply the continued utility of older survey instruments like the OM Scale to measure household modernity and traditionalism, which are still assessed today under different terms by large-scale international agencies like USAID and UNICEF. Modernity and traditionalism may not be strong predictors for child sexual abuse, but they can be for how far a girl can go in school. The principal investigator plans to implement future studies using these survey instruments in new sectors of West Africa, and other countries worldwide, which will allow for comparative analysis of this research problem. Moreover, the initial results from the quantitative analysis are informing action steps by local communities, civil society organizations, and schools to improve their gender responsiveness for students.

In 2018/19, the British Embassy in Liberia was motivated in part due to this study to fund a project in nearly 90 schools in Montserrado using the enumerator team and their affiliated nonprofit as an implementing agency. The qualitative interviewing using the same scripted questions is also repeated at a larger scale during this project, which informed the development of a new child-friendly schools model checklist for the Ministry of Education that is directly purposed for Liberian public and private schools. It targets the socio-economic and institutional challenges that face the country at this time and offers solutions that are relevant to the low-resource context in which most schools operate. Lastly, the MOE is working with CSOs and other partners in the county to better monitor and advocate gender equity and protection standards, green-lighting schools that comply and red-lighting (even closing) those schools demonstrating dismissal of

issues of sexual violence, gender discrimination, low quality education, and child safety issues. The MOE also is pilot testing at the county level a policy called 'Open Doors,' which forbids school staff from being alone with students without proper protection mechanisms in place to safeguard the child from abuse. These impacts of the research are further elaborated upon in the final chapter of this dissertation.

The principal investigator would like to give special thanks to the members of the Liberian consultant team for their participation in the research design and planning phase, the dissertation chair and committee members, and the Liberian government, as well as to the research assistant and enumerator team associated with Renewed Energy Serving Humanity (RESH) for their extraordinary volunteerism in an effort to make a difference for the girls of their nation.

4.6 Limitations

A limitation of the quantitative surveys is that funding and time constraints limit the scope of the research to one county in Liberia, which limits the generalizability of the findings. The study sites are randomly selected stratified clustering, in which each cluster site is fully saturated. Enumerators assess each qualifying household in selected areas. The distribution of sites within the county is well balanced, covering a diversity of geographic areas. One recommendation is to replicate this study in other parts of Liberia and well as different countries, like the Dominican Republic and the United States, to see if patterns identified in Liberia continue, while maintaining a pragmatic policy-analyst lens that studies are relevant to the time and context in which they are conducted. The qualitative analysis is able to deduce prevalence rates of abuse and categorize early sexual engagement risk levels, rape cases, and perpetrator types. However, this work can be more

precisely done by updating specific survey instruments and their guidelines. It is also important to continue to apply steps of diverse collaboration of research actors, particularly with national representation throughout multiple phases of the investigation. As this is a dissertation, the research design, analysis and writing are primarily executed by the principal investigator. This role limits the extent to which national experts can participate in authoring and synthesizing such research. In the future, they may play a more crucial role in data analysis and synthesis that may potentially expand interpretation and modeling.

Despite thorough steps taken to ensure reliability of instruments, a number of scales including the aggregated *total OM score* have low the internal consistency reliability (less than alpha= 0.50). Some OM scales have low alphas in part due to the small number of items (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 1998). Another potential issue may be that KAB surveys often require standardized, well-structured questions. Yet, people's knowledge, beliefs, and practices about child protection problems are complicated. A survey might be too rigid with fixed answer categories failing to capture the various factors interacting with key outcomes (Holman). The OM scale may be limited as this may be the first time it is used in child protection research. Other factors may include differing literacy rates affected understanding of the questions despite the steps taken, or the mammoth cultural shifts happening in post-war Liberia.

There were two notable limitations to the qualitative assessment. Firstly, while the principal investigator did not purposefully select the gender or age of the stakeholder representatives, there was a good balance of male/female participation, particularly among government officials and public servants who participated. However, the study could have benefited from a more robust sampling of males at the community level, including fathers. Likewise, due to IRB constraints, the principal investigator was unable to speak directly to a

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convicted rapist, which may have provided crucial insight into a perpetrator's behavior and logic. Secondly, some of the questions were better understood than others by some of the participants. Those who had less education or experience interacting with foreigners' English accents (the PI is American though she spoke colloquial Liberian-English) may have had some difficulty in understanding the questions. Their responses were somewhat limited as a result. It may be recommended that national actors perform the interviews alongside the PI in future research.

5.0 Chapter 5. Quantitative Analysis

5.1 Introduction

This dissertation brings to light a perilous gap that exists in contemporary international development research and policy: the gap in understanding the relationship between child sexual abuse and girls' education. The first chapter introduced the context of *Hawa's Query*, in which millions of girls in countries worldwide, like Liberia, are being allowed for the first time to learn their ABCs in place of becoming child brides. According to many of the principles in development theory, including the paradigm of human development, education theoretically should serve to empower these girls and their families to better protect themselves from harm and to ensure the growth of their capacity and agency. However, the scholarship on girls' education and sexual abuse is contradictory: while some research indicates that female education is a vital solution for human insecurity, another body of research warns that schools can be sexually violent spaces, and a third body of literature advocates that programs and policies must ensure safe school environments to guarantee protecting girls from sexual harm *(see Chapter Two).* An indeterminate number of female students like Hawa may still end up victims of child rape even though they are in school. The effects of being violated can gravely affect their lives going forward and saddle them with unjust burdens, including early pregnancy, social stigmatization, economic hardship, and physical and psychosocial trauma that can last beyond adolescence. We in the international development community have a duty to ask to what extent Hawa's story represents the experiences of her peers.

5.2 Overview of Statistical Analysis

This fifth chapter presents a statistical analysis of data collected from the 715 young women and 493 of their parents/guardians who participated in the 2018 field survey in Liberia. The analysis addresses the central research question: *How is the prevalence of child sexual abuse among girls in Liberia affected by their level of education, the safety of their schools, and the psychological knowledge, attitude, and behaviors (KABs) of their household?* A summary of the research design and instruments for Overall Modernity (OM) scales of knowledge, attitudes, and behavior and the qualitative analysis was presented in *Chapter Four*. The analysis of this fifth chapter is divided into the following sections:

- PREVALENCE OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: An overview of the overall prevalence of child sexual abuse, including statutory rape.

- CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND EDUCATION: Overall female child sexual abuse and its association with three levels or tiers of education.

- PERPETRATORS OF SEXUAL ABUSE: The relationship between child sexual abuse in school and whether the perpetrator is associated with an educational occupation, disaggregated by educational tier, including girls who never attended school.

- OVERALL MODERN CULTURE: Introduction to analysis involving girl's education, child protection, and potential rival hypotheses raised by qualitative data and literature.

  - GIRLS' EDUCATION AND MODERN CULTURE: The relationship between households with higher measures of modern vs. traditional knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors (KAB) (aggregated and disaggregated), rates of education of parents and

daughters, selected attitudes and behaviors including political participation and political efficacy, along with other attributes of adult agency.

- CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND MODERN CULTURE: The extent to which modernity, as measured by the OM scale, and traditional statements to OM items (aggregated and disaggregated) are correlated with higher or lower rates of child sexual abuse/rape.

- RIVAL EXPLANATIONS OF CHILD SEX ABUSE: Examines in more detail the rival hypotheses that emerge from the previous two sub-sections.

- SAFE SCHOOLING ENVIRONMENTS: The relationship between child rape rates, educational attainment, and safety levels of schooling environment.

- INTERACTION OF MAIN EXPLANATORY VARIABLES: Use of logistic regression to examine the effects of level (tier) of education and the perceived safety of schools on delayed sexual engagement, less risky early sexual behaviors, and lower prevalence of child sexual assault (including variables with coefficients of $r = 0.20$ or higher).

Levels of significance are set at $p=0.05$, and effect sizes like Cohen's *d* and measures of association including Pearson's *r* and Gamma will be measured standardly as 0.2, 0.4, 0.6 and 0.8, corresponding to small, modest, moderately strong, and strong. As this study is a mixed-methods research project, quantitative findings will be linked to the qualitative data that is discussed more fully in the next chapter. The simultaneous use of quantitative and qualitative data helps explore, validate, and perhaps invalidate statistical findings. A more robust qualitative analysis based on stakeholder interviews obtained in the Key Informant Interviewing is presented in *Chapter Six*.

5.3 Prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse

This first section explores the overall prevalence of child sexual abuse, including statutory rape. This analysis deduces child sexual abuse using Liberian young women's self-reported information on her first sexual experiences. It codifies child rape based on the legal definition of abuse and rape as established in international standards and the national policies of Liberia for what constitutes legal versus illegal early sexual engagement practices. According to the Liberian Rape Law as of 2018, 18 years old is the minimum age at which a person is legally considered to have the sufficient capacity to personally consent to sexual activity participation without clearly established parental consent (Agali, 2018). Child sexual abuse is thus converted into the dichotomous variable of *child rape* (defined as established/suspected "statutory rape" or sex between a female minor and an adult without established parental consent) versus *non-rape,* the main dependent variable in the statistical analysis.

Assessing sexual engagement among youth populations is crucial, as risky early sexual activity can readily place children at harm of sexual abuse (Mensch, Grant, & Blanc, 2006). The study indicates high sexual activity in Liberia. In this 2018 study, 619 of 699 young women surveyed (89 percent) report having sex before the age of 18. This rate tends to be greater than in many regions of Africa, where reported rates for adolescent sexual engagement vary from about 70 percent in Congo, 5 percent in Eritrea (Long, 2019), 20 percent in Nigeria (Cortez, Saadat, Marinda, & Oluwole, 2015), to 30 percent among Ghanaian girls (Asante, Nketiah-Amponsah, Andoh-Arthur, Boafo, & Ampaw, 2018).

Contemporary Liberian early sexual engagement behaviors also appear to reflect increasingly evolving, unconventional trends that can come with both positives (more equitable access, choice, and voice) and negatives (new forms of sexual abuse) (International Conference of

Population and Development, 2012). National census and statistical reports may not be fully accurate. But in general, their findings indicate that compared to their daughters today, Liberian matriarchs in the 1980s-90s tended to have higher rates of early marriage, youth pregnancy, and fertility; wed at a more tender age; be less educated; and use less family planning/contraception. Early marriage is on the decline and often linked to the rise in education rates (Chieh-Johnson, Cross, Way, & Sullivan, 1986; Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) & Macro International, 2008; LISGIS, 2011; Svanemyr, Scolaro, Blondeel, Chandra-Mouli, & Temmerman, 2013; Trading Economics, 2019). In the dissertation study, 240 young women surveyed (34 percent) report being pregnant before the age of 18, however these current early pregnancies seem to mainly fall outside of wedlock. Fifty-five percent of those who were pregnant as youth never married or lived with a man, but have instead remained single mothers, which is a notable cultural shift.

Moreover, this post-war generation of daughters now appear to face different rape situations. Mothers and grandmothers more frequently married young and to older men. While these unions could involve violent or forced spousal rape, being married young was not considered *statutory rape*, as it was a common cultural practice, the legal age of marriage was almost non-existent, and most child marriages involved parental consent. During the civil war (1989-2003), rape increasingly became a common weapon of terror used against their mothers' generation mainly by fighters. But the use of sexual intercourse with minors today is labeled an *epidemic* or *rising tide* by some experts, as it is more widespread among the general male population than before or during the war (Bacon, 2017; Cummings, 2011; UN Women, 2017). Rape is repeatedly viewed as a legacy of the war-generation that has not disappeared but instead increasingly manifested over time to involve sexual violence against children, which is "an alarming and

shifting pattern among rape victims" (Toral, 2012). An important take away is that modern sexual engagement has changed, with child rape rates likely higher *outside* of arranged/early marriages than previous generations—a situation that can lead to issues of statutory rape.

Staggeringly, over 35 percent of the Liberian participants in the study report childhood sexual activity that legally qualifies as *statutory rape*. The survey does not measure if the situation involves violence, exploitation, or coercion (for ethical reasons presented in *Chapter Four*). Disturbingly, nearly 1 in 20 females first become pregnant (colloquially called *"get with belly"*) between the ages of 8-13 and about 1 in 10 between the ages of 14-15, often in statutory rape scenarios, which are highly risky and illegal. Likewise, the qualitative interviews triangulate these findings. Several stakeholders provide statements indicating that child rape is a large issue in their community and society but not much is done to fight it. Quantitative and qualitative data both imply an instituted *rape culture* in much of modern Liberia, in other words an environment where rape is pervasive and female sexual violence is almost normalized, furthering a society that overlooks girls' safety and rights (Keller, Mendes, & Ringrose, 2018; Marshall, 2019). As one Liberian social welfare worker sadly states while shaking her head, "[Child rape is] so pervasive and it's so embedded in everyday practices, and it's so normalized. And so, the injustices just keep happening." This statement does not well quantify the magnitude of this issue, as most interviews fail to do. But such testimonials can further inform the quantitative findings that establish the size of the issue by sharing stakeholders' perspectives, experiences, and feelings, all of which offer deeper meaning of the situation. Their statements like the one above reflects a sense of being overwhelmed by the magnitude of the issue, leading to frustration, desensitization, and complacency. Many girls are being taken advantage of without their parents' awareness or protection, increasing their vulnerability.

5.4 Child Rape Status and Girls' Education

This section attempts to establish the extent to which overall rates of female child sexual abuse are associated with education. Many human developmentalists like the Malala Fund promote education as a *golden solution*, urging that education improves human security by lowering early marriage rates and beyond, as it purportedly empowers girls with the skills and knowledge needed for improved agency. This logic should be considered along with the rival hypothesis that girls in school have lower prevalence rates of sexual abuse than girls out of school (*see Table 5.1*). On the other hand, while "the links between schooling and marriage and sexual activity are also worth considering… increased educational attainment in sub-Saharan Africa has contributed to the decline in early marriage…[but] the changing context of sexual initiation in sub-Saharan Africa leaves a number of issues unaddressed" (Mensch et al., 2006). As the last section introduces, these issues include abuse patterns outside of wedlock. As the literature synthesis presents, there is a body of scholarship on school violence that implies the prevalence of sexual abuse does not decrease as girls' attendance increases, but that rates of gender-based abuse may instead rise. Initially in this study, the author posited that illegal sexual practices like statutory rape may be positively associated with education. But as the analysis will indicate, the picture is more complex than originally stated. Education among Liberian girls has improved, but sexual violence remains at a high level in schools that were previously male-dominated.

Clearly, Liberian education policies and programming initiatives like the Girls' Education Policy have helped its national systems to join the globe in advancing female human development indicators. This field research indicates that the current generation of female youth is significantly more educated than their mothers. Young women participants on average complete the 9th grade level, which is 3.5 years higher than their mothers report completing and about a year more than

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their fathers, a generational impact difference between genders that is significant (t=-4.48, p=0.001) (*see Appendix 20, Table 1*). Post-reconstruction Liberia remains an archetype of female learning progress and equity in the region. Yet in face of these achievements, there is no known research to-date in Liberia that measures whether girls who attend school also experience different rates of sexual violence than their less-educated peers. According to various Liberian academics and professional experts, as well as international agency directors, this study may be the first of its kind.

In recent years, a handful of Liberian schools, like the private school of More Than Me Academy (Young, 2018) and the public school of William V. S. Tubman Gray United Methodist High School, have come under heavy scrutiny for incidences of female child rape by school staff (Singbah, 2015). This study assesses prevalence rates of child rape by adults, disaggregated by 1) females' *education level* (grades completed) and 2) *tiers* (no schooling, primary, secondary, tertiary/advanced). The first hypothesis tested in this sub-section is fundamental to this entire study. The main hypothesis asks whether girls in school are at a greater risk of sexual violence than girls who do not attend school. Many studies (e.g. Stoebenau, Heise, Wamoyi, & Bobrova, 2016; and Steiner, Johnson, Postmus, & Davis, 2018) contend that expanding educational opportunities in low-income countries offers marginalized children like impoverished girls more capability, efficacy, and agency in life. However, as this study shows, it can also expose them to the danger of predators operating in school environments. Child rape status seems negatively correlated (if modestly) to education level (r=-0.14). Yet, *Table 5.1* strongly suggests that rapes decline as a result of exposure to schooling at the secondary and tertiary levels.

Table 5.1 Effects of Educational Tiers on Child Rape

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Rape Status	No School	Primary	Secondary	Advanced	Total
			School Tiers		
Rape	26 (0.43)	34 (0.45)	167 (0.35)	18 (0.21)	245 (0.35)
Non-rape	34 (0.57)	42 (0.55)	310 (0.65)	68 (0.79)	454 (0.65)
Total	60 (100.0)	76 (100.0)	477 (100.0)	86 (100.0)	699 (100.0)

Note: $\chi_2 = 12.47$, p=0.01, gamma= -0.26, (ss). Observed frequency outside parentheses. Percentages in parentheses.

One implication is that the "fatal remedy" argument may require clarification. The percentage of statutory rapes among girls who do not attend school falls from approximately 43 percent to 35 percent when they reach secondary schooling and to 21 percent if they have 13 or more years of education (e.g., universities, trade institutes). A girl's odds of being raped are roughly three times less if she has tertiary education versus only primary schooling (phi= 0.24, p= 0.01), and two times less with tertiary versus secondary (phi= 0.10, p=0.02). This finding signals the potential impact that very high levels of education can have. But we must not overlook that the effects may not help her odds *unless* she is fortunate enough to climb far up the educational ladder. According to 2016 data, only 44 in 100 Liberian female students graduate primary school, and about 1 in 10 ever attend tertiary (UNESCO, 2019). So, while very high levels of education may be helpful in avoiding rape, most girls will never make it high enough up the ladder to benefit.

If a student drops out early, she faces severe risks of being assaulted. Primary schools, where nearly 45 percent of girls are raped, have approximately the same percentage of rapes as among girls not in school (43 percent). Thus, another implication is that girls who complete primary school are not better off than girls with no educational exposure. Similarly, girls in secondary school only fare slightly better than their less educated peers. The odds of a girl with primary schooling being raped versus a student with secondary school are slight (1.5, phi= 0.07, p=0.10). While secondary schooling appears to have some bearing on rape prevalence, girls who

enter secondary school are still raped at the same overall average rate as all girls (35 percent). Equivalent results are obtained when we triangulate by looking at the relationship between *child rape status* and *education grade level.*

Table 5.2 Effects of Educational Level on Child Rape

Rape Status	Level (grades completed)																				Total
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	20	
Non-rape	34	1	1	4	7	5	24	22	36	46	46	43	117	15	13	9	17	2	3	1	446
Rape	26	2	3	5	3	6	15	15	26	21	35	19	51	7	2	5	3	0	0	0	244

Table 5.2 presents the frequencies of girls' rape cases for each grade level of education achieved, which note a fluctuating pattern. The probability of rape is almost 43 percent among girls in the sample who have not attended school (0 years). The probability appears to increase among girls who have had 2-6 years of schooling at the primary level and fluctuate between grades 7-8. At the higher-secondary school level (9-12 grades) the probability of rape then drops below the rates found in primary school and decreases even more at the advanced level. Furthermore, logistic regression modeling also indicates that we can expect little change in odds of a girl being raped with a one-unit increase in either *grade level* or *education tier (see Logistic Modeling in last section).* In the qualitative interview, a university student's explanation offers further insight into a key issue of why so many female pupils are raped as minors:

> [I]n my own world [as a female student], I would say [the obstacle for a girl to be educated and not sexually abused] is financial issues…most parents don't have [funds]…to educate their children, to a high level…sometimes it cause rape, too. What you [a poor female] don't have and you met this person [adult man] helping you giving you one or two these things acting as resource then they forcibly take you to bed…money business.

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Her statement reflects that there is a likely relationship between the common need among girls to financially afford school and transactional sex between a vulnerable girl from a low-income household and a male adult who takes on the role of a 'sugar daddy.' This man can abuse his position over her to coercively or forcibly have sex. Girls who complete lower levels of schooling tend to live in *poorer housing* often with poorly paved flooring and have less *household wealth* (4/11 possible items) on average than those who reach tertiary (households with mostly paved flooring and 6 items). This issue transcends into the educational setting in the form of sugar daddies who offer to pay for school expenses or even men working in the school who are willing to use their positions of authority to target potential victims. Further research in Liberia supports these findings on transactional sex (Atwood, Kennedy, Barbu, Nagbe, Seekey, Sirleaf, Perry, Martin, & Sosu, 2011).

While educating girls does not apparently expose them to higher rates of sexual violence as the first hypothesis initially postulated, female students in basic and secondary compulsory grades do not experience much of a difference in safety from sexual harm. This finding in itself has major implications: while female pupils may not be raped more than their non-educated peers, they still face outrageously high rates overall, unless they make it to the tertiary level. There also is the possibility that the few girls who do make it into tertiary education simply managed to avoid being abused at a younger age, and thus are less likely to be affected by the negative consequences (such as early pregnancy) that could cause them to drop out of school. There is an anomaly when looking at rapes in non-school, primary, and secondary settings. Why would they be virtually similar? To answer this, the next sub-section examines the identity of assailants in the two settings: of out of school and in school (represented by the primary and secondary tiers, which together are considered *compulsory* education, in Liberia).

5.5 Perpetrators of Sexual Assault

This third section examines if female survivors of child sexual abuse who attend school are more likely to have a different profile of sexual perpetrator than female peers who do not attend school. This second research question also helps explain the findings from the first. From a *human ecological development* standpoint, girls out of school may be more likely to interact more regularly with a wider variety of men (like local businessmen, vendors, family members, or community members) than girls spending a large part of their day in school. Likewise, schoolgirls may interact more frequently with men in school settings (more days of the week, more hours in the school day). Child protection literature suggests that sexual assault victims often know their perpetrators before the incident or attack (Berns, 2017; Rogers & Davies, 2007; Stoltenborough et al., 2011; Ezugwu, Ohayi, Iyoke, & Nnaji, 2017). The qualitative interview data further supports this fact. A gender-based violence (GBV) officer from the Ministry of Gender, Child, and Social Protection (MOGCSP) states, "Most of the [child rapists in Liberia] are people that know them [the victims] … people who are supposed to protect them, are the ones that do this thing [rape]." Furthermore, sexual assaults carried out by perpetrators known to child survivors tend to result in increased psychological harm such as a sense of defilement (Berns), including in West African countries (Sodipo, Adedokun, Adejumo, & Oibamoyo, 2018). Putatively, female students assaulted as minors may be more likely to have assailants who are associated with an educational occupation, including teachers, staff, or older/adult students. When an adult in a position of trust and authority like a teacher is the rapist, the trauma and feeling of betrayal frequently is greater for a child survivor (Fromuth, Kelly, Brallier, Williams, & Benson, 2016; Koss, 2018; Mitchell & McGill, 2015).

This analysis tests the cases of 241 young women whose *child rape status* is 'raped,' disaggregated by their *schooling tier* and the risk ratios of the *occupation of the male perpetrators* at the time she was a minor. Likewise, this study also analyzes this ratio as a girl moves further up educational tiers (no schooling, primary, secondary, and tertiary/advanced). The dissertation survey asked the young women participants if the males with whom they had sex as minors were adults or peer youths (under 18 years old) at the time of the act, and secondly, if the man had parental consent. Lastly, the survey captured the males' occupation at time of the sexual activity, categorizing their occupation as a binary variable: either 'school-based' (teacher, school staff, or adult student) or 'non-school occupation' (like farmer, vendor, businessman, police, etc.).

Table 5.3 Change in Rapist by Child's Daily Environment

Assailant Occupation	Environment		
	Outside of School	In School	Total
School-based	6 (0.24)	86 (0.40)	92 (0.38)
Non-school	19 (0.76)	130 (0.60)	149 (0.62)
Total	25 (100.0)	216 (100.0)	241(100.0)

Table 5.3 suggests that most assailants of these girls are men with occupations outside of the schooling environment, while approximately 38 percent work or study in classrooms. Rapists are about equally distributed, all of which seems to initially go against the second hypothesis. But examining the change in percentage odds among children's frequent environments offers a compelling finding. *Table 5.3* indicates that among 241 child rape survivors, the odds for a female student are that she is roughly twice as likely to have a teacher, school staff, or older student as her assailant than a non-educated peer. The sample of non-educated girls raped by a school-based assailant is small, which limits the generalizability of this finding. But it is notable that rape survivors who are frequently in schooling environments more often have assailants who also work

in schools. These school-based assailants also make up nearly a quarter of the non-educated victims' attackers, indicating that teachers, education staff, and adult students make up a high proportion of rapists even outside of schools. This pattern of percentage frequency of school-based assailants among girls statutorily raped goes up with each tier population—from 24 percent among non-educated victims to 35 percent among primary school victims, and then to over 40 percent for secondary and even tertiary victims (*Appendix 20.2)*. It should be shocking and appalling to any policy-maker that the rate of educational assailants is this high at all, when in truth, we should expect the percentage of school-based rapists to be the exact opposite—extremely low.

Finding comparable rates of rapist profiles in other African countries is problematic. It can be extremely difficult to establish teacher pedophile rates, often due to the lack in data quality based on low response rates, fear of retribution, and constructs of sexual assault. Qualitative research indicates that rape by teachers is an issue in many countries, like South Africa, Uganda, and Senegal, but statistics are not well-established. This is a global issue. A literature synthesis of rape rates of students by teachers in the US and the UK found large disparities and inaccuracies in quantitative findings. Yet one rigorous 2003 study by the American Association of University Women found that nearly 7 percent of US students had experienced educator sexual misconduct (physical contact) (US Department of Education, 2004). This dissertation study seems to have accomplished establishing a profile of school-based rapists for the first time in Liberia. Future statistical research including a more generalizable population sampling can improve on this initial finding. But this data may be vital to key stakeholders like the Liberian Ministry of Education in realizing the magnitude of the issue of rape perpetrated by adults in school occupations.

The qualitative interviews, such as statements by a female university student, nonprofit worker, CSO member, and GBV officer, offer supporting evidence of general

incidences/knowledge of teachers having sex with students behind the backs of parents, often employing coercion and grooming. Colloquially, the interviewees often refer to this as 'seduction' of students. The GBV officer discloses a 2018 case of a young student raped by a teacher who groomed the girl without her parents' knowledge "[and] started having an affair with her." In the quantitative survey, numerous young women participants went further to specify the exact occupation of the man/men who held school-based occupations at the time; the majority said these men were not always teachers or school staff but also adult students enrolled in primary or secondary school. Liberia, like many developing countries, allows late-entry into public and private schools, which permits primary and secondary classes to have a large age range amongst students (including adults even in their twenties). The key informant interviews give some insight into the problem of school rapes. A psychological clinician working in social welfare explains:

> [I]t's requires of all school authority immediately report of rape related cases to the nearest police station…The school authorities are trained and mandated to report the cases…[but the main issue is a] lack of willpower to persecute and the selective persecution which a case involves someone highly connected to the government.

There are issues with officials including school administrators ignoring or covering up cases of school violence. Additionally, the female university student says many young students are aware of rape in the classroom, but people in positions of authority did not take measures to stop the crimes. Moreover, there are multiple national reports of individual school staff members raping dozens of pupils within the same time period (Konuwah, 2019; Young), indicating potential *serial rapists*. And yet, these are not the only assailants whom pupils face.

There still remains the concern of the large percentage of men whose occupations fall outside of the schooling environment who may be committing rapes in or near school

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environments (within the ecological micro or meso sphere). These perpetrators, like perpetrators in the United States, are often a part of close-knit community circles and families whose members may know each other through economic, social, or religious contacts, but mainly through family connections. Hence, it appears that more than 6 in 10 rapes among primary and secondary school girls may be committed in the home environment or in some intimate family or extended family situation. The girls often range in age (from 8-17). Even though they spend a large part of the day in child-centered environments, too many of them still face being victimized. They carry their trauma into the classroom, which can in turn negatively impede their ability to learn, health, and sense of safety.

5.6 Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviors

In this section, we test the correlation between modern culture (measured by the OM scale) first to education level, and secondly to child sexual abuse. This analysis examines both aggregate OM scores of participants, as well as individual KAB items in the scale at a disaggregated level. The *total OM score* is used in accordance with Inkeles's research to maintain consistency with the original uses of the OM scale in more than a dozen countries. Lastly, the analysis accounts for potential rival hypotheses which emerge from the literature on modern/traditional culture, as well as prejudices against traditional practices identified by multiple Liberian stakeholders in the qualitative analysis.

As presented in *Chapter Two*, generations of studies regularly tie education to modern cultural attributes. Comparatively, the literature synthesis does not reveal any research that investigates the effect of modernity (such as Inkeles's work) on child protection from sexual abuse.

Unlike in the development sectors of education and health, the Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) survey and other quantitative methods are relatively new approaches in the child protection sector. Some agencies, like Save the Children-Liberia/Sierra Leone, recently started to explore KAP surveys in child protection, including use of the USAID-DHS survey instruments, but much progress still needs to be made in research quantity and quality (Holman, 2013). In addition to helping establish the rape prevalence rates among girls and pedophile profiles, this chapter also seeks to contribute to this new body of research and may be one of the first studies to explore how statutory rape links to knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors.

Although it first appeared in the 1960s, the OM scale effectively measures indicators of individual knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors commonly promoted today and in past decades in international development policy and programming, including public participation, democratic citizenship, educational aspiration, efficacy/self-determination, women's rights, and family planning. In fact, over three-fourths of the OM items used in the dissertation can be found in the 2017 USAID-DHS survey. As Chapter Four explains, the OM survey offers several unique benefits that more modern surveys like DHS do not, such as questions that Liberian specialists agree are less invasive and less leading for participants. Yet a number of the OM scales have a low threshold of reliability. In the next sub-sections below, the analysis assesses total aggregate OM scores on female education and child protection, while only using aggregated OM sub-scales with alphas above the set minimum threshold, including young women's public participation (alpha=0.63), parental participation (0.54) and family planning (0.66). Lastly, the analysis explores each disaggregated OM item as separate variables on education and child rape rates, prioritizing associations to the other main variables.

If educational attainment and lower sexual abuse is actually linked to a Liberian citizen's knowledge and value structures, a potential policy solution may be to promote cosmopolitan value systems and modern human rights standards, such as women's rights and family planning in households, to also advance education among vulnerable girls. Interestingly, a number of qualitative interviews support this view. There is an apparent level of bias against rural communities that tend to have more homogeneous ethnic/tribal populations of not providing equitable education and gender rights. Numerous statements are made by various Liberian stakeholders in the key informant interviews that a large obstacle to gender equity is traditional/ethnic practices, like bush schools holding girls back from advancing in standardized school, or villages being less likely to report abuse to authorities but instead resolve the dispute using inter-family or inter-community mechanisms. For instance, the District Education Officer (DEO) identifies "traditional festival, like the poro and sande society, especially within the hinterland or remotest part of Liberia" as an obstacle to policy implementation (see Appendix 21 for more).

Furthermore, as explained in Chapter Three, some research faults most traditional cultural practices as deterrents of female rights, education, and sexual protection. Yet there appears to be two-sides of the coin when it comes to the outcomes of child safety and education related to household knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. Whether modern or traditional (less modern), those knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors may serve to support girls' capacity development over time. However, belief structures or practices can also be harmful, especially if they discriminate against gender (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2016). From a pragmatic view, there may be some traditional culture practices that supplement formal education to be more culturally/contextually relevant, or that promote lower rape rates. Initial findings from

this study imply that there is little difference in education level amongst young women in rural districts compared to urban communities, with a disparity of a single grade level (t= -2.17, p= 0.03). Rural female statutory rape rates are also similar to urban rates, with only a 2 percent average difference ($\chi2$= 0.26, p=0.61, phi= 0.19). Thus, the PI acknowledges the need to test all potential rival hypotheses concerning modern culture on education and child protection from sexual harm.

5.6.1 Education and Modern Culture

A large body of literature historically defines modernity in terms of higher education. By contrast, traditional education or no formal schooling are associated with traditional cultural knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. We now turn to testing the validity of this statement by analyzing the responses of young women and their parents/guardians to questions in the OM scale, as well as specific sub-scales of *public participation* and *family planning*.

Table 5.4 presents the correlations between OM sub-scale totals and/or individual KAB items and at least one variable of educational attainment that indicate some relationship, measuring 0.1-0.19 as very slight and 0.2-0.4 as small. A Pearson's correlation analysis of young women's *education level* and *education tier* compared to *total OM scores* of both the young women and the parents implies a small association between generations. Girls with higher education tend to have higher aggregate OM scores, and the same goes for their parents. But overall parental modernity seems to be only weakly correlated to their daughter's education (level and tier). In the global South, mainstreamed education ideologies, systems like curriculum, infrastructure, and language of instruction typically are imported, mirrored after Euro-American systems (Crossley & Watson, 2003; Fiala, 2007; Thew, 2012). So theoretically, one can tentatively conclude that Liberians who attend mainstream governmental schools rather than more Afro-centered ethnic or religious

educational institutions (like bush schools) may display value structures that reflect westernized or urbanized values *(see Appendix 6).*

Comparatively, in *Table 5.4*, parental OM items appear even less correlated in general to their daughter's education level with a few exceptions, one particularly of interest. While *public participation's sub-scale total* is weakly associated with education, "Participation 1 (taking action on a public issue of high concern)" for young women and her parent seems to have a positive correlation to education level.

Table 5.4 Key Correlations of Education Level/Tier and OM Scale's Items of Household Knowledge, Attitudes, & Behaviors

	Girl's Edu. Level	Parent's Edu. Level
Total OM Score: Young Woman	0.29***	-0.01
Total OM Score: Parent	-0.06	0.31***
Young Women's OM:		
Public participation 1	0.19***	-0.10*
Public participation: total subscale	0.13*	-0.01
Educational aspiration 2	0.23***	-0.01
Efficacy 1	0.03	-0.14**
Women's rights 3	0.12*	-0.18***
Family planning 1	0.14**	0.02
Family planning 2	0.14**	0.06
Parent's OM:		
Public participation 1	0.24***	0.23***
Public participation: total subscale	0.03	0.14**
Educational aspiration 2	0.03	0.28***
Educational aspiration 3	-0.02	0.14**
Citizenship 1	-0.01	0.13**
Citizenship 2	-0.05	0.15**
Citizenship 4	-0.19***	0.08
Efficacy 1	0.10*	0.17***
Women's rights 1	-0.11*	0.25***
Family planning 4	-0.13**	0.13*
Family planning: total subscale	-0.05	0.11*

Note: $^*p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$.

Table 5.5 further indicates that parents who "often" take action tend to have daughters with significantly higher tiers of schooling than those who "never take action." Among girls with primary or no schooling, parents tend to take "no action." Yet such examples of 'modern' statements linked to higher education are seemingly a handful.

Likewise, when disaggregating by individual OM items, we find that overall, most items and sub-scales for both young women and their parents are weakly correlated to girls' education, except for a small handful of items. For example, a young woman's "Educational Aspiration 2: higher media/news exposure" is positively correlated with her *education level* (r= 0.26); but ironically, most other items including her other *educational aspiration* statements are poorly associated if at all. While the correlation between Family Planning 2 and girls' education is very small, a t-test analysis implies that young women who believe "a woman has the right to say no to sleep with a man like her husband" have significantly more education on average (nearly two grade levels higher) than peers who believe a woman should be submissive in the bedroom (t=3.60, Cohen's *d*= -0.43) *(see Appendix 20, Table 3).*

Table 5.5 Factor of Parental Public Participation on Daughter's Education Tier

| Daughter's School Tier | Participation 1: concerned about public issue, took action | | | |
	Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Often (3)	Total
No School	14 (.22)	16 (.08)	9 (.04)	39 (.08)
Primary	9 (.14)	15 (.08)	21 (.10)	45 (.09)
Secondary	39 (.60)	150 (.76)	149 (.67)	338 (.70)
Advanced	3 (.04)	16 (0.8)	42 (.19)	61 (.13)
Total	65 (100.0)	197 (100.0)	221 (100.0)	483 (100.0)

Note: $\chi 2$ = 36.81, p=0.00, Cramer's V= 0.20, gamma=0.36 (ss). Observed frequency outside parentheses. Percentages in parentheses.

A multivariate regression analysis of modern knowledge, attitudes, and belief on *education level* triangulates these general associative findings yet uncovers some inconsistencies in predictor

relationships. Aggregate OM scores of parents and their daughters follow the same patterns (although these scales have low reliability, so PI treats these models with caution). Next, we regress disaggregated sub-scales and individual OM items. These models further indicate that previously identified items are generally related to a *daughter's education level*, however their coefficients are small, while the rest of the items have insignificant relationships *(see Appendix 20, Table 4)*. Mainly, there appear to be a limited number of consistent relationships that can be identified. Yet overall, this analysis tentatively finds that some items of modern culture particularly elements of *public participation* are positively associated with higher schooling among girls and their parents.

5.6.2 Child Rape Status and Traditional Culture

Applying a similar analysis as the last sub-section, we now examine if child sexual abuse rates (measured by the binary variable of *child rape status*) correlate to modern psychological knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors (measured by OM total score and disaggregated by individual items/relevant sub-scales).

As explained, there is literature that states that most of traditional culture is often associated with negative outcomes for girls, including early/arranged marriages and female genital cutting. The qualitative interviews also identify a pattern among Liberian stakeholders stating that rural communities are less likely to comply with child protection policies and procedures protecting girls from rape. This analysis primarily concerns the inputs of parental knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs as influencing the child rape status of their daughters (who as adults would have experienced rape in the past).

Table 5.6 Relationship between Parental Modern Culture and Daughter's Child Rape Status

	Daughter's Child Rape Status (0 non; 1 rape case)	
	Point Biserial	Phi
Total OM Score: parent	-0.01	-
Public Participation 1: ever got highly concerned on issue, took action (often, sometimes, never)	0.10*	-
Public Participation 2: belong to any organizations (yes/no)	-	0.01
Public Participation 3: have voter's card (yes/no)		0.05
Public Participation 4: voted in last election (yes/no)		0.05
Public Participation 5: how many times voted/10 years	0.01	-
Public Participation: Total sub-scale score	0.05	-
Educational Aspiration 1: if school free, how much should child like yours (girl) get (a lot, some, none)	-0.05	-
Educational Aspiration 2: how freq. get media/news (often, sometimes, never)	-0.09	-
Educational Aspiration 3: studying in school most important (reading/math, vocational skills, religious texts)	-0.02	-
Citizenship 1: law considered unjust, you would (take action, no action)	-	0.01
Citizenship 2: what qualifies person most for high office (high education and spec. knowledge, popularity, devotion to old ways, right family)	0.00	-
Citizenship 3: whose advice more important (presid., depends, tribe/relig. ldr.)	0.06	-
Citizenship 4: consider self as first-and-foremost (Liberian, both, tribe/ethnic)	0.08	-
Efficacy 1: kind of job want with decision-making (a lot, some, none)	0.05	-
Efficacy 2: person's position in life depends on (own efforts, mix, fate)	-0.13**	-
Efficacy 3: most important to Liberia's future (hard work, gov't plan, God's will, good fortune)	-0.16**	-
Efficacy 4: most important for getting better (medical care, both, prayer)	-0.01	-
Efficacy 5: been affected by witchcraft/juju/curse (no/yes)	-	-0.08
Women's Rights 1: discuss politics w/spouse (often, sometimes, never)	0.08	-
Women's Rights 2: should unmarried 18-year-old girl take job far away (under most circumstances, some, never)	-0.10*	-
Women's Rights 3: how to pick girl's husband (herself, both, parents)	0.04	-
Women's Rights 4: marry parent choice even if not like him (no, yes)	-	-0.09*
Women's Rights 5: marry her choice even if parents disagree (yes, no)	-	-0.07
Women's Rights 6: vote for qualified woman as president/senator (yes, no)	-	0.03
Family Planning 1: woman say no to sleeping with man (yes, no)	-	-0.12**
Family Planning 2: okay to limit number of children (yes, no)	-	0.03
Family Planning 3: can female use contraception/pill (yes, no)	-	0.03
Family Planning 4: can man use contraception/condom (yes, no)	-	0.13**
Family Planning: Total sub-scale score	0.05	-

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; Point biserial is for binary on continuous comparison, while phi is for a 2x2 binary comparison.

Table 5.6 presents the correlations between parental OM scores (aggregated and disaggregated items) and daughter's child rape status, as well as the phi for the binary bivariate relationships. The data implies that in general a young woman's *child rape status* is weakly associated with *total OM scores* of their parents *(issues of reliability presented in Chapter Four).* A similar pattern is found when examining the associations to the dependent variable disaggregated by individual OM items and relevant sub-scales for young women and their parents. Both contingency analyses and t-tests further verify that overall, there is a weak relationship between modern knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors (aggregate and disaggregated items) and statutory rape.

We can tentatively conclude that in general high overall measures of modern culture do not necessarily decrease the prevalence of child sexual abuse. However, there are some OM items in the realm of *efficacy* and *family planning* that may interact with lower rape rates. A few *parental efficacy* items are slightly associated to their daughter's statutory rape status, like "what is most important to Liberia's future: good luck, God's will, good government planning, or hard work of the people." Just like with the variable of "taking action on an issue of concern", this efficacy statement may reveal a volitional willingness of parents to take on responsibility to effect change in their lives and country instead of relying on fatalistic values like fate and religion. Fatalism is quite common in Liberian society, affecting various aspects of life like skepticism of modern health issues (Atwood et al.) and government processes (Guseh, 2008). Additionally, there are a few parental *family planning* values that appear to be associated with rape status. These are worth exploring in the next sub-section testing for key rival hypotheses related to modern/traditional culture.

5.6.3 Rival Hypotheses

In this sub-section, we test two key rival hypotheses related to how knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors interact with educational attainment and child rape status. The first alternative hypothesis is that girl's education is not only correlated with high modernity but also with low modernity statements (a few of which represent traditional ethnic affiliation). OM items are scaled with more modern responses represented by higher values and traditional responses scaled numerically lower (based on Inkeles's research).

Table 5.7 explores whether the scope of modernity statements on binary variables of OM affects girls' average education level.

Table 5.7 Differences in Girls' Education Level on Responses to Key Binary OM Items

	Girl's Avg. Education Level		
	Low Modern Response	High Modern Response	Difference
	M, SE, SD	M, SE, SD	M, SE, [CI],
Variables	[CI], N	[CI], N	t Value, Cohen's d
Young Women's OM:			
Public participation 2:	8.13, 0.36, 3.89	9.46, 0.16, 3.98	-1.33, 0.41, [-2.12- -0.53],
belong to any orgs	[7.41-9.13], 115	[9.13-9.78], 588	-3.28, -0.33
Women's rights 3:	7.60, 0.41, 4.09	9.50, 0.16, 3.91	-1.91, 0.43, [-2.75- -0.07],
marry parent choice	[6.78-8.41], 99	[9.19-9.81], 609	-4.47, -0.48
even if not like him			
Family planning 1:	8.41, 0.43, 4.03	9.36, 0.16, 3.93	-0.94, 0.43, [-1.79- -0.09],
limit # of children	[7.56-9.28], 98	[9.05-9.53], 608	-2.13, -0.24
Family planning 2:	7.80, 0.52, 4.65	9.47, 0.15, 3.95	-1.67, 0.46, [-2.58- -0.80],
girl can say doesn't	[6.77-8.83], 81	[8.98-9.57], 615	-3.60, -0.43
want to sleep with man			
Parent's OM:			
Family planning 4:	9.96, 0.33, 4.09	9.09, 0.20, 3.65	0.87, 0.38, [0.13-2.58- 1.60],
use male protection	[9.30-10.61], 152	[8.65-9.72], 314	2.31, 0.23
like condoms			

Note: CI is confidence interval.

When examining some key differences between high modern responses to low to individual OM items, we note that higher levels of girls' education (though the difference is by a few grades) is

more often significantly linked with 'modern' responses, such as a young woman's belief to *Family Planning 2* being 'yes, a girl can say she doesn't want to sleep with a man like her husband/partner.' Yet intriguingly, some 'less modern' OM responses appear to be positively associated to girls' schooling attainment, for instance parents responding to the traditional/conservative belief of *Family Planning 4* that 'men shouldn't use protection like condoms.' In the table below, the dependent variable is listed above while the independent variables are horizontal for easier presentation.

Relatedly, there are a few OM questions that directly measure affiliation with traditional/ethnic culture versus nationalism, including citizenship self-identity and following traditional/religious leadership over governmental agendas. These items are useful in better testing traditional affiliation against the dependent variable.

Table 5.8 Factor of Parental Citizenship Identity on Daughter's Education

	Citizen 4: consider yourself first-and-foremost Liberian or ethnic group/tribe		
Education	Tribe/Ethnic Group (1)	Liberian/nationality (2)	Total
Primary/No schooling	5 (.07)	64 (.18)	69 (.15)
Secondary/Tertiary	66 (.93)	290 (.81)	356 (.85)
Total	71 (100.0)	354 (100.0)	468 (100.0)

Note: $\chi2$= 5.30, p=0.02, phi= 0.11. Observed frequency outside parentheses. Percentages in parentheses.

Table 5.8 indicates a traditional response to the *citizenship* item assessing whether a parent primarily self-identifies with their 'tribe/ethnic group' over 'nationality/being Liberian' is associated with having a daughter with higher tiers of education. Most participants affiliate with being Liberian in general. Yet parents who self-identify first-and-foremost with their ethnic group/tribe are nearly 3 times more likely to have daughters who have secondary or tertiary education than those who identify as Liberian. In Liberia (unlike some regions in Africa), identifying with one or more of the 16 tribes is common with little to no social stigma. Indigenous

or tribal affiliation tends to be a normal, positive attribute among most citizens (Badu, 2018; Wallace, 2014). The word 'ethnicity' is rarely used or understood in colloquial Liberian-English, but it includes the main tribes and other ethnic groups including Americo-Liberian and Lebanese-Liberian. Given the fact the civil wars in country often involved fighting between ethnic affiliations and Liberia has been at peace for nearly 15 years, this is a unique finding in citizenship identity and education which may benefit from future qualitative investigation.

The second rival hypothesis that this analysis examines is whether child sexual abuse is correlated to either lower or higher modern responses. *Table 5.9* indicates that parents who hold more conservative beliefs about the future of their nation tend to have daughters with a higher frequency of rapes than parents who are more fatalistic. In fact, Liberian parents who prioritize 'God's will' are 1.8 times more likely to have a daughter who is sexually abused than those believing in 'people's hard work' (phi= 0.18).

Table 5.9 Factor of Parental Efficacy on Daughter's Child Rape Status

Daughter's Status	Efficacy 3: what is most important to Liberia's future				
	Good luck (1)	God's will (2)	Gov't plan (3)	Hard work (4)	Total
Non-rape	5 (.50)	66 (.62)	108 (.58)	133 (.79)	312 (.66)
Rape	5 (.50)	40 (.38)	79 (.42)	36 (.21)	160 (.34)
Total	10 (100.0)	106 (100.0)	187 (100.0)	169 (100.0)	472 (100.0)

Note: χ^2 = 19.63, p=0.00, Cramer's V= 0.20, gamma=-0.28 (ss). Observed frequency outside parentheses. Percentages in parentheses.

Similarly, *Table 5.10* factors in the effect of whether parents believe in female voice in sexual relationships, including whether "a girl can say no to sleeping with a man (like husband/partner)." Parents who disagree with this statement tend to be 1.4 times more likely to have daughters who are rape survivors than parents who support a woman being able to say no.

Some particular proactive knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs focusing on gender equity may support improved human security for daughters.

Table 5.10 Factor of Parental Family Planning on Daughter's Child Rape Status

| | Family Planning 1: can female say no to sleeping with man | | |
Rape Status	No, she can't (1)	Yes, she can (2)	Total
Non-rape	52 (.55)	255 (.68)	307 (.66)
Rape	43 (.45)	118 (.32)	161 (.44)
Total	95 (100.0)	373 (100.0)	468 (100.0)

Note: $\chi2= 6.23$, p=0.01, phi= 0.12. Observed frequency outside parentheses. Percentages in parentheses.

Some KAB variables that impact a girl's chances of not being raped tend to relate to positive views towards *parental efficacy* and gender-equitable values towards *family planning/women's rights*. The data supports association of some OM measures with lower rates of sexual assault. Yet at least one high-modern statement on OM items is conversely related to 'higher' rape odds, for instance, the variable asking whether it is good for "a man to use contraception like a condom." Parents who agree with this statement have daughters nearly twice as likely to be rape victims than not (phi=0.13).

The OM items presented above indicate that there are very few unique factors that challenge the main hypotheses presented about modernity linked to human development indicators of female education and sexual abuse. Overall, we can tentatively conclude the hypotheses on OM stand as presented. While there may be a few significant items of traditional views (in this case self-identifying with one's ethnic group/tribe over being Liberian) associated with girl's education, higher schooling levels still tend to mainly be correlated to higher modern culture (both aggregated and disaggregated). Moreover, there are OM items on both spectrums of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors that are positively linked to lower rape rates. Again, these examples testing the hypothesis that child sexual abuse is not correlated to high modern culture are few; but nor is it exceedingly related to low-modernity or traditionalism.

5.7 Safe Schooling Environments

This sub-section tests the final hypothesis that the *safety of the learning environment* of the education that a girl receives is moderately correlated with lower prevalence of child sexual assault. We know that educational attainment is statistically linked to safer sexual initiation like delayed age of first pregnancy. Secondly, higher tiers of education are also linked to lower rates of sexual assault, but only when girls reach advanced levels of education like university. We then ask how the provision of a child-friendly, gender-responsive learning environment (as measured by the UNICEF Child-Friendly Schools [CFS] Scale) interacts with *education level* and the dependent variable of *child rape status*.

This analysis considers the total CFS scores for 1) the young women on their reported educational experiences and 2) that of their parents related to their experiences with their daughter's schooling, which are scales with high reliability (alpha about 0.6). The school environment is measured using Likert scale items, in which the participant states if s/he strongly agrees to strongly disagrees with a statement based on personal school experience. *Only young women who attended school and their parents answered CFS scale agreement statements, so the findings do not represent those who never attended class*. These items cover school daily operations, student work, school infrastructure quality, safety of traveling between home and school, fear of harm in school, gender equitable student-teacher relations, quality of parent-teacher association and parental engagement, established and posted codes of conduct, and prevalence of sexual harassment and illicit sexual relationships. As this analysis indicates, educational access may not be enough in itself to improve a girl's human security from sexual harm.

A point biserial correlation analysis implies that *child rape status, education level*, and *safety of the learning environment* are slight associations, with higher school safety environments

linked to higher education level (r_{pb}= 0.15) and lower rape rates (-0.18). Their parent's CFS experiences appear poorly correlated. OLS regression modeling additionally suggests that the more friendly and safe a girl's learning environment is, the longer she is likely to advance through school *(see Appendix 20, Table 5).*

Table 5.11 Differences in Child Rape Status by Perceived Safety of Learning Environment of Girls

	Female Child Rape Status		
	Non-Rape	Rape	Difference
	M, SE, SD	M, SE, SD	M, SE, [CI],
Variables	[CI], N	[CI], N	t Value, Cohen's d
Young Women's CFS:			
Total score	29.7, 0.20, 3.89	28.3, 0.29, 3.95	1.4, 0.35, [0.7- 2.1],
(risker 15-36 pts. safer)	[29.3-30.1], 364	[27.7-28.9], 187	4.05, 0.36
CFS3: Boys & girls have	3.5, 0.04, 0.87	3.2, 0.07, 0.90	0.2, 0.08, [0.2- 0.6],
equal opport./treatment in	[3.4-3.5], 412	[3.1-3.4], 213	2.86, 0.24
school (disagree 1-5 agree)			
CFS4: Families like mine	2.9, 0.06, 1.17	2.5, 0.08, 1.22	0.4, 0.10, [0.1- 0.4],
involve in school	[2.8-3.0], 408	[2.3-2.6], 213	4.18, 0.35
decision-making (1-5)			
CFS6: No cases of teachers	2.2, 0.06, 1.23	1.9, 0.08, 1.14	0.3, 0.10, [0.0- 0.4],
or staff having relations	[2.0-2.3], 405	[1.8-2.2], 213	2.15, 0.18
w/students (1-5)			
CFS8: There's a trusted	3.4, 0.05, 0.96	3.2, 0.06, 0.94	0.2, 0.08, [0.1- 0.23,
person students can	[3.3-3.5], 409	[3.2-3.3], 214	2.02, 0.17
approach w/problems (1-5)			
Parent's CFS:			
Total score:	40.8, 0.28, 4.80	40.5, 0.21, 4.55	0.3, 0.45, [-0.5-1.2],
(risker 21-48 pts. safer)	[40.2-41.33], 297	[40.3-41.1], 314	0.66, 0.07
PCFS3: School welcoming	5.2, 0.06, 1.12	4.8, 0.05, 1.19	0.4, 0.12, [0.1-0.6],
& attractive environment	[5.1-5.4], 307	[4.7-50.0], 161	3.05, 0.30
for students (1-5)			
PCFS8: No issues of	3.6, 0.11, 1.90	3.1, 0.16, 2.03	0.5, 0.19, [0.1-0.8],
student harassment between	[3.3-3.8], 307	[2.8-3.4], 162	2.35, 0.23
home & school (1-5)			

Note: CI is confidence interval.

Table 5.11 triangulates these patterns with t-values indicating that daughters who are not raped as children tend to have somewhat safer, more gender-inclusive schooling environments

compared to victimized peers. The t-test table again places the dependent variable on top with the independent CFS items vertically for presentation ease. While the difference appears small, it may signal a generalizable finding among the Liberian population that school safety levels play a critical role in minimizing female assault rates among educated girls. A contingency analysis of young women's CFS scores and child rape status triangulates the relationship's effect size ($\chi 2=$ 34.20, p= 0.03, Cramér's V= 0.25).

However, *Figure 5.1* suggests that the apparent effects of CFS may not be same for every school tier and may even reflect diminishing returns the higher up the educational ladder that a Liberian girl climbs. This graph presents the percentage of girls in each tier group being statutorily raped for all school environments, school environments with lower/risker safety levels (below average) and with higher/safer levels (above average). The decline in rape rates appears the greatest among girls attending low-safety schools verses high-safety schools at primary level. 56 percent of all girls in primary schools with unsafe environments are raped compared to only 36 percent of those in safer primary schools, with a drop-in crime rate of about 20 percent. The difference in rates for female students in secondary school is 6 percent and among girls with advanced education is 4 percent, all of which indicates that effects of child-friendly schooling may be greater for lower grade levels. Girls at the primary level may be more vulnerable, as they are less mature, with lower decision-making capacity, physically less able to fend off attacks, and easier to groom/exploit/coerce than their older peers in later grades (Leclerc & Felson, 2016).
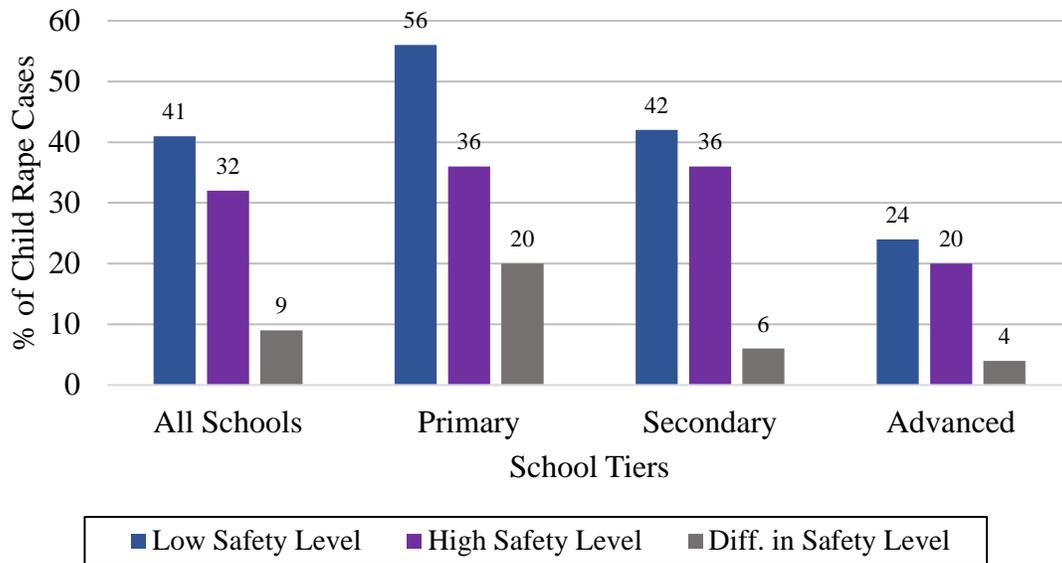
Figure 5.1 Percentage of Female Child Rape Cases Given School Safety Environment

At the same time, *Table 5.10* further indicates that not all items in the CFS scale appear to relate to lowered abuse rates among female pupils. This t-test analysis still might highlight some important factors that can help a schooling environment significantly minimize abuse rates, which could be beneficial for a variety of stakeholders like policymakers, principals, parent-teacher associations, and even students to prioritize for more likely change in their schools. The PI categorizes these items into three distinct action areas common in education programming:

1) The *provision of a positive and gender-friendly school atmosphere*, where female students feel that girls and boys having equal opportunity/treatment in school, and parents believe the school is a welcoming and attractive environment for their kids

2) *Means of accountability are in place*, including families of female students being involved in school decision-making (signaling family involvement), and girls feeling that there is a person in the school in a position of trust whom students can approach with problems like reporting abuse (formal reporting mechanisms)

3) *A 'zero-tolerance of abuse/harassment' environment* is established, in which female pupils agree there are little to no cases of teachers/school staff having sexual relationships with students, and parents feel there is little to no issue of student harassment between home and school.

The qualitative data seems to validate the importance of these action areas. The District Education Officer (DEO) agrees that multiple stakeholder participation in schools at the local level is crucial to improving gender-responsive education through resourcing, management, and accountability. "Teachers, parent-teachers association and community leader along with other stakeholders [in the education and child protection sectors] are the resources needed." Unfortunately, the widespread lack of awareness around issues of sexual violence is a frequent issue that is brought up by nearly all the stakeholders in the key informant interviews. The female university student and mother both suggest that most people in their communities know the policies forbidding harmful relations between adults and children like teachers and students, but they and others emphasize that 'more awareness and action' are needed. For instance, the DEO states, "[T]he beneficiary are not well informed, more awareness needs to be created." Lastly, most stakeholders identify additional challenges with the lack of reporting and prosecution of female rapes including those within the school environment. A rival hypothesis is that child-friendly schooling is only useful if it directly involves awareness building and active reporting mechanisms around sexual-based violence. *The next chapter explores these issues in more detail.*

Likewise, the CFS scale is quite robust in its indicators, reminding us that providing a safe and nurturing environment requires a much more holistic approach than simply offering a few workshops on sexual abuse. Schools are complex environments where factors of learning quality, inclusive teaching, child-focused pedagogy, equitable access, safety, administrative management

and accountability, and psychosocial and emotional wellbeing all co-mingle to impact a child's development. Policy and programs need to take on a multi-dimensional approach to effect sustainable human security change.

5.8 Interaction of Main Explanatory Variables

Lastly, this analysis runs a series of logistic regression models (presenting odd-ratios, not coefficients), presented in *Table 5.12* below, to examine the effects of level (tier) of education and the perceived safety of schools on lower prevalence of child sexual assault. These models assess the relevance of each main variable as they are staged together, uncovering an interesting framework for consideration in how variables interact to impact the dichotomous dependent variable of *child rape status*. This regression analysis excludes any rival hypothesis items with coefficients lower than correlations of 0.20 related to girls' education or child rape status. Nearly all the models imply that the effect of *education level* (grades completed) on rape remains significant yet the coefficient is low, suggesting only high levels of schooling such as tertiary can lower the odds of a girl being victimized.

Models 2-3 indicate that *total OM scores* of daughters and parents have some effect on preventing rape of girls. Additionally, Models 4-6 suggest that a handful of individual OM items appear to play a small role in influencing the odds. The analysis incorporates those Hypothesis 2-3 items identified as likely important indicators that in the previous correlation analyses were associated with education and child protection. In the regression models, key KAB items appear to include indicators on *parental efficacy* (what they identify as most important for Liberia's future) and *public participation* (being concerned enough about a public issue to take some level

of action). Model 4 for instance implies a 1.61 increase in the odds ratio of rape when there is a one-unit change in Public Participation 1 modernity response, holding all other variables constant.

Additionally, later models account for fixed effects of ethnic group, district number, and age of the female participants, meant to control for the average differences across inter-location and inter-generational disparities (as the age range for the young women is nearly 15 years) in any observable or unobservable predictors. For instance, in Models 10-12, the odds of a girl being victimized decrease by about 0.90 for every one-unit increase in a girl's education level, holding all other variables constant.

However, it is important to note that the effects of *safety level of the educational environment* remain consistently throughout, particularly CFS experiences of the female students. In the last models, there is an apparent 0.88 decrease in the odds ratio when perceived school safety increases by one unit. As found with Hypothesis 5, the safer and more nurturing her schooling environment seemingly is, the less chance the girl experiences statutory rape. Additionally, the PI tests numerous models that incorporate other secondary variables that the survey captured, including demographics like socio-economic status, parental education, district type, and familiar statistics like marital status and number of children; policy knowledge among participants; and frequency rates of community sexual violence, all of which appear irrelevant with low odds ratios and p-values.

Logistic analysis is commonly used to examine the relationship between a variety of predictor variables (either categorical or continuous) and a binary outcome's baseline odds. The rows in the table below with larger coefficients may be particularly important because of the strength of the coefficient (not so much the p-values, which reflect a large sample). Furthermore, logistic regression modeling requires careful selection of the correct variables to place in a model.

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One pitfall to avoid is including too many input variables, which may dilute "true associations and lead to large standard errors with wide and imprecise confidence intervals, or, conversely, identify spurious associations" (Ranganathan, Pramesh, & Aggarwal, 2017, 9). For this reason, the PI first considers the implications of all the findings produced in the correlational, contingency, t-test, and regression analyses in full before drawing final conclusions. She also weighs key data from the qualitative interviews, which for this chapter, either help to triangulate the individual hypotheses of this research or raise rival hypotheses.

Table 5.12 Logistic Regression of Child Rape Status of Liberian Young Women by Research Variables

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
						Statutory Rape (odds ratio)						
Girl's Education Level	0.93***	0.92***	0.93*	0.92***	0.92***	0.90**	0.91**	0.91**	0.91**	0.89**	0.90**	0.94
(grades)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.06)
Total OM Score: Young		0.96	0.93									
Woman (21-36 pts.)		(0.04)	(0.05)									
Total OM Score:			1.01									
Parent (42-72 pts.)			(0.03)									
Public Participation 1:				1.61***	1.56***							
Young Woman (1-3)				(0.26)	(0.22)							
Edu. Aspiration 2: Young				0.77								
Woman (1-3)				(0.14)								
Public Participation 1:				1.33*		1.24						
Parent (1-3)				(0.22)		(0.22)						
Citizenship 4: Parent				1.23								
(1-3)				(0.19)								
Efficacy 3: Parent				0.67***	0.66***	0.72**	0.77*					
(1-4)				(0.13)	(0.08)	(0.10)	(0.11)					
Total CFS Score: Young						0.91***	0.88**	0.88***	0.90***	0.88***	0.88***	0.88***
Woman (15-36 safer)						(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Total CFS Score:							1.06**	1.05*	1.07**	1.06*	1.07*	1.10**
Parent (21-48 safer)							(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.05)
Child Rape: Confidant									0.26***	0.23***	0.24***	0.31***
(non 0-1 rape case)									(0.26)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.09)
Ethnic Grp (Fixed Effects)										Y		
Age (Fixed Effects)											Y	
District (Fixed Effects)												Y
Constant	1.04	4.27	5.37	0.72	1.80	34.64***	8.72**	5.77*	17.57**	48.04***	27.02**	0.84
	(0.20)	(4.50)	(11.57)	(0.77)	(0.96)	(35.05)	(9.30)	(5.83)	(22.68)	(66.38)	(38.99)	(1.65)
Observations	690	605	300	440	459	373	360	363	319	315	311	318
Pseudo R-squared		0.02	0.02	0.05	0.04	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.13	0.16	0.16	0.27

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$

5.9 Conclusions

The quantitative analysis from this chapter tested five key hypotheses related to the research questions. *Figure 5.2* offers an overview of the results of the statistical tests of these hypotheses, whether they hold, and conditions that may be related to rival hypotheses or analysis limitations.

Main Hypotheses of Study	Statistical Testing Results
H_1: Overall female child sexual abuse is moderately and negatively correlated with levels of education.	Holds—with exception that lower rates mainly linked to advanced education
H_2: Female survivors of child sexual abuse who attend school are more likely to have an adult perpetrator who is associated with an educational occupation than female survivors with no education.	Tentative—small sample of non-educated females limits analysis; most assailants have occupations outside of school, while 38% are school-based
H_3: Households with higher measures of modern culture than traditionalistic values are moderately correlated with higher rates of education (for both parents and daughters), and different types of efficacy and other attributes of adult agency.	Holds—with small exception of a few low-modern statements and traditional items related to high rates of education
H_4: Modern knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs are not correlated with higher rates of child sexual abuse/rape.	Holds—with some exception of several high-modern statements and one low-modern statement items related to differences in rape prevalence
H_5: The safety of the learning environment of the education that a girl receives is moderately correlated with delayed sexual engagement and lower prevalence of child sexual assault.	Holds—but effect is not linear, mostly prominent among primary school populations, with diminishing association at higher education tiers

Figure 5.2 Summary of Quantitative Results of Dissertation Hypotheses

Furthermore, this analysis contributes a variety of key findings to gaps in development literature. Firstly, the analysis helps explain the size of the policy issue found in *Hawa's Query* throughout Liberian society. The primary purpose of the quantitative analysis remains to assess the magnitude of the issue of child rape, and determine to what degree the key variables of education level, modern/traditional knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors, as well as the safety of the learning environment interact with the dependent variable, including in schools. The

underlying reasons behind the scale of the issue and the meaning behind the quantitative relationships are explored in the next chapter.

The statistical findings of this dissertation indicate that 35 percent of Liberian females face child rape. Nearly all girls, regardless of their demographics of socio-economic background, ethnicity, or location share similar prevalence rates of being raped by adult men. This study's findings also point to the historical relationship between modern knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs being linked to higher rates of education. This is important as conventional research frequently correlates putting girls in school to delaying early marriage. But this research suggests that educational attainment alone cannot fully guarantee human security for Liberian girls from sexual abuse. Hawa's experience is not a lone outlier but an actual phenomenon within society. Like a game of 'snakes and ladders,' the goal for schoolgirls is to climb high enough up the education ladder without slipping off too soon. Data analysis indicates that girls with lower levels of education such as primary school face statistically similar child sexual abuse rates as peers who never enter school, with approximately 40 percent being statutory rape survivors. Female pupils at the secondary level fair only slightly better than those with less education. However, if girls are able to complete advanced schooling like university, their rape rates significantly decrease. Sadly, only a small percentage of girls ever make it that far.

Secondly, the analysis helps establish for perhaps the first time the statistical profile of rapists linked to educational occupations. The data suggests that while most assailants of Liberian girls are men who work a variety of occupations outside of a schooling environment, about 38 percent are school-based adult perpetrators. Educated rape survivors are about equally as likely to be raped by a man working in a school as by one in another occupation. Moreover, the odds for a primary and secondary student are slightly higher to have a teacher, school staff member, or older student as her assailant than a non-educated peer, although the effect size of

this difference is low likely due to too small a sample of uneducated participants in the survey. This latter finding has limited generalizability but indicates that ecological environment may be a factor in rapist profiles: girls who are around educators more may be more likely to have them as attackers. Yet men in education occupations also represent nearly a quarter of assailants of girls out of school.

It may be tempting to say the percentage of school-based assailants is relatively small compared to men in other occupations. But we must take into consideration two facts. First, schools make up only one of dozens of occupational settings, indicating a stark 'concentration of rapists' in this occupational realm. Some assailants may be serial rapists due to their access to potential victims and the lack of accountability reported by multiple stakeholders. Secondly, from a moral and ethical standpoint, educators and adults in schools should be considerably much less likely to be child rapists given both their specialized orientation in child development and learning, as well as working in environments that by governmental mandates are *guaranteed* child-safe spaces. Like in most nations, Liberian teachers and school staff must swear to 2014 MOE codes of ethical conduct, including detailed mandates for proper student-teacher relationships banning any romantic/sexual practices and *quid-pro-quo*, as well as establishing safe and child-friendly environments. Sex between schoolchildren of any age and education staff/adult students are strictly prohibited and can result in dismissal, suspension, and potential prosecution. The idea of even one child being raped by a school staff or adult student is deplorable; yet for many girls, it is catastrophic.

Thirdly, the analysis explores how modern culture may link to educational attainment (summary findings in *Figure 5.3* below). Development literature often addresses factors like household KAB variables that help guarantee marginalized children, including girls, are afforded equitable opportunities to enter school to further their human capacities and agency. The statistical analysis of *Hypothesis 3* indicates that overall modernity (total OM score)

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appears positively related to educational achievement, as are most OM items like public participation that are correlated to higher levels of girls' schooling.

Moreover, this study may be one of the first to examine the relationship between modern culture and child sexual abuse in Liberia, thus helpfully contributing to the gaps in KAP surveys in child protection research. The analysis tentatively concludes that neither aggregated modern or traditional culture, nor most of their sub-scales and OM items, are associated with a girl's rape status. The analysis of OM rival hypothesis does however suggest that there are a few exceptional items that challenge the two original hypotheses related to modern culture, including that there are some traditional items like self-identifying with one's tribe over nationality related to lower rape rates, just as there some modern items which tend to reflect support for gender equity. Yet these are not enough to disprove the original hypotheses.

Item- Source	Modern Culture	Weak/No Association	Traditional Culture
Literature on Child Development/ Protection	No established modernity research on child sexual abuse	Other literature states only harmful/ discriminatory practices are associated with child sexual abuse	Some research indicating nearly all traditional practices harm girls' rights
Literature on Girls' Education	Most modernity scholarship finds formal education as correlated; More education correlated with lower early pregnancy		Some recent research posits positive traditional knowledge, behaviors, and practices can supplement formal education
Qualitative interview statements	Associated with higher girls' education; Urban areas suffer from more negative influences like drug and alcohol use		Associated with policy failures- higher child rape rates, higher adolescent pregnancies, and lower education rates
Qualitative findings on Education	Total OM scores related to higher education; some disaggregated OM items & sub-scales on public participation, educational aspiration, and citizenship		May be some parental traditional items like ethnic vs. national self-identity linked to higher female education (very few); One low-modern statements like a man shouldn't use contraception linked to high female education rates
Qualitative findings on Child Rape Status	Some modern statements by parents on efficacy like future of Liberia depending on hard work of people & family planning like girls' voice in sexual relationships linked to lower child rape rates	Most OM items and scale scores not correlated with either spectrum; coefficients and effect sizes can be modest	One low-modern statements like a man shouldn't use contraception linked to lower rape rates (only example)

Figure 5.3 Summary Findings of Modern Culture on Girls' Education and Child Rape Status

The view that traditional culture and rurality are obstacles to gender equity in education and child protection, as asserted by multiple participants in the qualitative data, appears to be overstated and may be a purported myth that needs to be better examined. This assumption may come from perceiving the warning signs of rape culture that in truth can exist in either modern cosmopolitan settings or rural conservative locations. A culture of rape involving female victims often includes misogyny, objectification of women's bodies, and a populace that turns a blind eye to pervasive sexual violence (Keller, Mendes, & Ringrose, 2018; Marshall), an issue explored in more depth in the next chapter.

Finally, the analysis from *Hypothesis 5* theoretically substantiates the importance that school environments can have on multiple factors of girls' education and child protection. When daughters experience safer, more nurturing learning environments, they may be more likely to stay in school and appear to experience less sexual abuse as minors. However, while improving safety levels in schools may be a viable solution, like many policy solutions, it may be one that has limits. Higher school safety seems to have a larger effect on lowering child sexual abuse rates among primary students compared to girls with secondary education. In secondary school, there may be factors other than school safety level that come into play, including higher levels of efficacy, sexual activity, peer pressure, and social interactions, thus diminishing the impact of child-friendly schools. Primary schools may also ironically be less safe for girls due to their tender ages when children can be more vulnerable to sexual predators.

The child-friendly schools analysis helps identify key action areas that can statistically better guarantee safer school environments, including providing a welcoming, gender-responsive atmosphere; having systems of accountability in place like family involvement and trained staff for students to meet with about safety issues; and lastly, ensuring safe and healthy relationships between staff and students, including banning illicit relationships or violence. The results of the quantitative analysis show that schools must not only be accessible to all children;

they should also be child-friendly, gender-responsive, and take a *holistic* approach to child protection to mitigate risks children face either on or around school grounds and in the classroom.

6.0 Chapter 6. Qualitative Analysis

6.1 Introduction

There are many people who might have saved Hawa, a young student victimized by her teacher, impregnated, forced out of school, and later onto the streets. There were many opportunities for policy and programming support mechanisms that could have helped her plight but instead failed her and continue still to fail many of her Liberian sisters. Overworked government representatives who struggle to create awareness of and enforce educational and child protection directives. The school staff who turn a blind eye to their colleagues and adult students taking advantage of young female pupils. Community members who want to help stop child abuse but don't know exactly how. The frontline workers- nurses, social workers, and police, who are too under-resourced to make a dent in protecting girls from sex predators. And at the center, the female students and their parents who are aware of abuse inside and outside of schools but either do not trust in the system for justice, or do not know their rights. This quantitative analysis explores the data collected from key informant interviews of 16 stakeholders playing a role in Liberian policies promoting girls' education and banning child sexual abuse. The purpose is to further develop insight of the potential causal mechanisms between the main research variables, including the statistical findings from the last chapter, through highlighting the experiences, perspectives, and voices of those who are intimately involved.

Plays large role in ensuring international development agendas in national policy development process including agenda setting, formation, & planning including funding, typically within ecological macrosystem

Often leads formation, adoption/ decision-making, including planning & administrative guidelines, and implementation protocols, regulations, & supervision within ecological macrosystem and exosystem

Manages majority of policy decision & programming implementation, interacting regularly with clients and community, with some degree of discretion to government regulations & procedures, affecting exosystem and mesosystem

'Third sector' of individuals and non-governmental organizations representing interests, will, and democratic civic engagement operating often at community or district level; can influence policy implementation including monitoring, advocacy, & information dissemination, within meso & microsystems

Are direct and indirect beneficiaries meant to be supported at localized or decentralized level; can play role in policy process including impact as well as resistance; may be affected by fatal remedies, within meso & microsystems

International Development Community

National Policy & Decision-Makers

Policy Implementors & Street-Level Bureaucrats

Community Actors & Civil Society

Target Beneficiaries

Feedback

Ambassador of European country; INGO healthcare director

Ministry of Gender: gender-based violence division research officer & juvenile unit officer; Ministry of Education: district education officer (DEO)

Police commander; Nurse; Social worker; Teacher; Academic; National NGO worker

Parent-teacher association (PTA) member; Civil society organization (CSO) member; Mental health clinician

Young woman (university student); Mother of female child

Figure 6.1 Stakeholders & Policy Process Interaction

This dissertation purposefully seeks to include national professionals' expertise and the experiences of national target participants to informing all that we do in international development. Its *key informant interviewing approach* of various focuses on explaining the issues behind *Hawa's Query (see Chapter Four for details on the methodology). Figure 1* presents the key stakeholders interviewed in the study (listed on right) who fall into five main categories sharing similar policy roles and experiences (listed on left column). Each stakeholder has unique experiences and roles that focus the lens of their understanding behind the magnitude of the research problem and the hypotheses testing results. Key informants can reflect on an array of themes, providing pertinent answers based on their knowledge and experiences, a number of which may overlap or be shared amongst different participants. Interviewees also can describe gaps in systems compared to their intended design in a developing setting (Sonalkar et al., 2014). Furthermore, this analysis uses on a gender analysis lens and applies principles of gender responsive and gender sensitive policy applications.

Additionally, the qualitative data is mapped against the 2018 child protection policy procedures, also called the 'Sexual and Gender Based Violence Referral Pathway,' mandated by the Government of Liberia agencies like the Ministry of Gender Development, Children & Social Protection (MoGCSP) and the Liberian National Police (LNP). *Figure 6.2* details this required referral pathway as of 2018 and the expected steps that should be taken with a child abuse case, including any case that happens either in the community or within school *(see Appendix 22).*
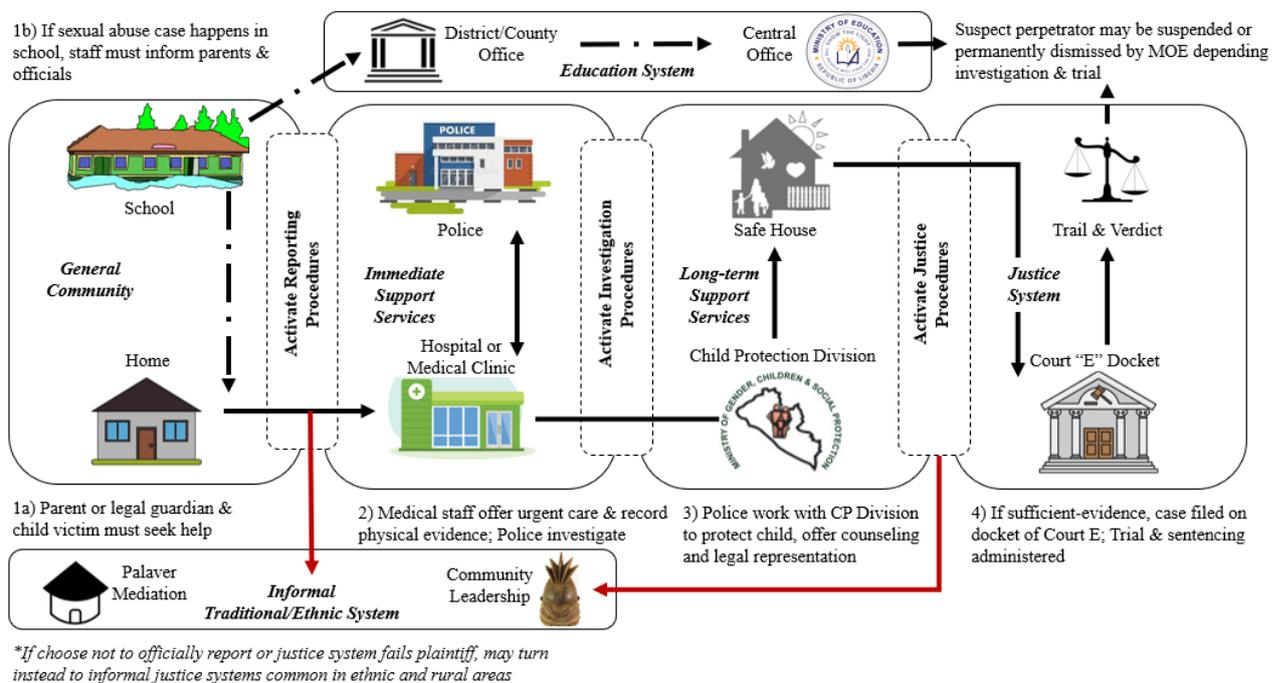
Figure 6.2 Mandated Liberian Child Protection Procedures

Formal procedures are signaled by solid black arrows, the protocol for school incidences of abuse use dotted arrows, and in cases were informal/traditional systems are activated is highlighted in red.

6.2 Gender Analysis

Gender analysis can support identifying the extent that value structures and sociological structures related to gender may hinder or espouse equitable opportunities and outcomes from development initiatives like policy processes, and who is most affected in certain contexts. Policies and programming should be sensitive to the lives of all citizens, including women and children, and how their experiences can be shared by gender norms and interactions with policy processes, informing a larger picture of social, economic, and structural inequality within society. Gender responsive policy and programming, expanding globally in development work, incorporate gender analysis into policy research can uncover key perspectives and experiences of stakeholders that may inform improved policy changes in theory and practice at centralized and decentralized levels, including in future policy budgeting, evaluation, and implementation plans (Global Partnership for Education (GPE), 2017; Jaquette, 2017; Sarraf, 2003).

This gender analysis focuses on key aspects of gender-sensitiveness and gender-responsiveness, which often interact with child-friendly environment mechanisms. *Gender-sensitive* indicates gender awareness and means that a policy or program recognizes the important effects of gender norms, roles, and relations. It is often contrasted with being gender-blind, which overlooks differences in opportunities and resource allocation for women and men, as well as gender norms, roles, and relations and often reinforces gender-based discrimination. *Gender-responsive* applies to a policy or program that fulfills two fundamental criteria of a) gender norms, roles, and relations are considered, and b) measures are taken to actively reduce the harmful effects of gender norms, roles, and relations, involving gender inequality (GPE; Hanson, Smith, & Ngyfuan, 2018). Gender analysis can certainly consider the perspectives and experiences of multiple actors specifically to explore potential phenomena influencing gender equality. While gender analysis is well-established in many development

sectors, gender-responsiveness programming is a quickly rising policy agenda in international education including in Liberia.

6.3 Experiences of Grouped Stakeholders

The groupings of the stakeholders are first organized by their similar interaction with the policy process (determined by the PI based on her extensive knowledge and familiarity with development in Liberia). Participants are asked in the key informant interviews to consider their specific role as a member of one stakeholder group, as some hold several roles like a CSO member who is also a parent. The stakeholders in the outer rings (such as international and national agents) generally set policy definitions and procedures, acting as the dominant decision-makers. Agents in the middle rings like policy implementors and community members tend to ensure the policies are carried out. The center ring are the intended beneficiaries of the policy, who can proactively take advantage of the policy benefits, or reject or refute policy goals and outcomes. Likewise, they may be those in society most negatively injured by fatal remedies of failed policy and programming. The next sub-sections present the general experiences and key comparative findings from each stakeholder group, in relation to the main hypotheses and findings of the study.

6.3.1 International Development Community

As *Figure 6.1* indicates, stakeholders in this most outer ring often play large role in ensuring international development agendas in national policy development process including agenda setting, formation, & planning including funding. Main examples of international development stakeholders often include international government officials like embassy or

foreign service staff; international non-government organizations and nonprofit organizations like Save the Children, UNICEF, or the International Red Cross; international advocacy organizations like human rights agencies like Human Rights Watch; bilateral and multi-lateral agencies like USAID and the World Bank; and multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) and private-public partnerships (PPPs) like the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). While each stakeholder has distinctive roles and experiences, generally they have value-based missions, resource commitment, global or regional operations and networks, and similar levels of formalizations. Their aim in global policy often is to influence or represent a global agenda, often enacted or advocated to national scope, including top-down agenda setting, definition, and implementation approaches for national or domestic level changes placed on national governments and actors elicited through resourcing, funding, or bilateral partnership strategies (Beisheim, Ellersiek, & Lorch, 2018; Martinussen, 1997; Risse, Ropp, & Sikkink, 1999). Their experiences and actions typically influence rules and regulations influencing social interactions mainly within Bronfenbrenner's ecological macrosystem.

This group is represented by participation of two actors: an ambassador from a European country as well as an expatriate director of the Liberian branch of an INGO operating in the health sector. They both indicate their circle's intention to help Liberian national systems develop. The INGO director, a tan woman leaning back in a plastic chair drinking a soda, states:

At our essence we [the INGO] are trying to support the ministry [Ministry of Health] to achieve its goal for a more responsive and resilient health system, and that by its very definition requires a commitment to universal health coverage and equity. And so, we can't have healthy, resilient people if you don't have strong laws and policies in place to protect children and to allow them to thrive and grow in a supportive space. And so, although our entry point is in the health sector, social protection and law enforcement and health are all inter-related and promote wellness, and so you need to have enabling

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policy environments but we are looking for targeted improvements in health outcomes we are looking for pipeline programs.

Her diction offers insight to her consideration of the situation and her position. She uses inclusive wording like "we" referring to her INGO and potentially to the more general international sector; however, transitions to more sectional diction like "you" and "but" when speaking about national systems, indicating she may hold a sharp distinction between the international stakeholders and host-nationals. Her choice of words seems to (almost-unconsciously) reflect the experience of INGO actors often arriving with global agenda goals in a given sector of interest that they hope to further in country, but while critiquing the policies and institutions in country which some expatriates may presume may not seem up to *par-for-the-task*.

This dissertation has extensively shown over multiple chapters that female child rape is a pervasive issue in country, including among schoolgirls. The statistical analysis indicates that nearly 35 percent of all Liberian females experience statutory rape. Yet, while most stakeholders including the international representatives are aware of the issue, their policy knowledge can be quite limited. This factor is of concern as they represent international organizations that could play a crucial role at centralized levels in advocating for better policy implementation and programs to protect girls especially in schools.

Generally, foreign leaders like INGO managers have different levels of familiarity with the host-country in which they are assigned (Stroup, 2012). In Liberia, while they interact with national actors on different levels, often their interactions are in a formal (almost sterile) settings like official meetings held in city office buildings or official functions. The policy knowledge of the stakeholders in qualitative analysis is not very robust in the sectors of education and child protection. The European diplomat, who seemingly holds congenial relationships with his Liberian staff, frequently bantering with them as he passes their desks in

the Embassy, has worked in Liberia for over many years during two different term periods. He has engaged with several Liberian presidential administrations during the post-war and reconstruction years, while quite fluent in colloquialisms and politics. Comparatively, the American INGO director is a mid-career health expert with only a few months of experience with Liberian context and culture.

In the interviews, both international actors admit to almost no familiarity with national policies related to girls' education and only slightly more knowledge of child protection. These are sectors that are not in their main scope of work. They do share a general awareness of some important details of these policies like the Liberian age-of-consent laws, which they state are not always followed in rural areas. However, what the two foreign actors do know seemingly relates to details in the laws of their own home countries, for instance Liberia's consent laws are similar to westernized standards in the two countries that they are from (ambassador's country of origin is not disclosed per request). They do not know how many girls are abused, however. The critical factor of *time in country* does not seem to improve their policy knowledge of specific sectors outside of their role's purview. Yet, having more time in country seems to accommodate a better familiarity with Liberian institutional action and changes over time.

International stakeholder insight into national systems' capacity to manage gender and child policies can be important in identifying key challenges that foreign actors like donors and nonprofits most commonly recognize (whether or not host nationals are in agreement) and thus may be more likely to be a prioritized areas if intervention is activated. The ambassador states:

> I think that the effort that is going into the child protection and particularly uh sexual crimes against children is less than the last time I was here…There was a lot more NGO input into the, into that part of the sector, uh, because I think generally the NGOs were actually doing a lot more with the [Liberian National Police] LNP at the time. Over time as the LNP has grown and actually um been able to stand on its own two-feet more.

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His experiences with the Liberian government (GoL) as well as his own embassy's agenda tend to be wary of commitment to affect change, which he blames on funding. "[Commitment or prioritization to supporting policies on child sexual abuse protection and girls' education is] unrealistically. If you look at even the Ministry of Gender, if you look at the department that deals specifically with children, we actually need, uh, funding." His use of words like 'we' indicates a feeling of partnership with the entities of GOL. He later iterates that his embassy funds programs through NGOs in collaboration with GoL agencies. Still, the ambassador infers in his statements an obligation as a diplomat to "pressure" GoL to improve its capacity yet recognizing policy constraints. These issues mainly focus on institutional capacity to implement policies due to resource constraints and thus a capacity dependency on international support to operate. He shares:

[T]he big challenge is, is sheer lack of resources here [in Liberia] and particularly financial resources…and it's very hard to pressure the government to improve this when they've got so many priorities and so little funding… I think the education sector is completely donor dependent. So right across the board, I mean it would not function without it [foreign assistance support like DFID and USAID], just doesn't have the budget for it…I can't foresee any time in the next, you know, couple of decades of them [Liberian agencies] being able to support their education system sector on their own.

While they recognize the institutional capacity constraints, the international actors seem unlikely to promote long-term sustainable changes.

Both international stakeholders want 'quick program fixes,' such as the INGO director's desire to identify "pipeline programs" and the ambassador's idea for research "identifying where there may be some quick, relatively easy wins, um, interims of actually overcoming some of the obstacles." They also want a multi-sectoral approach to promoting child safety and education. The INGO director lists families, community public servants like

social workers, medical facilities, government agencies, and nonprofits "interfacing" together in these two sectors. The two actors also tend to share the *experience of feeling* that there is not enough research or information on barriers affecting children's schooling and safety to help them. The INGO worker states that having information and research specifically on "the prevalence of kids out of school and violence experienced out of school would help to create more enabling supportive coordinated action." Yet their commitment to lead this effort appears limited.

6.3.2 National Policy and Decision-Makers

These stakeholders tend to share experiences of leading or partaking in national and district level policy formation, adoption, or decision-making. These tasks often include directing or advancing national and decentralized teams in relation to policy planning & administrative guidelines, and ensuring implementation protocols, regulations, & supervision (Dougherty & Phillips, 2019; Martinussen, 1997; Risse, Ropp, & Sikkink, 1999). Their experiences and actions often determine mandated, legal rules and regulations influencing social interactions mainly within ecological macrosystem and exosystem affecting children and youth. This includes establishing laws and regulations of the roles and actions of public servants and frontline workers (street-level bureaucrats) to enforce licit, healthy relationships between adults and children, including student-teacher interactions, early sexual engagement norms, all of which can influence or clash with ethnic, communal, or familiar value structures and traditions. These stakeholders include government officials, elected politicians, and contractors.

In Liberia, they often have some degree of formal training including university, although their area of expertise and study may not necessarily correlate to the national agency to which they are assigned. Higher level ministry officials regularly are transferred between

departments, divisions, and even ministries, for reasons like political favour or staffing gaps. Yet lower level officials and representatives tend to spend more time in the same job posts and have more formal training and experience in their work sector. In this analysis, this group is represented by three key informant stakeholders from two government agencies linked to education and child protection: a gender-based violence (GBV) division research officer and a juvenile unit officer from the MoGCSP, as well as a district education officer (DEO) from the MoE.

In the interviews, the PI learns that the three officers take a very hands-on approach to their work. They are not simply sequestered to their air-conditioned government offices with comfortable furniture and supplies, stamped with USAID and INGO donation labels. They also seem to belong to middle and higher socio-economic classes, as indicated by their nice professional clothing, personal laptops, iPhones, and university-education, which are not as common among their subordinates- policy implementors and frontline workers. Still, these high-level national officials convey a close affinity with ground operations at county and district level. They each come off as approachable and eager to participate in the interview, speaking at length on most questions and asking questions of the principal investigator. They each also provide a variety of evidence of information including hard-copy and soft-copy reports, media information, and official referral documents that they share often without being prompted at different times during their interview.

Each officer is highly-knowledgeable about a variety of national policies, including the education policies and child protection laws, and indicate that they work to ensure mandates and regulations for staff and citizens in the policy process. They offer highly-detailed information about the policy most related to their job but are still informed about main policies in other sectors. They seem to hold in esteem international policy agendas, like their international counterparts, advocating global human development goals. For instance, the DEO

brags about the link of Liberian policies on education to universal standard. "The girl child educational policy is consistent with the Article 25 of the University Declaration of Human Rights, and the Convention of the Rights of the Child, and therefore all of us, educationalists, must endeavor to provide quality education for our children especially the girl child," he says from memory.

They quickly explain official documentation required for tracking the progress of children in their sector. Their work is often siloed and not interdisciplinary. So those from one ministry are less familiar with another ministry's policy details, yet they still may know how other government policies may generally intersect with their work sector. For instance, the GBV officer shares a copy of her most recent case, including the medical report documenting signs (making sure to keep the child's identity private) of physical sexual abuse of a young girl who was recently sexually victimized by a teacher who groomed her.

> [The girl] started showing off symptoms of different, different signs [pregnancy symptoms], and so when they asked her [what happened], and she explain how the teacher took her [sexually]…and [this] explained [why] there is a medical report, so that teacher is behind bars as I speak to you…that teacher like any man, any other teacher in the system is held to the law.

It is fortunate that her latest case involves prosecuting a teacher pedophile- a sign there is some action being taken to address rape in schools. Yet the GBV offer does seem aware of how many rapists there may be preying on students, nor whether schools know and/or are following the procedures to report abuse crime to authorities. Like with this case, the GBV officer easily tracks the progress of each victim, relying on the documentation that comes her way from her subordinates. She has dozens of investigations at present. However, there are far fewer open files compared to the thousands of likely statutory rape cases in country. The cases that her division handles are those fortunate enough to make it through official reporting

channels. Likewise, while the file that she shares with the PI involves a teacher, most cases appear to include adult assailants who work in non-school occupations. The GBV officer is proud of the one teacher case but seems unaware that nearly 4 in 10 rapists work or study in schools.

The three officers think their divisions have made some policy improvements directly related to advocacy and implementation efforts in recent years related to girls' education and stopping child rape. The juvenile officer says, "Not that the policy has been fully achieved but it is working one way or the other because ah, uh, rape suspect have been prosecuted." Additionally, the GBV officer shares, "[T]here are other challenges that we have that needs to be worked on seriously, but at a larger extent, I think people are aware." The officials also tend to believe that action A (having child sexual abuse reporting mechanisms and advocacy/awareness on laws) leads to objective O (girls who complete their schooling and are protected from harm into their adulthood)- as the DEO concludes, "Such mechanism when enacted into law will help in the process." But in face of the progress to-date, they agree more is needed.

Comparatively, they differ in their commitment level to education and child protection. Each official seems more dedicated to his/her individual division's mission and less committed to work outside of their purview or jurisdiction. The juvenile officer for instance states he is more concerned with matters related to juvenile delinquency, while the GBV officer focuses on gender-based violence and abuse of children and women. They indicate that their workloads are often too heavy and constrained to focus on alternative efforts. Government positions additionally seem to have noticeable gender population disparities. The GBV division offices are filled with more mid-aged female staff than the other ministries' divisions like the juvenile justice system and the district education offices, mostly led by men of various ages. Law enforcement and education in Liberia like the DEO's office tend to be male-dominated

professions in general. The offices with more women tend to focus more on issues involving girls like rape and education rights.

However, the government officials have a shared passion and focus in the policy process linked to institutional capacity, including ensuring proper implementation by agencies and accountability for the legal system in place. The juvenile officer states part of his function is to monitor policy adherence. "[The] intent of the policy is to put check to people, who, people who commit such offense and for if for if [for what] they are doing, [and ensuring the agency does] not compromising these cases. [If] these people are being prosecuted then we come to the conclusion that the policy is working." His statement is similar to his fellow stakeholders who indicate that they know policies are effective when prosecution of perpetrators of the law are held to account. In fact, they identify one of the critical pieces of evidence that multiple stakeholder groups (policy implementors, community actors, and target beneficiaries) list as indication of policy success- prosecution and use of the justice system. Yet they concur there have been more prosecutions in recent years, institutional human and financial resourcing issues severely limit the advancement of policy accountability. Each officer works directly with only a handful of other government officials in their office, and resourcing is more limited at decentralized levels, often making them reliant on public servants like social workers, teachers, and police to not only implement policies but make them aware of any violations.

Additionally, the government officials offer a variety of obstacles that they feel are most pressing on the policy process affecting their work at national scale. The GBV officer lists ministry budget constraints and staffing, as well as the "justice system. The cases are just over-piled and over-piled, so if there is this case, we [GBV Unit] have to wait for a long period of time before it is heard." These constraints lend to policy and programming failures such as sustainable reporting mechanisms. "We launched a child help line...that was functional for just about three months, it was just a pilot phase [and stopped]." The latter issue of institutional

capacity and resourcing is noted by other stakeholders as well, including the police chief, the ambassador, and the social worker. This is not the only complaint that they share with others.

One of the key findings in the statistical analysis is that most modern knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors are linked to higher education rates. Yet, neither modern/traditional culture are clearly associated with child sexual protection, although a group of Liberian stakeholders hold biased opinions of rural areas following gender equity policy mandates. The DEO and GBV officer agree that awareness on policies by most citizens is poor in general. The DEO states that "[beneficiaries] are not well-informed, more awareness needs to be created," a complaint shared by additional stakeholders like the CSO member and parent. Yet, all three national officers bring up issues of policy enforcement in the hinterlands, or rural counties where traditional/ethnic practices can clash with national mandates. Some of the most relevant issues include unwillingness of parents reporting child rape or sexual abuse to proper authorities, perpetrators hiding from the law to elude conviction, and traditional/ethnic structures that may promote harmful practices negatively impacting girls' education and child rights like female genital cutting (FGC) and poro/sande bush schools. Most of these same issues are also mentioned by policy implementors/street-level bureaucrats, including the difficulty to work in rural or remote regions. The distances are long, resourcing for this work poorly, and case tracking full of huddles. For instance, the GBV officer states, "Police find it very difficult" to find sexual predators in rural areas. All of these presented obstacles imply a general overlap in experiences and opinions among national policy makers and decision makers, and more localized stakeholder groups.

6.3.3 Policy Implementors and Street-Level Bureaucrats

This third stakeholder group often manages the bulk of policy & programming implementation at the local or decentralized level. These 'street-level bureaucrats" or frontline workers have an important role in implementing and providing services stated in policy. They are public servants or workers whose job is to interact at the local level (one-on-one) with public citizens. Unlike policy makers who set and manage the policies, these public employees interact on a frequent basis with target policy beneficiaries and the community, and they regularly must handle problem-solving work challenges and needs that likely were unpredicted at the policy planning phase. For this reason, these policy implementors have substantial *discretion* in deciding how best to do their job requirements to serve the public (Gilson, 2015; Lipsky, 2010; Martinussen). Their experiences and actions often relate to adherence and implementation of policy mandates, rules and regulations influencing social interactions mainly within ecological exosystem and mesosystem affecting children and youth. This grouping is represented by six stakeholder representatives: police commander, nurse, social worker, teacher, university academic, and national NGO worker. Several of these participants hold other roles including as community actors and parents of girls, but they specific respond to the interview questions related to their role as a policy implementor.

They appear more aware of the extent of abuse and the need to promote girls' education or than more centralized policymakers and international actors, likely as they work daily with these issues. Their experiences frequently involve their work interacting with issues related to mandated policy procedures in referring child abuse in the community and in schools, nearly perfectly aligning with ministry policies *(for more detail, see Appendix 22).* Specifically, they share similar crises with getting family members to comply with activating reporting, investigation, and justice procedures. Their insight into individual daily work with child

protection and girls' education generally reveal crucial obstacles on the ground, a quagmire of levels of policy awareness & commitment, and work constraints that affect their motivation and undermine their efforts to help children.

Each stakeholder member recognizes his/her specific role in supporting the mandated policy procedures. Their roles link together at a decentralized level which has its own natural process, which ebbs and flows differently at times. Firstly, there is the social worker whose role is linked to policy by educating youth and protecting them from harm. She shares, "tell[ing] them about the risk involved in having sex at a teenager/early age, you [social worker] protect them." Working in tandem with the social worker, the teacher offers a safe learning environment, while the nonprofit worker helps ensure girls are in school and any abused child and her family are supported in next step decision. The nonprofit worker explains, "[Our NGO team will] have a meeting with the family and girl first, and then we support them if they want in reporting." Before they enter their profession, the university sociology academic trains social workers, teachers, and nonprofit workers in gender-response and gender-sensitive content, creating awareness. He says proudly, "[T]he issue of rape, and women empowerment, and women's rights, equality, it is all embedded [in what I teach]." Once an abuse case arises, there is the young nurse knows her duty to care for a child victim of rape, including ensuring medical reports are completed for the investigation. "[R]ape cases should always be attend[ed] to immediately whenever as a nurse you are on duty. A [set of] parents bring a child, rush a child in and say this child has been raped by a man who is older than her. That nurse should what-pay attention to that child. Immediately you should what, go and sit and look after that child and know the level of rape the level of damage that have been done to that child." Lastly, the tired police commander wearing his uniform impeccably neat, states, "We [police] work under the criminal justice system. It divided into three components. The police come first. I am the first contact of the criminal justice system…. My function there is to arrest and record. If I get

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evidence for you, I will take it to the corruption rehabilitation center [part of the MOGCSP] and from then it goes to the court." These individuals share a general sense of their official roles and responsibilities in protecting children and promoting education. They are aware of each other and interact in the policy process. However, their statements also allude to meanings hidden between the lines about the hardships and ambiguity of their work tasks, and the flaws in the system that they often have to make daily discretionary decisions in response to daily obstacles.

Although less than the knowledge levels and information access of national government officials who supervise their work, policy implementors indicate that they have a moderate foundation of policies related to education and child protection. They tend to know more about policies specifically related to their field. But most of them share the belief that action A (having child sexual abuse reporting mechanisms and advocacy/awareness on laws) leads to objective O (girls who complete their schooling and are protected from harm into their adulthood). Sadly, they appear to work with populations at the community and district level who have limited policy awareness, a point also made by their supervisors in ministry offices, which constrains policy effectiveness.

The social worker who operates in a major district of Montserrado says the most frequent challenge in her work "is to carry out awareness and to gather information" to the general population. The social worker and NGO worker have experiences with this awareness issue as overlapping with traditional value structures and constructs on early sexual engagement. The young NGO worker states, "Liberia has fantastic reporting mechanisms, and you know, like on paper they are structured very well. But the culture hasn't caught up to the paper, and I think that in order for things to really change and shift, the culture has to catch up to the paper. Slash [in addition] if it's not, if people don't see it as such, and as such, harmful [the meaning] being as harmful as maybe others in the world may see it, slash [in addition] the

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reporting mechanisms are not [that] proper, don't allow the culture [into account]." This statement reflects the issue that local definitions/constructs of rape and education may not run parallel with national policy definitions. It also demonstrates similar experiences of resistance by families to comply with policies, such as a family who may not want to report child sexual abuse but instead keep it hidden/private. This links to the quantitative data that shows inconsistencies in modern or traditional culture being statistically related to child rape levels, when moreover it appears to do with factors of sexuality and gender role that seem to be under enormous cultural flux between generations of youth and older populations. These changes require heavy policy awareness raising and community relationship building to earn trust in the new policy definitions and reporting protocols.

Numerous stakeholders from the police, the nonprofit worker, and the social worker have interacted with cases of parents and families resistant to following policy mandates and procedures, often linked to practice and a lack of familiarity and trust in national law enforcement and justice systems. In addition to ethnic and traditional community practices, cultural issues can also occur among peers, which the human development ecology model espouses. The social worker finds that peer pressure including teenage pregnancy can influence negative decision making among youth. In fact, multiple stakeholders including the teacher, nurse, academic, and nonprofit worker frequently include teaching about family planning and life planning in their work and urge that more programs are needed to improve awareness raising to avoid harmful sexual engagement that can affect education and risk rates. Yet, many of these agents may recognize their position to bridge this gap, as the police commander advocates. "[P]olice have partnership with the public, and the public have partnership with the police [claps hands together]. They come to one understanding, one objective, one aim…sometimes we talk with the community leaders…[and] older boys. We get their view."

Secondly, a key challenge that street-level bureaucrats face on a frequent basis are resource constraints. Unlike those of their supervisors who have man-power barriers, policy implementors like the police, nonprofit worker, and the teacher face difficulties in 'affording' to do proper work or not having the tools needed, especially in the investigation phase of an abuse case. The nurse states, "I would say it would seem no we don't have much medical supply to our hospital." She further states that what resources that they do have for evidence collection are inadequate, as they "don't have no equipment for" blood testing, rape kits, DNA analysis, etc. as many countries do. She has witnessed that this lack of resources leads to issues of investigation errors, including messy, inadequate, untriangulated records by medical staff that inform rape cases and can lead to either cases being thrown out or the wrongful conviction of a suspect. Likewise, the police commander experiences hardships among his force that are budget related. Police are often highly underpaid, at times unable to afford uniforms, instead painting LNP on t-shirts, and paying for gas out of pocket to track down a suspect or investigate a child abuse case. The LNP has little resources for its officers including transportation. "[M]onitoring this rape is an issue…lack of transportation problem, it makes for small [extra] work," he says. These challenges in field also tend to indicate among policy implementor stakeholders a hidden guilt of feeling exhausted and frustrated on their part.

6.3.4 Community Actors and Civil Society

The statistical analysis indicates the importance the child-friendly school safety levels have on girl's education and on lowering child sexual abuse rates. This model lists active community members and civil society connected to schools as vital to ensuring a gender-responsive and safe learning environment that community actors and civil society can have in improving girl's education and accountability of child rights. However, the qualitative data

infers that they often may be a nearly inactive source of accountability for child abuse both in the community and in academic environments.

Regularly referred to as 'third sector,' this group comprises of stakeholder who are individuals and members of non-governmental organizations representing the interests, will, and democratic civic engagement at community/local level. can influence policy implementation including monitoring, advocacy, & information dissemination, within meso & microsystems. The core of civil society in the household unit and the social life of people within the household, local community, and local organizations apart from political systems. Proponents of alternative approaches to development like Sen and ul Haq, Streeten and Friedman, focus on how civil society engagement can support human development efforts that also include a gender dimension specified to the culture influencing their communal society and relevant context locally (Martinnusen). This group is represented by three stakeholder members: a parent-teacher association (PTA) member, civil society organization (CSO) member, and mental health clinician offering services within his community. PTA members are major school players, however, due to their voluntary nature are often categorized as community actors. Likewise, CSO are made up of local citizens actively participating in their community through associations, religious groups, block associations, student groups, etc.

Overall, these stakeholders tend to share similar roles and experiences of policy procedures linked to the general community. Like policy implementors, this analysis indicates that they also tend to act as intermediaries or additional support mechanisms for monitoring child compliance issues like female student enrollment and attendance, and helping families seek out medical and law enforcement services for abused children. Yet their roles in mandated policy procedures is less structured, which often lends to the shared sense of confusion for how best to support gender equity and gender-responsive policies.

Generally, there is a noticeable difference in the knowledge and familiarity of educational and child protection policies among the PTA and CSO member compared to the clinician. The summaries that they provide about these policies is somewhat vague, but they indicate some level of interest and enthusiasm for learning more about how to support these policies, if almost a derived satisfaction in playing an active role in their communities to be more gender equitable. This diverse policy knowledge may be linked to formal education and professional development training, as the PTA and CSO member never attend university only public school. Overall, these stakeholders range more in their responses than the previous stakeholder groups. They tend to share similar beliefs that effective policy implementation promoting gender equality will be evidenced in lowered gender disparities sociologically. The CSO members states that sufficient "evidence is the presence of prominence women in the society and at the front of politics," while the PTA member insists that policies should "provide equal and equality education for all children." These statements indicate that a gender lens influencing the knowledge, motivation, and experiences of community actors, which may not have existed decades previously.

International agenda of human rights appear to be informing their statements, but unlike members of the outer rings, their familiarity is more insular and holds less substance, which may mean they have less direct experience with policy information and policy procedure interactions. Their interview responses are short. When asked what information they have access to or need to support gender equity, the PTA and CSO member responses are nearly blank. The clinician completely differs, providing statements that show vast past experiences working with education and child protection policies through his mental health work, likely at the national level, beyond the capacity that he holds currently. Exposure to information and work experience with the policy process then may better inform suspensive knowledge and awareness of how to affect policy change.

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Moreover, policy knowledge may influence understanding or the ability to informatively identify policy obstacles. The clinician more astutely identifies national level issues experienced by other stakeholders like the policy implementors and policymakers, including "adequate staffing, funding, and persecution [likely meaning prosecution of offenders by the justice system]." He offers this blistering statement:

Policies and laws in Liberia are some of the finest on paper globally but the lack of willpower to efficiently holistically persecute culprits is the real obstacle…[A]gencies charged with the responsibilities of implementing the laws and policies are mostly underfunded, understaffed or politically driven…Frankly, data are almost always scanty in Liberia, but judging from the outputs, it's glaring that the minimum trainings given to the very limited number of selective teachers are not done in the form and manner which yield the requisite results.

In his experience, national efforts are fraught with issues and failures, the solution of which may only rest in the hands of local actors. His perspectives seem to represent distrust and bitterness of national policies.

In contrast, the CSO and PTA members offer highly-unstructured responses identifying policy challenges in education and child protection. The CSO member states, "No [none], cause I am still learning about girl's education," illustrating an self- awareness of lack of familiarity with policies affecting children. The PTA member, who is a mother, appears to be most concerned with household influencers, including parental involvement and moral orientation, a lack of which appears to have policy concerns of "teenage pregnancy and knowledge awareness." While these community actors seem motivated to support gender equality, even adopting lingo similar to national policies, the scope of their familiarity and potential roles remain limited except for the clinician who may have previous national level experience.

6.3.5 Target Beneficiaries

At the end of the day, policies are only effective if target beneficiaries believe in their process, understand their benefits, are committed to following them, and see tangible results when they take positive action. Key informant interviews at localized level can help identify issues around policy knowledge, compliance, and beneficiary outcomes (Sonalkar et al.; Chazdon & Lott, 2010), like enrolling their girls in school or reporting a rape. The quantitative survey assessed what form of punishment a teacher would likely face if he was caught raping a student like Hawa, either formal (like jail or dismissal from teaching) or informal justice (like facing community leaders, marrying the girl). Parents believe school-based abusers are slightly more likely to face justice through informal/communal mechanisms (51 percent of the time) than formal/legal means (45 percent), while the rest said there would be no punishment. There is a clear degree of stakeholders in the other group circles who believe people from rural/ethnocentric regions are less likely to report abuse to authorities, even though the statistical analysis implies that modern culture is not heavily linked to different rates of child rape or average female education levels. Yet parents in rural areas are more likely to agree that the teacher will face local/informal justice systems (65 percent) than their urban-based peers (47 percent) So, while the statistics indicate that region and cultural knowledge, attitudes and beliefs may not be strongly connected to higher sexual abuse, there are indications that parents in rural communities are more likely to witness/seek traditional methods of justice such as through *palaver*.

This stakeholder group includes direct and indirect beneficiaries (e.g. children & families) who are meant to be supported, normally at localized or decentralized level. These actors are not always inactive recipients of services, but they also can play role in policy process including cooperative action, creating policy impact change, as well as resistance (Ajulor,

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2017; Howlett, Kekez, & Poocharoen, 2017). Issues of resistance towards policy adherence including reporting child abuse by parents is noted by several stakeholder representatives, often related to issues with culture clash, differing constructs of terms like rape, or lack of awareness of policy and their procedures. These actors can also be affected by fatal remedies, within the ecological meso & microsystems. Yet national and international efforts inform macro attitudes and ideologies, social services, local politics and mass media/information access helping shape the social interactions of developing children. This group is represented by a young female university student and a mother of female children. They share overlaps in experiences of policy knowledge, commitment of gender equity, and policy issues that they want addressed.

Overall, target beneficiary familiarity of policies on education and child protection seem weak, mainly informed from media and social messages. The young woman is asked what she knows about the policies, and she offers little in response other than "not really, but we [her and her peers] have been hearing about it," or that it is coming up more and more. The mother states, "I know they say we have them in place, but I think that they are slacked." Neither actor provides detailed descriptions akin to national policymakers and implementors. They also tend to be more spectacle of how effective policies are to outcomes of improved gender equality. They both agree there is evidence of progress in girls' education as promoted by the last administration, however, they are more tentative about child sexual abuse. The mother dissatisfiedly shares that the rape law has not effectively changed society. "It hasn't, it hasn't because most people, like you see young girls…[and] people don't believe it. If a girl goes into a man's house to visit and she gets raped there, they don't see it as rape." This is because in her experience, concepts of rape differ at the community level compared to legal definitions (which came up previously), like the idea that a female can be raped if she goes in a man's house. These differences may relate to culture or social norms around sexual practices,

but she is not specific enough to derive a set conclusion. They do relate to negative signs of rape culture within the community including victim blaming.

Both women are not very familiar with the policy procedures involving reporting rape cases and know less about how it differs if the abuse occurs in school. The mother urges that while she may know about what to do, "most people don't know, like first of all they run to the police station, you understand? So sometimes the evidence is tampered with, you know. Maybe they lose the evidence in the process maybe the child has gone to take their bath or whatever, I don't know." They both agree that there are challenges to policy implementation.

Again, the core issue appears to be policy awareness, this time among parents and children. This is also where they feel there is the most hope, for parents to take on active roles in educating their children and protecting them from harm. The mother states that "this long-prolonged suffering that you have [people generally have in Liberia] is because you have not been able to empower yourself, and your children are not empowered. So, if I am slaving now-so I should be able to raise better kids than I am so that way you can break the chains of poverty." Likewise, the young woman feels advocacy and awareness raising are important by "go from town to town village to village community to community to build [awareness to change when]…as a parent if you are not performing your duties like sending your child to school for the day and those who see rape to be nothing taking it as a common way of living and keeping them there as well." They seem to stress a personal role in this work, although neither offers details on past advocacy engagement.

However, like many other stakeholders including the DEO, the ambassador, and social worker, target beneficiaries experience issues of sexual abuse in schools by teachers with female students. The young woman brings up that the biggest challenge to both school and child abuse in schools is linked to household financial constraints. She gently explains, "[I]n my own world [as a female student], I would say is financial issues. Yea, most parents don't

have… some parents want to send, to educate their children, to a high level but they don't have…sometimes it cause[s] rape too. What you don't have, and [then] you met this person helping you, giving you one or two these things acting as resource then they forcibly take you to bed." Additionally, the mother worries about the potential threat of sexual predators working with children like in schools. She offers that "we should have database for criminals, people you know that have been like, that have like have done crimes like this kind of rape crime…so that when you are employing especially in school where people will have to be like working close with children we could also check their past." Such files do not exist in Liberia, although GoL has background checking systems which are paper based. These statements example crucial gender-based insights into the issues directly affecting Liberian women and girls, exposing the most vulnerable to unintended flaws in the national policy systems: legal means of accountability and justice.

In general, the representatives of the direct beneficiaries provide statements calling for active engagement in advocacy and policy awareness among community members, especially parents, to better ensure gender-responsive policies. Essentially, they give the sense that the national system as it stands today cannot do it alone for them, as accountability mechanisms do not properly function, like school administration turning a blind eye to incidences of school staff-student relationships, or criminal background checks to ensure past-offenders are not working with girlchildren. These are the 'snakes' that cause girls to lose the game of educational 'snakes and ladders.'

The fact that parents and girls often have conflicting constructs of rape further inflate issues of knowing legal verses illegal forms of sexual engagement. Additionally, parents in rural communities may seek out palaver/informal means of justice for a child rape rather than comply with mandated government reporting. Yet more information is needed to know why this is, whether rural parents prefer informal systems or if they are simply more accessible.

Target beneficiaries seem aware of some progress made by national efforts to improve girls' schooling, and they realize the benefits on multiple levels. However, their personal experiences with the barriers to education (like financial household constraints and the misunderstanding of what rape is) identifies key gender issues that can negatively any motivation to play active roles. Target beneficiaries seemingly act more as neutral parties, who though they benefited from education policies, witness and/or experience the grave effects of gender-based violence and rape, including in the school system.

6.4 Conclusions

The key informant interviews demonstrate that each stakeholder has unique experiences and roles that focus the lens of their understanding of educating girls and protecting them from sexual harm. Combined, their perspectives can offer a variety of qualitative inputs, many of which are shared and others that are distinct. This chapter strives to reflect their voices and contextual experiences into the analysis, and help support explaining in more depth the relationships identified in the quantitative findings, while at the same time addressing policy relevant, effectual solutions for the problem. *Table 6.1* presents a summary of the key findings among each stakeholder group.

The statistical analysis and literature review depict the gravity of the issues of sexual abuse for Liberian girls including those in school, yet familiarity with the problem is lacking even at the highest centralized levels of international development. International stakeholders like the European ambassador and INGO director exhibit the extensive unawareness of how many girls are raped and the policies set in place to prevent victimization and ensure justice. They also tended to adopt misinformation such as that rape rates are higher and education is lower in rural areas, as first presented in *Chapter Five*. Their statements indicate a wiliness to

help find solutions for issues of gender inequity. However, each representative appears more enthusiastic about supporting their main sector of interest, which for the ambassador is state capacity development and for the INGO health director is health systems at a decentralized level. This pattern may be anticipated among other international development members. Their words show support for multi-sector, collaborative approaches. But their policy knowledge appears limited to institutional commitment. There is also a shared concern about key Liberian institutions' capacity to make substantial change in gender equity due to human and financial resourcing, although they posit multi-stakeholder collaboration and pipeline projects as potential solutions. Yet, in general, their descriptions of their work experiences demonstrate divergent efforts, often limited in scope and frustration with national systems and capacity, which likely leaves the issue of child rape as a backburner policy agenda item.

Comparatively, national policy and decision-makers demonstrate strong policy awareness, not surprisingly stronger in their specific field of work. Overall, their work experiences and statements reflect a strong motivation to ensure policy functions. They seem to see themselves as agents of institutionalized justice and accountability. And while they mainly work in government office buildings and have heavy workloads, they seem to share the same dedication to affecting change in their relevant policy area as those whom they supervise at decentralized levels. Yet their fervor in their work may reflect a romanticized perspective of the effectiveness of mandated child protection procedures (depicted in *Figure 6.3*) compared to those who interact with the issues of abuse both in and out of schools on a daily basis in field.

Like international stakeholders, they appear unaware of the magnitude of the issues with female child rape. They focus on the impact gain in beneficiary numbers (how many more girls attend school and the increase in child abuse investigations by the government) but seemingly without realizing these achievements may be drowned out by the thousands of

vulnerable girls victimized in country who the government policies fail to reach. Their enthusiasm to help children is tangible, however the evidence of sustainable change is questionable. They show a general familiarity with the issues on the ground, like the need for awareness raising and better institutional funding. But at the same time, they seemingly grasp on to any indication of policy effect like the prosecution of a teacher raping his student as a mammoth victory, when essence to others like the mother or the clinician, it may seem a drop in the bucket. Like international actors, they have little insight into the common profile of rapists, unaware of the statistics including that nearly four in ten pedophiles work in schools. They instead seem to focus on cases of severe abuse that come through hospitals, or those fortunate cases reported to the police for active investigation.

National policy-makers tend to interact frequently with street-level bureaucrats/frontline workers. They also seem to share a similar passion for helping girls rise through education and protection from harm. The frontline workers may be tasked with carrying out policies, but they clearly perform their duties with some room in deciding how best to affect change at the local level. Yet, their work to support girlchildren is often hindered which can lead to feelings of despair, exhaustion, and frustration at being a part of a system that does not quite work as it should. Despite their best efforts, they seem to face long hours, are underpaid and under-resourced, rely on antiquated tracking and reporting mechanisms, and confront different level of resistance or unawareness of policy procedures among community members including beneficiaries often related to culture.
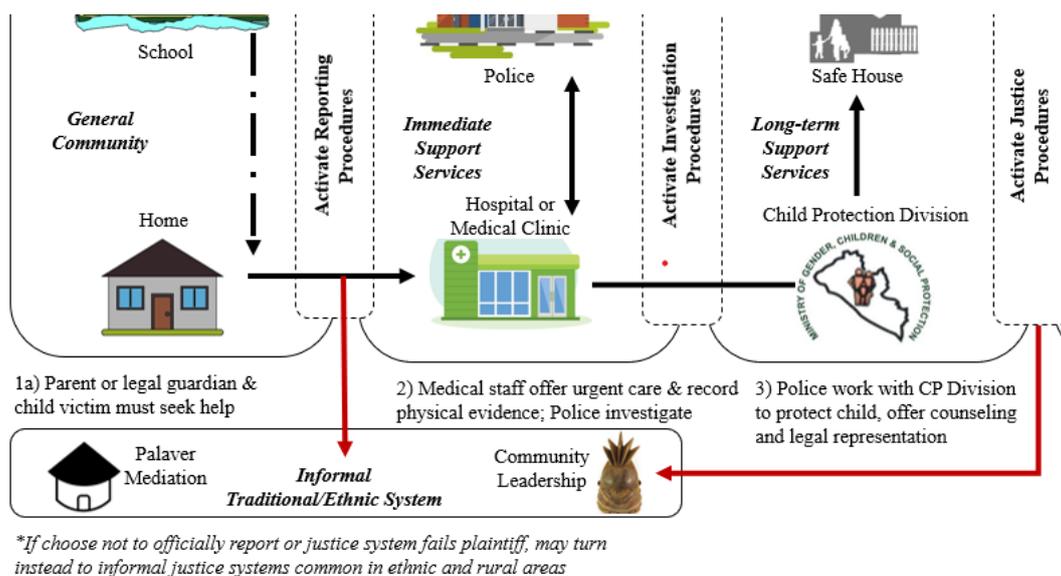
Figure 6.3 Activation of Informal Traditional/Ethnic Systems of Justice

Likewise, international agents, national policy-makers, and frontline workers, share half-informed beliefs about traditionalism. Their work appears influenced by the belief that rural and ethnic-homogenous populations in the interior are often 'obstacles' to their work, having traditional beliefs and practices that hold back the potential of girls and prompt non-compliance with national policies. Yet as the statistical data implies, this may not fully be the case as rural populations demonstrate similar girls' education rates and rape rates as urban centers. Modern cultural knowledge, attitudes and behaviors are linked to higher rates of educational attainment, but not necessarily to child sexual abuse. Still, the quantitative data indicates that parents in rural areas tend to believe more in informal/traditional justice systems than formal/legal systems when it comes to female rape, which further supports the notion among stakeholders that policy non-compliance is a potential issue (as shown in *Table 6.3* which zooms in on deviations away from the mandated national pathways). This discrepancy in the qualitative and quantitative data presents a policy issue, as officials may not be aware of the statistics but instead based on experiences with individual cases are influenced by such stereotypes. Dispelling (or at least diluting) any misinformation around traditional belief

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structures and justice systems linked to child abuse may be an important factor in policy improvements. Understanding better how beliefs and practices are 'harmful' and may reflect misogynistic tendencies may help discern the underlying issues of abuse, akin to understanding the reasons traditional justice systems are sought by locals rather than legal processes.

One solution that arises from this qualitative study is to possibly activate community agents like CSOs and PTAs. They can act as a check-and-balance to government workers, including school officials and police, as well as private agencies, keeping them accountable for their actions. This can be very useful in setting up additional mechanisms of accountability for school safety and policy compliance standards including prevention of illicit relationships between children and adults (Hanson et al.) Overall, these stakeholders tend to share similar roles and experiences of policy procedures linked to the general community. They also tend to act as intermediaries or additional support mechanisms for monitoring child compliance issues like female student enrollment and attendance, and helping families seek out medical and law enforcement services for abused children. However, the interviews indicate some challenges. Their roles in mandated policy procedures is less structured, which often lends to the shared sense of confusion for how best to support gender equity and gender-responsive policies. Secondly, while these participants share a common sense of responsibility to gender equity, their policy familiarity and information access is highly skewed, which limits their actual engagement experiences. This may provide insight into the need to better train community actors in gender-responsive policies and roles to better orient their potential efforts on the ground so that they do not remain stagnant or inactive.

Another possibility is addressing an issue which nearly all stakeholders at some point in their interview mention- awareness raising. Statements by the target beneficiaries including the female student and the mother imply a general awareness that education is important to a girl's potential, and that female rape is an issue including in schools. Yet their knowledge on

the policies and responsibilities around reporting rape is severely limited. Their statements also may reflect problems around *rape culture*, like victim blaming, saying she placed herself in the situation of abuse and therefore it is her fault; thinking on licentious women get raped; not taking reported incidences seriously enough to report them; and tolerating sexual harassment and abuse (Marshall). By educating the general population including parents and children on their rights, the definitions of child abuse, and the responsibilities of parents and community members to safeguard their girls, report crimes, as well as educate their boys on consent, there may be more sustainable change at the localized level. Yet many of these community actors appear flagged by disillusionment with policy obstacles and a history of failures.

There are numerous challenges that face Liberia's work thwarting child sexual abuse. There are impediments to the mandated child protection policies and procedures, depicted in *Table 6.3*, which are gravely affecting the effectiveness and trust in the government system. Starting in the home environment, many families and community members including CSOs and PTA require improved policy knowledge around protecting their children, which may help in activating more reporting of crimes that often go hidden. Secondly, Liberian government agencies need to work with informal traditional/ethnic systems led by community leaders including tribal elders and religious officials to negotiate ensuring justice for victims and their families in accord with legal compliance and traditional practices. Thirdly, the government and international agencies need to consider solutions for the "bottlenecking of cases." Due to the lack of resources (manpower and infrastructure) too many cases often get backlogged or fall through the cracks during both the investigation phase as well as the justice procedures. Additionally, any actors and authoritative bodies working with schools need to focus more attention to creating safe environments that are gender-responsive, including establishing better means of accountability to report crimes to police and the Ministry of Education.

Table 6.1 Summary Analysis of Key Informant Interviews by Stakeholder Grouping

Group	General Policy Knowledge	Commitment to Two Sectors	Believes Policies on Girls' Education Affect CSA	Obstacles to Policy Processes	Info. Access & Needs
International Community	Shared; Education-extremely limited CSA- limited to institutional capacity	Low, but each is committed to either education or health sector programming	Yes, but only if systems use multi-sector approaches and multi-actor collaboration, not happening to date	Budget constraints; policy coordination; state institutional capacity	Research on barriers affecting children and programs
National Policy & Decision Makers	Shared; detailed, but much stronger in relevant sector	Mainly devoted to division mission in individual sector	Yes, especially when required mechanism are enacted into law, and institutional resourcing is adequate	Institutional human & financial resourcing; Justice system overloaded; Policy awareness; Traditional/ ethnic practices that clash with national mandates, especially in rural areas	Strong information access and production of info, including documentation and reports at national and decentralized level; good electronic access; low needs except in rural areas
Policy Implementors/ Street- level Bureaucrats	Diverse, but moderate in their relevant sector	Highly committed to inter-disciplinary policy implementation efforts, but at times hindered by field constraints	Mostly share agreement	Heavy workloads; poor resourcing; antiquated tracking and reporting mechanisms; some resistance or unawareness of policy procedures related to culture	Need improved reporting mechanism for evidence collection; general policy awareness materials needed for advocacy
Community Actors & Civil Society	Diverse, appears linked to education and professional experience with policies	Highly committed, but several actors show little awareness of potential roles or policy-orientation	Mostly in agreement, yet founded in limited policy knowledge and inexperience	Very diverse responses, from no response, to household issue of teenage pregnancy and moral orientation, to national level issues like adequate staffing, funding, and persecution	Highly in demand (as interpreted by principal investigator); policy awareness for families
Target Beneficiaries	Diverse, and not fully accurate	Committed verbally, but historical inaction	Feel education is an important influencer, while rape policies are less effective in policy outcomes	Household financial constraints which led to coercive/ exploitative relationships; household awareness of policies and procedures	Highly in demand, as information is limited or filled with gaps; most information comes from hearsay and media

While a few teachers and staff members are charged for their crimes against female students, there are many who get away with attacking girls. This perpetuates a hostile learning environment, in which rape becomes a culture. Moreover, as the European ambassador emphasized, more research on these issues is needed to further understand not only the scope of the problem of abuse linked to girl's education, but also find viable, context-relevant solutions to the fatal remedies of failing policies meant to protect girls. This research attempts to contribute to this need, and the dissemination of the results will be a critical next piece of this work. The author would like to thank the key informant participants who generously shared their experiences, thoughts, and expertise for this research. Your words greatly contributed to unlocking a more prophetic understanding of the issues and opportunities to help girls like Hawa.

7.0 Chapter 7. Conclusions

This dissertation identifies a fatal remedy of international education policies promoting the international agenda of *Education for All,* particularly affecting young girls. While a large body of development literature indicates that education is strongly associated with decreased rates of early childhood marriage, another important body reveals that education may also expose girls to other forms of sexual violence that are associated with school. Liberia is a country filled with thousands of young women in similar circumstances as Hawa. As little girls, their families made the beautiful commitment to their education, even though many come from communities where historically only boy children were seen as worth of the investment. They bought their blue-shirted uniforms, black shoes, school materials, and backpacks, and sent them off with the hope for a bright future for their daughters. Many of these parents, especially the mothers who faced war and poverty, did not have the same opportunity at schooling as their children have now, with even the possibility to advance all the way to university. Although these female students have the chance to walk through the classroom door, they are ironically entering a twisted game of *snakes and ladders*, where the goal is to climb as high as they can in school without landing on a snake and sliding downwards in life, as Hawa experienced. For vulnerable young women hoping to ascend the ladder, their educational path is laden with obstacles and pitfalls, of which sexual abuse is one of the gravest.

This dissertation is drawn from an extensive mixed-methods field study and data analysis conducted from 2018 to 2020. The study included insights from a team of national consultants, data collection by thoroughly-trained professional enumerators, quantitative surveying of 715 young women and 493 of their parents/legal guardians, as well as qualitative interviews with 16 key informants. According to numerous Liberian academics and international development

experts, this study maybe one of the first to identify statutory rape statistics and sexual assailant profiles among educated and non-educated female populations in country. The study attempts to further develop insight into the potential causal mechanisms between the main research variables through open-ended interviews with the key informants. Moreover, this dissertation is the first in recent years to explore how modern/traditional culture (as measured by household knowledge, attitudes and behaviors) link to Liberian educational attainment and child protection from sexual harm. The ethical and policy-relevant ramifications of this research are crucial at a time when girls are entering the classroom at higher rates each year, yet without schools and policymakers fully understanding how to ensure a girl is protected during the course of her education, sustaining her human development and quality of life.

7.1 Major Empirical Findings

The statistical analysis conducted by the principal investigator indicates that female students face similarly high levels of sexual abuse as their uneducated peers. Over 35 percent are statutorily raped. Rates of abuse are highest amongst girls who either do not attend school at all or only complete primary grade levels. These rates begin to decline at the secondary level and significantly drop at the tertiary level. Unfortunately, most Liberian female pupils do not make it into later secondary grades, and very few enroll in university. Of all the girls who were victimized, 38 percent of the rape cases involved a male adult working or studying in a school environment, while the rest of the rapes were committed by men in the community who hold other occupations like farmers or businessmen.

Relatedly, the qualitative interviews identify important gender-related issues potentially propelling the high rates of abuse even among educated girls, mainly: financial burdens which make low-income females vulnerable to sugar daddies who groom them, potential pedophiles in academic settings who are not reported to authorities by a third party (like administration or PTA members), and lack of awareness among many stakeholders, particularly at the community level, about the laws and responsibilities to report crimes through proper channels. Perhaps most powerful of all, are the major issues of apparent complacency among society members at the staggering issue of child rape and a general lack of trust in the ability of the formal systems to ensure justice for victims and their families. From centralized stakeholders like international development actors and national decision-makers, down to frontline workers, many agree that while stopping child rape is a vital issue, it is not a policy agenda item given much support, as girls' education is. There is not enough of the political support, financial or human resources necessary to make a significant dent in the rates of abuse. Agents have to settle with one-off wins in investigating and convicting rapists among the thousands of suspected cases out there, including educators who violate their oath to protect and nurture their students.

Additionally, both the qualitative data from key informant interviews as well as the literature review suggest a strong stereotype among many stakeholders who believe that rural/ethnocentric populations in the hinterlands face larger issues of gender inequality that hinder girls' capacity development than those in urban areas. The actual statistics imply that girls in rural communities have similar rates of education (reaching the 9th grade on average) as well as similar rape rates as their urban sisters. And yet, the numbers also show that higher rates of education are correlated to key measures of overall modernity at the household level, particularly proactive public participation and media access. However, neither modern culture nor traditional culture

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knowledge, attitudes, and behavior indicators are generally associated with different rates of child rape among girls. Parents who agree with some modern indicators, like being pro-female in voicing sexual decisions with a male partner, tend to have lower rates of abuse among daughters, but the same is true of the traditional response among parents who self-identify with their tribe/ethnic group over their nationality/being Liberian. Therefore, it may not matter so much whether families fall into a cultural category of modern versus traditional, but more importantly, whether what they know, believe, or do has misogynistic/discriminatory undertones. While modernity and traditionalism may not affect whether child sexual abuse happens, both the qualitative and quantitative findings show that compliance with mandated government child protection protocols is, in fact, different in rural areas. Most parents in rural communities believe in justice being mediated by informal/traditional systems like palaver rather than through legal channels like the police. Similarly, nearly all stakeholder groups list traditional beliefs and rural locations as obstacles to investigating child abuse.

There are major lessons for policymakers and educators than can be drawn from these findings. Combining efforts to increase educational attainment (help girls complete more schooling) while ensuring safe, nurturing learning environments can together significantly lower child rape rates. Developing a girl's full human capacity requires not only educational access, but also child-friendly, gender-responsive environments that help keep girls in school and create barriers that keep abuse out of the classroom. The quantitative analysis implies a number of actions that can sustain meaningful change in schools, all of which are part of the child-friendly schools (CFS) model. Often this approach is multi-pronged, requiring joint action by a variety of actors, from the policy to the community level. This finding is verified by the qualitative interviews in which multiple stakeholders, from centralized policymakers to local actors and beneficiaries,

regularly identify the need to use multi-stakeholder partnerships and programming to address girls' education and child sexual abuse. Like most policy solutions that can be temporal in nature, ensuring safe learning environments appears most effective at the lower grade levels. At the same time, keeping girls in school, through primary into secondary and beyond, can further help them jump over the snakes as they climb up the educational ladder.

7.2 Theoretical Implications

Based on the findings from both the quantitative and qualitative data analysis, the principal investigator posits the following change to the key research problem causal model that was initially presented in *Chapter Three*. *Figure 7* below addresses the main research question of *how is the prevalence of child sexual abuse among girls affected by their level of education, the safety of their schools, and the modern knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of their household?* The literature review shows that most girls, despite their socio-economic, ethnic, and regional backgrounds, often can face abuse. Yet findings in *Chapter Five* indicate that there are some familial knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors that can help encourage girls to enter and stay in school. While there are some low modernity items also related to girls' education, a variety of modern statements are correlated with daughters' schooling. Initial tiers of education may improve her capacity development but cannot guarantee lower odds of being raped. However, fusing school access with safer school environments can help her advance through primary and early secondary tiers when child rape rates are the highest. From there, she can progress into more advanced levels of education with a lower likelihood of being burdened by the negative effects of rape, including psychosocial trauma, physical risks, and early pregnancy. Yet, for schools to be made safer, we

must address the issues presented by study participants that are contextually relevant to the situation in Liberia at present.
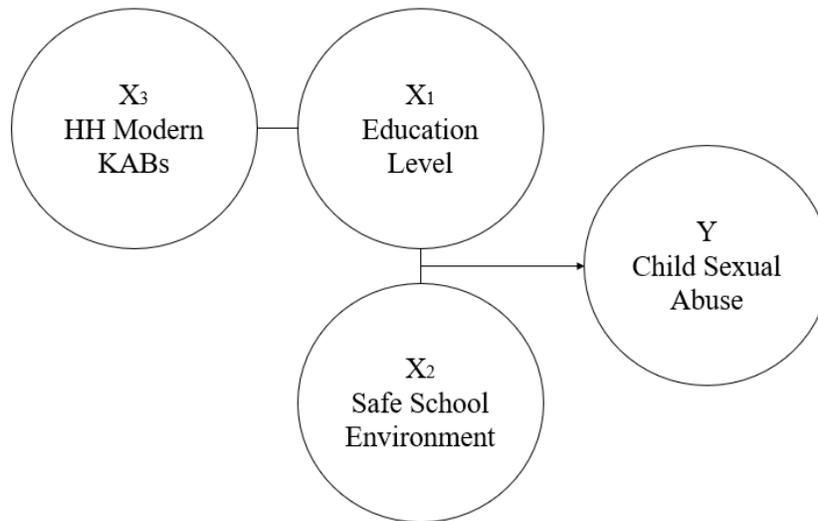
Figure 7.1 Modified Key Research Causal Model

Sieber's *fatal remedy* conceptualizes any social intervention, including a program or law, that faces unanticipated negative consequences involving regressive implications, rendering the original goal(s) of the intervention as less attainable, or deteriorating the condition it was meant to alleviate (1981, 9-25). Specifically, this study employs the term *fatal remedy* to represent the potential or real unintended negative consequences of human developments policies that place target beneficiaries at risk. These policies may involve hazards that are unanticipated, missed, or fall under the radar of policymakers and other key stakeholders. Moreover, this research examines fatal remedies involving cross-sectoral policies that, at least for a time or to some extent, effectively complete their intent in one sector, while also creating cascading negative consequences upon intended beneficiaries within another sector so detrimental that the effect results in a reduction in quality of life and human development. This effect is termed by the principal investigator as *regressive marginalization*.

Hawa's Query, involving the young female student illegally coerced by her teacher into a sexual relationship, reveals a shocking deviation from the true intentions of *Education For All* policies: to afford marginalized girls the education needed to improve their capacity and agency in their adult years. While the Liberian educational policies founded on the principals of *Education for All* helped expand the opportunities for Hawa to enter school and to begin her educational journey, it also eventually put her in harm's way. In effect, the policy placed her on the right trajectory to improved human development, but due to the unanticipated danger of child sexual abuse, she lost her foothold and she was kicked out of school. Sadly, her quality of life became worse than if she had never entered school at all. Hawa's story represents a hidden truth within well-meaning efforts: often social policies are not linear but can be more like a game of snakes and ladders for vulnerable populations such as girls. While the policy may offer paths that lead more directly and quickly to an intended human development outcome, we must also be wary that 'all ladders have potential snakes' that not only can take the beneficiary backwards but may lead them to more dire conditions—thus having the effect of what the principal investigator terms *regressive marginalization.*

To address the risks that come with the lived experience of when a girl enters a classroom, academics and practitioners first need to theoretically question the causal narrative that they follow when it comes to girls' education and human security. The literature synthesis, in *Chapter Two*, presents the three contrasting bodies of research. This dissertation calls into question the first two bodies (the oversimplification that schooling guarantees human security versus the contention that schools are sexually violent spaces) and instead further validates the importance of the third body, which indicates that educational access for girls simply is not enough to protect them from harm. Schools must be safe and secure environments that are child-centered, taking on a multi-

dimensional approach to learning and development. If not, we are left with not knowing how many schoolgirls may share similar experiences as Hawa did.

Knowing the magnitude of the problem of child rape for all girls, including non-educated, primary school, secondary school, and advanced educated populations, is crucial to understanding the phenomenon of *Hawa's Query*. Likewise, we can take on a *human development ecology* approach (represented by Bronfenbrenner [1981/1994]'s model) to assess what social interactions may play a role in allowing predators to enter the micro and macrosystems of a girl, as well as how policies and policy implementation at the macro level can stop harmful social interactions from occurring while fostering positive ones such as healthy teacher-student relationships. Furthermore, a *gender lens* can help better understand specific traps targeting vulnerable girls by assessing cultural and sociological implications of policies mandating compulsory schooling and redefining formal constructs of rape through law. Rape survivors often know their assailants before the time of the assault. Thus, we must understand how changing her system of interactions to include schooling environments does or does not affect her chances of engaging with potential pedophiles. The qualitative interviews strongly indicate that most stakeholders do not know the full extent of how many girls are being assaulted, nor who is taking advantage of them.

Secondly, the way that modern/traditional culture is viewed in literature may skew the theoretical narrative on child protection too far toward biases against traditional practices and may benefit from reassessment. This dissertation upholds the findings from over half a century of research which—while often ethnocentric and antiquated in how it positions modernity over traditionalism—still appears to link formal education to modern culture. Yet this study further calls into question the assumption that all indicators of modern culture are positively associated with girls' education. Furthermore, both modern and traditional culture appear poorly linked in general

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to child sexual abuse, although some issues do exist with rural populations following official child protection protocols (as presented in *Figure 6.2*).

Schooling may very well unlock human capital. And yet, this dissertation also acknowledges that the type of education promoted in low-income nations frequently employs westernized academic models that can displace valuable indigenous, cultural, or religious forms of education. In the global South, mainstreamed education ideologies and systems, including curriculum, infrastructure, and language of instruction, are typically imported, mimicking Euro-American systems (Crossley & Watson, 2003; Fiala, 2007; Thew, 2012), often irrespective of local conditions, traditions, and means of learning (Altbach, 2004; 2015). Hence, while modern culture may be associated with higher rates of education, it involves national EFA policies that mandate mainstreamed schooling, often at the sacrifice of traditional indigenous education (bush schools), such as those in Liberia and other West African nations.

Children and their families should be able to choose alternative education to supplement mandated mainstream schooling as long as these practices are safe, so that once they are grown, children have the skills needed to enter the workforce as well as share in their heritage. Further related research may be needed beyond what this dissertation achieves to addressing the balance of blending mainstream and traditional/cultural education opportunities together- a future vein of inquiry that the principal investigator aims to support in the coming years. This work may include theoretical analysis of policies from a reconceptualization of modern versus traditional culture in relation to human development *(see Appendix 23).* While it is important for any nation's citizenry to access the education and preparation needed to compete in a globalized market, people may also benefit from a traditional cultural education, where traditional culture can be represented by ethnic or religious systems that make up individual or group heritage.

7.3 Policy Implications

The findings from this research help establish crucial updated statistics on girls' education and child rape, which can be invaluable to policymakers and donors in the international development community. In recent years, a handful of Liberian schools, like the private school of More Than Me Academy (Young, 2018) and the public school of William V. S. Tubman Gray United Methodist High School, have come under scrutiny for disturbing incidences of child rape by school staff (Singbah, 2015). However, this study tentatively concludes that these schools experiencing student rape are not outliers but in fact archetypical school cases that just happened to come into the public limelight in what may otherwise be a prevalent systemic issue of educational violence. One child rape case is one too many, so public uproar over school-based rapes plays an essential role in raising awareness and ensuring accountability for failures to protect children in educators' care. However, the practical implications of highlighted cases like these two can have severe effects, including some potential loss of community trust in sending girls to school and school closures without properly considering alternative safer schooling options. Research in most of West Africa and other global regions to date has not sufficiently identified prevalence rates of child rape by adults disaggregated by females' education status (educated vs. no schooling) and level (grades completed). This dissertation accomplishes this task, setting a foundation for future exploration into these rape rates.

Moreover, this research highlights that government ministries should have protocols in place for better enforcement of child protection standards. While it may be difficult to improve financial and institutional resourcing in the immediate future, the Government of Liberia and its international partners can find efficient and effective programs to improve awareness and prevention of child abuse both in communities and schools. Solutions include a variety of

techniques, including dialoguing with policy implementors and beneficiaries about their needs, improving resourcing for key governmental agencies to enforce child protection policies, building robust support for stopping child rape as a national policy agenda, and utilizing already established systems on the ground like civil society organizations to monitor and report child abuse including in schools.

While the results from this dissertation will be presented in formal publication, this study was also purposefully disseminated to thousands of community leaders, parents, schools, and government agencies in country as part of the qualitative phase in late 2018 and into 2019. The goal was to ensure information dissemination cycled back into the very communities that participated in this research, so that they were made aware of the findings and could further utilize this research to facilitate broader awareness and active public participation at the grassroots level. The research findings were also shared with international stakeholders (ex. diplomats, nonprofit organizations) operating in country, as well as vital national agencies working in child protection and education, including the Ministry of Gender, Children & Social Protection (MOGCSP), Ministry of Education (MOE), and civil society organizations (CSOs).

The shared information later inspired a six-month pilot project in 2018/19 funded by the British Embassy and implemented by the same enumerator team from the nonprofit, Renewed Energy Serving Humanity (RESH), that helped with my research's data collection, including a second phase of project funding the next year. The project is specifically designed to promote gender-responsive education in over 90 schools in all district research sites by training and mentoring civil society organizations to use evidence-based research to monitor and evaluate school environments for gender equity and child-friendly schooling standards. Next, the CSOs worked with county and district education offices (CEOs and DEOs), parent-teacher associations

(PTAs), education staff, and the local community to share their findings, and then develop and implement individualized action plans to foster improved gender responsiveness efforts in target schools. Numerous CFS action steps including awareness sessions with PTAs and community groups on child sexual abuse, as well as posting codes of conduct for teachers and students in schools, had a large impact in many of the high-risk schools. In a number of schools, parents and community members reported teachers suspected of raping female students to the DEO, and in several instances, investigations confirming abuse led to immediate dismissal as well as formal reporting to police. The treatment impact was statistically significant in participating schools, and the CSOs continued expanding their work even beyond the life of the project funding cycle.

The MOE County Office in Montserrado additionally is pilot testing the *Open-Door Policy*, prohibiting teachers and adult staff from being alone (behind closed doors) with individual students. Instead, all interactions between school staff and students must be done in groups, with supervision, or in visible sight of others, including leaving office doors and classroom doors ajar to avoid misconduct or abuse. Teach For Liberia and other nonprofits are training their educators to use CFS standards and the Open-Door Policy. Sharing research beyond academic publication has tremendous potential.

The results described above indicate how disseminating research locally, including to the research subjects themselves, can empower them and their communities to become agents of change. Ethically, research participants have a proprietary right to be informed and have access to research information, particularly key findings that will be made public. Moreover, information is a vital resource for citizens to affect change in their lives and communities. Public information sharing can lead from knowledge to action, inspiring relevant discourse and planning as a social enterprise (Campbell, 2012; Wolf-Powers, 2015). It has the power to potentially improve citizen

competence, empowerment and capacity to render social progress even in low-income settings (Fischer, 2015). Information disseminated in a decentralized process can advance participatory planning and intervention concepts to facilitate public participation and offer a more meaningful role for citizens who would otherwise only be sources of information extraction or benign participants, as well as inform policy implementation changes (Neudoerffer, Malhotra, & Ramana, 2001; Tologbonse, Fashola, & Obadiah, 2008), as implied by this dissertation. Not only do beneficiaries deserve access to relevant services, they also deserve a say in ensuring that policies have their intended impact.

The probable ethical and policy-relevant ramifications of this research beyond Liberia are crucial at a time when girls are entering the classroom at higher rates each year, without stakeholders having a clear understanding of how to best ensure that girls are protected, and their agency upheld. The principal investigator intends to replicate this study (with modifications to some of the methods and instruments, including the OM scale) in other national settings, including in the United States or Dominican Republic. Due to the nature of the analysis, it is important for the researcher to be highly familiar with the country context and culture to ensure quality research. Furthermore, the researcher will build on best practices and lessons learnt from this dissertation, including the purposeful involvement of national research and professional experts, as was done with the Liberian consultant team and research assistant *(see Appendix 13 and 14)*, as well as using enumerators who are national professionals trained in working with children and vulnerable populations, as presented in *Chapter Four*.

As the principal investigator, I would like to again thank all those who helped make this research possible, particularly those who participated in the study, as well as my Liberian colleagues who generously volunteered their time and expertise to uncovering the data behind

Hawa's Query. Today, they continue to work with me to disseminate the findings of this research and consider new avenues for using this evidence-based research to promote gender-responsive education that promotes girl's wellbeing and safety from sexual harm. Our journey to stopping gender-based violence affecting young girls still has a long way to go, but by blending policy research and practice together much can be achieved to address this fatal remedy.

Appendix A Key Assumptions of Research Question

Key Assumptions:

- Assumption 1: Female education rates are higher in urban areas than in rural settings.
- Assumption 2: Female education rates are moderately correlated to socio-economic status (SES) demographics which tend to be on average higher but more varied in urban areas.
- Assumption 3: Higher female education levels are moderately correlated with lower rates of formal early marriage (composed as lawful early sexual engagement with parental consent).
- Assumption 4: HH modernity rates are likely higher in urban centers as these areas have more media, infrastructure, and additional associated amenities.
- Assumption 5: Early sexual engagement practices often relate to tribal and/or cultural patterns which may differ in rural settings where homogenous ethnic groups are more pervasive.
- Assumption 6: While modernity is positively associated with education, its link to child sexual abuse is not as well established and some forms of traditionalism may also yield positive effects in child protection.

Appendix B Major Ethnic/Tribal Groups in Liberia

Kpelle	Mandingo
Bassa	Mano
Gio	Krahn
Kru	Loma
Grebo	Vai
Gola	Belleh
Gbandi	Dey
Kissi	Americo-Liberian (Congo-Liberian)
Mende	Lebanese-Liberian

Appendix C International Education Sector in Development

During the 1990s and early 2000s, multi-lateral institutions like the World Bank and their initiatives like the MDGs first promote basic/primary schooling access for all in LDCs, particularly girl children (Heyneman, 2003). This period typically references two movements- *Education for All (EFA)* and the *MDG 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education*. Yet by halfway through the MDGs, policy and program evaluations begin to show that access to basic education is not enough for sustainable human development. As Roser & Ortiz-Ospina (2019) prove, literacy indicators vary worldwide like being able to read and write your name or the alphabet. Many basic definitions are applied in development. Additionally, basic education may be enough to prevent early marriage but not necessarily enough to empower a young woman's capacity to avoid all forms of sexual abuse. When the education afforded a girl fails to take on a holistic approach including addressing education quality, life skills, and the provision of safe and supportive school environments, learning outcomes and gender improvements can eventually deteriorate. By 2010, in many developing countries, attendance and completion rates stagnate, and in some regions actually decline especially among female students (ChildFund, 2010; Gove & Wetterberg, 2011). During the EFA and MDG era, holistic school approaches like UNICEF's Child Friendly Schools (CFS) gain speed worldwide. Evaluations on their effectiveness in many HDCs and LDCs teach the importance of incorporating child-centered spaces, gender responsive education, combined with supportive and safe learning environments with EFA. CFS programming proves one of the most effective means of maintaining school completion rates, improving gender equity, and improve learning for all children including girls.

As the MGD's 2015 end-date approaches, the international development community turns its focus instead to education quality including improved teacher training and early learning programs like Early Grades Reading Assessment (EGRA) assessing standardized learning outcomes (Dubeck & Gove, 2015; Friedlander, 2013; Gove & Wetterberg). Although hundreds of international learning assessment surveys are conducted during this time, few evaluations include measuring rates of violence against children. During this second generation, child protection and SGBV in schools become less of a priority. It takes nearly ten years for this to change. In 2016, the SGDs formally adopt both high-quality learning and secondary education for all children particularly female youth (*Leave No One Behind*). The new swing towards secondary schooling for girls once again renews interest in human development outcomes linked to girls' protection in education (Arubayi & Arubayi, 2016; Boni, Lopez-Fogues, & Walker, 2016). Research shows that advanced education attainment for women results in significant gain in critical thinking and analytical skills that may contribute to improved civic engagement, human rights awareness, self-esteem, and long-life learning motivation. "Completing secondary education and beyond has consistently large positive associations [with female agency, empowerment, and gender equity outcomes], underlining the importance of going beyond primary schooling…[yet while considering] context specificity and multidimensionality" (Hanmer & Klugman, 2016, 237). Focus on universal secondary school access and quality continue today.

Appendix D Rape as a Weapon of War and the Lapa Movement

Rape became a tactic of war employed in the 1980s during the civil conflict after the coup d'état by Samuel Doe. By the late 1980s, President Doe and his forces were under threat when a civil war outbroke under rebel forces led by Charles Taylor and Prince Johnson. By the mid-1990s, Taylor forces overran most of the country. The use of rape as a 'pay yourself' policy became increasingly common among Doe and Taylor forces from the late 1980-1990s, mainly inflicted on women and children. Doe eventually was murdered by Prince Johnson, and Taylor became president in 1997.

Taylor attempted to assuage the international opposition against him and win over more support including of the American government. His administration attempted to update human rights legislation (Jones). But by the end of the 1990s, however, the new government had all but suppressed all local opposition through coercive actions. Most international NGOs were forced to leave. By 2001, UN monitors were forced out of the country by the state, and political opposition grew in number along the borders, as groups like LURD took arms (supplied by the CIA and bought illegally) against Taylor's government. A third full scale civil war erupted, in which cost more lives than the previous wars together. Recruited child soldiers were forced to rape mothers, sisters, and neighbors, and even kill them, as a tactic to ensure they would not escape soldiering and return home (TRC; Waugh). Rape of women and children grew to frequencies never yet seen in country. By this time the definition of rape both as a crime against human and a war crime were set in international law. By 2003, Taylor abdicated his presidency. Liberia fell into civil chaos as rebel forces vied for control.

As rebel fractions entered cities like Monrovia, they tortured, raped and killed over half of the remaining population who had been unable to escape to the borders before the invasion. Interim governments were put into place were ineffective. "Resistance to the soldiers' demands often had dire consequences for the victims or their family. [During and after Taylor], Liberian security forces, whether the military or the Liberian National Police (LNP), not only failed to protect girls from falling prey to sexual abuse, in many instances they blatantly abused their powers and committed the very same crimes that they were supposed to prevent," (TRC, vol. 3, p. 48). For three years instability, louting, and human rights crimes went mostly unchecked (Deline).

Liberian human rights advocates agree that the true numbers will never really be known, but on average, likely 70-90 percent of women and children (both boys and girls) were raped (Deline; Zaway). Yet for every human rights violation such as rape or murder by Doe's forces, Taylor's forces and later rebel groups were reported responsible for eight times that number (Waugh). Rape came to define two generations of women and children. During the wars, rape remained a taboo subject in public (Blunt, 2006; Wallace). The women's peace movement, often called locally as the "spread your lapa movement", brought light to war rape survivors. With nearly one forth the population dead, by 2003, the surviving women were tired of war. That year the armed fractions came together for yet another series of peace talks. The Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace movement surrounded the headquarters for months, spreading their lapas on the ground where they sat refusing to leave, openly protest for peace signings. The Women in Peace-building Network (WIPNET) additionally protested, often highlighting the issue of rape as a crime (Deline; Hanson, 2016).

To help the country move forward, the 2006 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia's (TRC) was one of the first concessions by the acting government including the National

Legislature, with pressured support of international actors, to "forthright response to its core mandate of investigating and determining responsibility for 'egregious' domestic crimes, 'gross' violations of human rights" (22). A final report was published a few years later. There were no prosecutions of rapists or persons who sexual exploited children such as using them as sex slaves or for prostitution:

> A 2003 survey among Liberian refugee women who had found refuge in Sierra Leone found that 74 percent of the women interviewed had been sexually abused or assaulted prior to being displaced. Even though there are no specific statistics on the total number of sexual abuse and violence against women, there is overwhelming evidence that sexual abuse and rape during the conflict was predominantly targeted at girls and young women. Among all the violations reported to the TRC, rape affected most severely girls and young women, with the age groups between 5 and 19 years of age making up approximately 50 percent of all reported rape cases (TRC, vol. 3, 47).

Appendix E Comparative Archetypical Model of Girls' Education and Child Protection

Girls not brides

nation NewsPlex
www.nation.co.ke/earlymarriage #NationNewsplex #16days

Early marriage

1 in 8 females age **15-19** in Kenya is either married, separated, divorced or widowed compared to less than **1%** of men

3 million
Estimated number of girls who get married before their **18th** birthday in sub-Saharan Africa. This is equivalent to **1 in 3** girls

Consequences

3 in 5 girls age **15-17** do not attend secondary school in Kenya. Early marriage and childbearing are some of the main reasons girls drop out of school

46%
Share of girls who started Standard One in 2007 and sat for Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education exam in 2018

2 in 5 girls who started Standard One in 2007 did not join Form One in 2015, **9** years later

Early childbirth

1 in 6 women age **15-19** in Kenya is pregnant or a mother

Domestic abuse

45% of teenagers aged **15-19** think a husband or partner is justified in hitting or beating up his wife or partner

2x
Likelihood of a Kenyan woman with primary school education being physically or sexually abused often, compared with one who has completed secondary school

50%
Increase, globally, in the risk of a girl who marries before age 18 facing violence from an intimate partner throughout her life

2 in 10 females age **15-19** do not believe that a woman is justified in asking her husband to use a condom if they know he has a sexually transmitted disease compared with **1 in 10** women age **20-24**

Lost earnings

Sh6.3 trillion
Amount lost in earnings and productivity because of low education attainment of girls

Returns

62% of women with higher education say they have enough money for food, compared with **46%** of women with no secondary education

5X
How much more women with higher education earn on average, compared to those with no education

8%
How much less women who marry early earn on average in Africa compared with those who married after age **18**

75%
Fall in early childbirth if universal secondary education were introduced while early marriage would almost be eliminated

8%
Reduction in the likelihood of a girl getting married before age **18** or giving birth with each year of secondary education

1/3
Decline in fertility rate in Africa if early marriage were eliminated

due to early marriage for 12 countries, which account for **half** of the Africa's population. Annual total net Official Development Assistance for the continent was estimated at **Sh4.1 trillion** in 2016

SOURCES: WORLD BANK, WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM, KDHS 2014 AND KNBS   COMPILED BY: DOROTHY OTIENO   DESIGN: BENJAMIN SITUMA

Appendix F Theoretical Implications of Modernity on Education Sector

Despite its flaws, the modernization paradigm continues to influence later development theories and their promotion of education as a vital sector. Even today, scholarship recognizes that modernity continues to strongly influence contemporary theories that inform current development work and policy worldwide. Examples include Reflexive Modernization (Knöbl; Alexander, 1996); Human Resource Development; the Human Development Theory (Anand & Sen, 1994); and debatably, in alternative development approaches like NGO-based human development and post-development (Kiely, 1999; Pieterse, 2000). Most of these theories are also highly Euro-American centered, and at times, they promote jingoism and ethnocentrism (Parekh & Wilcox). Yet the human development paradigm, including Sen's Human Development Theory, may compensate for some of these issues of modernity. In theory, these two paradigms can be complementary.

Chiappero-Martinetti, von Jacobi, & Signorelli (2015) suggest that the Human Development Theory compared to its earlier theoretical cousins like modernity and economic growth "are intrinsically interconnected, co-evolutionary, and mutually reinforcing each other" (223). They all measure "progress" in terms of economic definitions like income and participation in market activity. However, Sens' capacity approach is more robust in its perspectives on human development by redefining inequality beyond economics to that of a state of well-being (Chiappero-Martinetti et al.).

Appendix G Global South Education System Influenced by Westernized Systems

Post-colonial lensing is pervasive in any theories and related research deriving from the same paradigm as modernity. The promotion of education, which is arguably one of the most noble, still remains influenced by jingoism and ethnocentricity. Research like the studies by Inkeles, USAID, DfID, UNICEF and other research entities demonstrate that there is a strong correlation between an individual's education and holding other 'modern' tendencies as defined by post-colonial value systems, including earning income, being an active public and civic participant, and performing democratic tasks like voting. Yet we have to further remind ourselves that 'being educated' is often defined in these various scholarships as completing standardized schooling that furthers literacy, numeracy, and inputs knowledge often ideologically westernized often previously informed by Victorian and protestant models of education, that later spread to a globalized definition (Thew, 2012). Post-World War II led to a rampant promotion of education worldwide never yet experienced, but often the education systems, their curriculum, and infrastructure mimicked the lead educational ideologies within schools in the global North (Crossley & Watson, 2003; Fiala, 2007). The new neo-colonialism efforts worldwide drive the "loss of intellectual and cultural autonomy by those who are less powerful… Countries and academic systems and institutions in the developing countries become dependent on rich and powerful foreign providers" (Altbach, 2015, 4).

Additionally, most libraries and textbooks in low-income countries are supplied from the Global North, the content written by westerners in a European language. Higher educational institutions are accredited by global standards to which many African universities qualify lower than Euro-American. Often, exported educational ideologies, systems, and programs in this new

neo-colonial era fail to ensure that pedagogy and curricular content are relevant and respective to local conditions, traditions, and means of learning (Altbach, 2004; 2015). School buildings often have classrooms with blackboards at the front of the room with students sitting in rows of desks shipped in abroad, carbon-copies of schools across the Atlantic. All representing the importance placed on a westernized education. In West Africa, a person was typically viewed as better educated the more she learned Euro-American language and literature, and social sciences, natural sciences, and mathematics standard in Euro-American school systems. Indigenous and mother-tongue languages and curriculum that is diversified to reflect a multi-cultural world has increased in educational systems globally in the last decades, but still, learning takes on a post-colonial perspective valuing western ideology. These issues strongly affect the Liberian schooling system.

Liberia's educational system is highly founded in African American educational models that historically institutionalized ministry curriculum (Thew, 2012). Before the introduction of western public education in the 19th century, Liberian children typically received indigenous education led by chiefs and village elders, with the purpose to continue Liberian culture based on ethnic orientation, including in the mother-tongue language. After the introduction of compulsory public schooling, children often rotated between attending indigenous schooling (bush schools) and western schools often operated by the government or missionaries. In rural areas, this educational practice continues, in which government officials and civil society stakeholders often negotiate children being able to complete both schooling types, but often one type (often indigenous education) is less prominent than public (Adesiyan, 1988).

Additionally, Liberian public-school curriculum highly favors American-Liberian or western influenced ideology, language, and history over the promotion of over 16 distinct tribal-ethnic groups, their language, history, and culture. In 2018, public and most private schools are

taught in standardized English, excluding mother-tongue instruction except in a handful of funded projects. In recent years, the Ministry of Education has made moves to privatize the education system in order, which despite a number of its more efficient improvements in learning quality and school operations, has led to further issues of imported westernized curriculum, administration, teaching pedagogies, and instruction (Klees, 2017; USAID, 2016).

We must remember that 'being educated' from a developmentalist perspective is to share standardized knowledge with much of the rest of the world. But this 'education' is set in post-colonial knowledge and value structures. But in completing both standardized and traditional training, youth are empowered to thrive in formal and informal environments, like university or work, without sacrificing identity and culture. For instance, bilingual schools to after-school religious or cultural programs, an American student may more readily participate in public schooling systems as well as traditional, ethnic, or cultural educational programs. In her maturity, the person lives in a free democratic society that allows her to then select which educational inputs to use as outputs to be contributing members of society.

Cultural education like traditional (bush/religious/ethnic) schools may not always hinder children's formal schooling but can provide positive knowledge and behaviors. In West Africa nations, traditional education often includes informal apprenticeship/vocational training with family or community members, and early learning opportunities in the workforce that westernized schools may not offer. Blending formal education with traditional/cultural practices can enhance a child's learning opportunities (Niamer, 1993).

Another example involves thousands of American Mormon youth who are just as modern as their non-Mormon peers- driving cars, accessing social media and pop culture, dating, and attending public schools compliant with governmental standards- while also undergoing thorough

religious training and practices. A four-year study of over 3,000 youth demonstrated that Mormon youth are highly educated to core educational standards and much less likely to engage in risky behavior including substance abuse or early sexual engagement than their peers who score lower on religiosity (Smith & Denton, 2009). While balancing between faith and public schooling is not without some flaws, this study demonstrates again that following religious or ethnical traditional practices can positively supplement formal education or child protection issues. Children and youth should have access to quality education that prepares them to play an active role in a globalized world, while still learning from their rich ethnic and religious background represented in a diversified curriculum.

Appendix H Alpha Testing of Scales for Major Variables

Appendix Table 1 Alpha Test Avg. for Survey Scales

Scale	Sub	N	Alpha	Code
Child Friendly Scale (CFS)- for educated girls		570	0.58 (0.61)*	TotalCFSstud
Child Friendly Scale (CFS)- for parents		468	0.56 (0.58)*	TotalPCFS
Child Friendly Scale (CFS)- Total HH, girls + parents		378	0.72 (0.72)*	TOTALCFSHH
OM Scale- Young woman-	Total Score	693	0.27 (0.31)	TotalOMScoreWoman
	Public Participation	697	0.47 (0.55)	OMPubPartTotal
	Public Part. (less 1)	702	0.64 (0.63)*	TotalOMPubPart
	Education Aspiration	703	0.05 (0.07)	TotalOMEdAsp
	Efficacy (only 1 item)	-	-	
	Citizenship	697	0.21 (0.22)	TotalOMCitizen
	Women's Rights	697	0.31 (0.32)	TotalOMWomenRites
OM Scale- Parents/Guardian-	Total Score	341	0.47 (0.50)	ParTotalOMScore
	Family Planning	451	0.35 (0.35)	TotalOMFamPlan
	Public Participation	451	0.28 (0.54)*	TotalPOMPubPart
	Efficacy	429	0.24 (0.26)	TotalPOMEffic
	Women Rights	451	0.19 (0.24)	POMWomenRitesTotal
	Family Planning	462	0.65 (0.66)*	TotalPOMFamPlan
	Edu. Aspiration	474	0.09 (0.12)	TotalPOMEdAsp
	Citizenship	461	0.20 (0.26)	TotalPOMCitizen
Total HH Wealth (total of 11 common items)		714	0.73 (0.73)*	totalhh
Girl's Perceived Prevalence Level of Comm CSA		629	0.53 (0.57)*	COMMCHILD-ABUSELVL
Girl's Legal Knowledge on CSA (adj)		684	0.56 (0.60)*	SCORELAW-KNOWB
Parental Perceived Prevalence Level of Comm CSA		434	0.59 (0.60)*	PCOMMCHILD-ABUSELVL
Parental Legal Knowledge on CSA (adj)		473	0.66 (0.68)*	PSCORELAW-KNOWB

Note: Standardized alphas in brackets. Scales used in statistical analysis with sufficient alphas; if not starred, items compared individually and not as scale.

Appendix I Sampling

N= 1,118, 241 (Population of Montserrado County, Liberia)

Montserrado County Population Disaggregated by Type:

	Male	Female	Total	Type
Montserrado	549,733	568,508	1,118,241	
Careysburg	15,048	14,664	29,712	rural
Commonwealth	5,752	6,124	11,876	rural
Todee	17,479	16,519	33,998	rural
Greater Monrovia	476,473	494,351	970,824	urban
St. Paul River	34,981	36,850	71,831	urban

The formula used for these calculations was:

$$n = \frac{X^2 * N * P * (1-P)}{(ME^2 * (N-1)) + (X^2 * P * (1-P))}$$

Where:

n = sample size

X^2 = Chi – square for the specified confidence level at 1 degree of freedom

N = Population Size

P = population proportion (.50 in this table)

ME = desired Margin of Error (expressed as a proportion)

$$n_1 = \frac{(1.96)^2 * 1{,}118{,}241 * (0.5*(1-0.5))}{((0.05)^2 * (1{,}118{,}241\text{-}120)) + ((1.96)^2 * 0.5*(1-0.5))} = 384$$

*This formula is the one used by Krejcie & Morgan in their 1970 article "Determining Sample Size for Research Activities" (*Educational and Psychological Measurement*, #30, pp. 607-610).

This research will pad the sample power n by 20% of the original sample size to account for issues of possible attrition or data collection error:

$$n_2 = (384+(384*0.2)) = 461$$

Planned Sampling Design in Field:

- *County Level:* There are over 4.5 million people in Liberia, of which 1,118, 241 people are in Montserrado county. There are five total districts of which three are rural (population of under 35,000/district) with a total of 75,586 people (8% of total county pop.), and two that are urban (92% of total county pop.).

- District Level: Stratified sampling will be performed from two districts within Montserrado, one urban and one rural, both of which will be chosen randomly. The sample size taken from the rural district will be 37 (8% of the total sample size) and the sample size taken from the urban district will be 424 (92% of the total sample size).

- Local Level: Participants will be selected based on cluster area sampling. In each district, cluster area sampling will be employed, in which district areas will be gridded in blocks of ¼ sq. miles in urban areas and ½ sq. mile in rural areas. Each grid area will be numbered and then

randomly selected. Enumerators will all sample household (house, apartment, shack, hut) per block with at least one young woman participant (between the ages of 18-21, of any education level, who voluntarily consents) within the selected grid areas. They will cover all blocks within individual grid.

Appendix J Enumerator Insight to Research Methods

Applying a three-phase pilot provided enumerators both the opportunity to become more familiar and reliable in implementing the surveys to standard, and the chance to provide feedback on the instruments and survey guidelines. Enumerators provided relevant cultural insight suggestions that led to several protocol changes to ethical and considerately improve the survey experience for survey participants. For instance, enumerators were trained to conduct surveys with individuals in private away from others as to ensure anonymity and privacy of participants. Yet, it was found culturally-taboo in many sectors to allow a male stranger to be admitted in the home of a woman without permission or the presence of a head of household, the act of which could cause later issues such as family questioning her honor. Enumerators offered that the guidelines be changed to stipulate that both male and female team members should only perform surveys in open spaces like living rooms with front door fully-open, or outside of the home such as on the porch or by the outside cooking-hut, yet while ensuring any family or neighbors within sight were hearing-distance away to protect the confidentiality of the participant.

Furthermore, enumerator insight gave light to potential socio-political issues not identified in the planning phase. Since the war, Ebola, and increasing rates of crime nationwide, some communities are highly wary and even violent against strangers from outside perceived as possibly *snooping* around homes. Enumerators requested that the researcher and assistant meet with community leaders and undergo proper vetting of the intent of the research, which was also recommended by IRB-Liberia. Once approved by the community leadership, they next formally introduce each enumerator to the community in a formal meeting to explain the work that they will be doing. This introductory step helped build trust and transparency among the community about

the research and acted as a safety mechanism for the team members. Additionally, the enumerators wore survey uniforms, and they carried government-issued identification cards and copies of IRB-approval documentation for verification. Thirdly, the principal investigator insisted most surveys be conducted during the daytime. But the enumerators shared that most Liberians will be bothered by surveyors interrupting their work or household duties during the day, but per cultural norm would not say anything as it is socially perceived as rude to turn away a stranger. Thus, the team voted to let each enumerator decide what time s/he thought it best to do their work in their individual communities.

Appendix K Example of Triangulation

Triangulation both using two or more theoretical methods can supplement the weaknesses of each other, such as including a qualitative approach to explain the quantitative results of a large-n survey. Likewise, triangulation using multiple points of measurement or assessment for with-in case can help verify the accuracy of variables and their constructs (Dunn & Peters, 2018). A major example, the survey asked female participants the age that they first gave became pregnant (got with belly). Due to common issues of illiteracy or social desirability, there were additional questions added later in the survey including the year that her first child was born, and at the end of the survey, how old she was the day of the survey, to verify her reported age of first pregnancy. Based on this triangulation technique, the data analysis revealed that nearly one in ten young women responded to questions with self-reported data that conflicted each other. Nearly 90 percent of those women whose answers did not match up reported giving birth in her later teenage years; yet, based on their present age and the calculated age of their first child, they were likely pre-adolescent at the time that they gave birth. Numerous individual participants were as young as 8-10 years-old at time of her first conception, which indicates that she was sexually initiated even younger, which by Liberian governmental policy and most ethnic cultural systems is deemed as illicit and unnecessarily risky to the girl child. Although there is no way to determine the reasons behind the mismatching data points, it can be deduced by examining the characteristics of the majority of the women that there is an implicit (even if unconscious) desire to misreport or hide cases of pre-adolescent sexual activity. This example of triangulation provides new insight to better assessing levels of social desirability and incongruency of self-reported data related to taboo/private topics.

The female survey does inquire about how old she was when she first got pregnant, lived with partner, or was married, to first assess if she likely engaged in sexual activity as a minor. If it because of her responses it is clear she had early sex, then the enumerator would ask the following: "To confirm, you had sex (came into life) before you were 18 years old? (*Yes/No/No response*). Did the man (men) have permission or consent from your parents and family to be with you? (*Yes/No/No Response*) At the time, was the male (male) who you were with about the same age (under 18/youth) or was he an older man (18 or older/adult)? *(Peer/Adult)* What was the occupation of the male (males) at the time they were together? (disaggregate occupation as *education-based* if teacher, school staff, or student, and as *other* if no school related)." Based on this line of questioning, the principal investigator can deduce the categorization of each case. In fact, the majority of the surveys purposely include questions that provide data which is used *to deduce* sexual engagement, risk levels and rape, without specifically using culturally-abrasive diction like *rape* or *abuse* that may to protect participants from unnecessarily harm such as the psychological trauma of naming prior experiences. No treatment (like therapy or educational programming) is offered to participants by this research, so the researcher concludes it would be unethical and unwarranted to lead women through such relentless questioning. Prior research found in the literature review which offers no intervention after evaluation that asks invasive questions including about rape debatably place participants through unnecessary risk of harm simply to collect data. During both the development and the pilot testing stages of the research, the Liberian consultants and enumerators gave positive feedback to this line of questioning, nearly all agreeing

that it was beneficial for the research participants. Similarly, analysis of the data shows that the survey questions significantly captured reliable and valid measurements of rape.

For this reason, it arguably proves that asking invasive questions is at times unnecessary to ensure quality data collection. Researchers must carefully reflect on the impact of conducting emotionally charged research on personal topics like violence and rape in social science, particularly weighing the potential costs to their subjects who may be asked to relive their trauma in detail. Researchers should reflect on their connection to their research subjects and the impact of their investigation on them (Ackerly & True, 2008; Campbell, 2013; D'Costa, 2003;). This dissertation broaches the sectors of child protection, education, and gender development. "Feminist-informed ethical perspective makes us attentive to the privilege of being able to do research and to the power relationships that are a part of the research process…to reconsider various aspects of our process throughout our research, from choosing a question to publicizing our findings…through critical self-reflection that *a question itself* may reinforce or exacerbate existing power relations, forms of marginalization, exploitation or silencing" (Ackerly & True, 701-702).

Appendix M Research Assistant

Professor Ernest G. Smith, Jr. is a respected Liberian expert in social welfare and mental health. He taught university courses in sociology, research design and psychology at multiple Liberian universities, including AME Zion University and University of Liberia. He founded and is the acting executive director for Renewed Energy Serving Humanity (RESH), a nonprofit organization focusing on psychosocial and mental health work, social welfare, research, and civil society. He worked alongside Jessi Hanson, the principal investigator, for nearly a decade including on grant projects offering nearly 1000 people affected by Ebola to receive psychological support, funded by UNICEF and in partnership with Playing to Live, as well as headed a grant project based on the results of this dissertation research to mentor civil society organizations on evidence-based research and advocacy to promote gender responsive education in schools, funded by the British Embassy. Professor Smith was supervisor for social services at the JF Kennedy Hospital, in Monrovia, and worked also for the Center of Victims of Torture. He is a lead expert in Liberia for mental health, psychosocial research, and has participated as part of formal IRB processes at national universities. His role as research assistant for this dissertation included: supporting selection of enumerator team, training enumerators, co-supervising enumerators and leads, instrument design feedback for cultural and contextual relevance, support for IRB-Liberia process, co-monitoring visits of data collection, and feedback on drafted chapters by principal investigator. His work was voluntary, and he was paid a stipend by the grants for this dissertation to pay for transportation and material costs. He allowed use of RESH headquarters for dissertation enumerator team trainings and mentor meetings. As a research assistant, he was required to take IRB courses by the University of Pittsburgh.

Appendix N Consultant Team of Survey Instruments and Key Informant Interview

Facilitator-   Jessi Hanson, PhD(c) with mentor support by Dr. William Dunn

Members-   Education NGO Cluster- Desmond Diggs, Teach For Liberia

Social Worker NGO- Prisie Badu & Malynda Omens

Academic Community- Professor Ernest Smith, Jr.; Dr. Richard Ngufuan

Child Protection MOGSCPD- Victoria Zaway

International Community- Dr. Vijay Parveen, UN Women; Carolyn Ziv,
UNICEF

MOE County Level- Cecilia Reeves, CEO of Montserrado

Educational Governmental Representative- Senator Dallas Gueh

Teacher/School Administration- Prisie Badu, Margaret Tubman

Diplomatic agencies- Robertetta Rose, Ambassador David Belgrove

Appendix O Importance of Cross-national Expert Partnerships in Research

The inclusion of national-level academics and practitioners, and even local research participants can further advance potential of scholarship to expand insight, understanding, and opportunities to meaningful empower voice and sustainable change beyond peer-reviewed publication. One way to address this issue is to ensure any foreign researcher completing an investigation in another country has relevant experience and familiarity with the cultural context, history, and contextual reality of their target population in country. Experience working in country can improve capacity to understand and interpret the data that they collect, make relevant conclusions, and recognize the best means and strategies to conduct research (Malik & Pereira, 2015). Secondly, these researchers should seek out relevant chances to include diverse collaboration in this research particularly with national representation throughout multiple phases of the investigation (Cashman, Adeky, Allen III, Corburn, Israel, Montaño, Rafelito, Rhodes, Swanston, Wallerstein & Eng, 2008).

Appendix P Gantt Chart

Gantt Chart	Month															
Activity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Phase 1: Preparation																
1.1 Finalize evaluation instruments and IRB process	■	■	■	■												
1.2 Coordinate plans in Liberia				■	■	■										
1.3 Write operations procedures for field data collection						■	■									
Phase 2: Quantitative Phase																
2.1 Identify enumerators with help of consultation team						■	■									
2.1.a Finalize consultation team						■										
2.1.b. Interview enumerators							■									
2.1.c Contextual & translate instruments if needed							■									
2.2 Pilot test instruments							■									
2.2.a Pilot test instruments and test							■									
2.2.b Redesign & test as needed							■									
2.3 Conduct evaluator team training							■									
2.4 Perform data collection								■	■							
2.4.a Sample selection of sites							■									
2.4.b Monitor enumerators for data consistency & quality								■	■							
2.4.c Data collection by enumerators								■	■	▒						
2.5 Data entry								■	■	▒						
2.6 Conduct initial statistical evaluation analysis and summary report									■	■						
Phase 3: Analytical Phase:																
3.1 Review data findings with Liberian consultants & feedback										■	▒					
3.2 Analyze findings & compare to quantitative data										■	■	▒				
3.3 Write chapters of dissertation											■	■	■	■	■	
3.4 Present dissertation																■

*dark gray- planned activity span; light gray- potential delay span given conditions

Appendix Q Cluster Sampling, Enumerator Assignment, and Data Collection

After calculating the sample size, enumerators were then selected from a large pool of hundreds of candidates from every district in the county. All candidates were previously vetted by the research assistant, often working with his nonprofit organization or completing his university courses in social sciences and research design. Next, cluster sites from each district were randomly selected. Enumerators living closest to those cluster sites were assigned by the principal investigator, often in pairs during the pilot phase. The paired enumerators then submitted a list of all streets within their assigned cluster area (approximately 10-25 streets depending urbanization and population density). The principal investigator next randomly-selected a street from each cluster list. Enumerators were instructed to visit every individual home on the selected street to assess if the household had potential participants matching the target study population, and if so, whether they consented to participate in the study. If a potential participant declined to participate or there was no survey candidate matching the participant profile, then the house was excluded. Once every home (both formal structures like houses, or individual residencies like apartments or shanties) on the selected street was visited by the enumerators, then another street would be randomly selected from the cluster list for the enumerator to fully survey.

By assigning enumerators to sites near their own homes, the research project drastically reduced travel expenses and time that would otherwise be spent if enumerators had to commute to remote locations or far distances as a whole team, which is often standard practice for research projects in West Africa. This method also reduces the risks that can face volunteer data collectors traveling longer distances. Some benefits include mitigating traveling into the evening when there can be less safe transportation, lowering rates of commuter robbery/assault and vehicle accidents,

as well as minimizing the additional time sacrifice away from daily work and household responsibilities. Additionally, enumerators were more familiar with the sites as they lived close by, and could more readily navigate local politics, social interactions, and transport.

On average, an enumerator pair or enumerator working alone surveyed a household in approximately 1-2 hours, completing 3 households a day. Each enumerator completed nearly the same number of households per week. Data collectors were volunteers who received a weekly travel stipend to cover research costs which was mostly safe transport to and from site. Enumerators either traveled by public transport or walked to assigned sites. All enumerators were frequently monitored including on randomly selected days by the principal investigator and lead mentor. Monitoring included verifying each enumerator followed the survey protocol and operations guidelines. Any inconsistencies were recorded, and enumerators received follow-up mentoring on improving capacity and reliability. Every week, the enumerator team gathered together for follow-up training and feedback sessions led by the principal investigator. They reviewed protocol and discussed any potential challenges, such as their role when confronted with a suspect case of rape which occurred multiple times. Each time, enumerators referred parents or family who reported the case to the proper authorities, which included encouraging them to immediately go to medical facilities and police departments legally authorized as support services. All survey participants were provided copies of the consent form and a referral list of proper agencies for child protection and educational services, to spread awareness of how to report child abuse and learn about child rights.

In the end of the project, enumerators provided feedback to the principal investigator on their experiences. They reported that the thorough training and ongoing mentoring were main reasons for the lack of data collection error. They also felt it improved their capacity and motivation to do high-level evidence-based research. Likewise, pairing enumerators particularly in the first weeks of data collection improved capturing survey data consistently among the team. Pairing enumerators also allowed them to travel more safely, to monitor each other's work continuously, and share experiences and learning. The

study prioritized recruitment of mainly female candidates as most survey participants were women, and culturally, it is more comfortable and preferable among participants if they interact with female professionals especially on sensitive topics like sexual activity. However, review of the data collection by the team found that male enumerators were nearly if not equally effectual in their survey work as their female colleagues, when properly trained and mentored, and when possible paired with a female data collection partner.

Appendix R Triangulation Testing for Social Desirability Bias in Early Sexual Engagement Survey

The survey uses multiple data points to assess the accuracy of young women participants' response to their age of first pregnancy. This triangulated analysis reveals a relevant pattern of women who were pregnant in pre-adolescence providing inaccurate or mismatching responses. The survey asks female participants the age that they first gave became pregnant (got with belly). Due to concerns of potential illiteracy or social desirability among participants, additional questions are appear later into the survey as a means of triangulation the variable construct, including the year that her first child was born, and at the end of the survey, how old she was the day of the survey, to verify her reported age of first pregnancy. Because of this triangulation technique, the data analysis reveals that nearly one in ten young women respond to questions with self-reported data that conflicted each other on early childbearing. Nearly 90 percent of these women whose answers do not match up reported giving birth in her later teenage years; yet, based on their present age and the calculated age of their first child, they were likely pre-adolescent at the time that they gave birth. Numerous individual participants were as young as 8-10 years-old at time of first conception, which indicates sexually initiation at a tender age, which by Liberian governmental policy and most ethnic cultural systems is deemed as illicit and unnecessarily risky to the girl child. Although this analysis cannot determine the reasons behind the mismatching data points, it can be deduced by examining the characteristics of the majority of the women that there is an implicit (even if unconscious) desire to misreport or hide cases of pre-adolescent sexual activity. This example of triangulation provides new insight to better assessing levels of social

desirability and incongruency of self-reported data related to taboo/private topics of early sexual

engagement.

Appendix S Statistical Tables

Appendix Table 2 Avg. Change in Education Levels of Daughters versus Parents by Gender

Variables	Father-Daughter M, SE, SD [CI], N	Mother-Daughter M, SE, SD [CI], N	Difference M, SE, [CI], t Value, Cohen's d
Edu Level (grades)	0.75, 0.51, 6.20 [-.27-1.74], 149	3.47, 0.39, 6.14 [2.80-4.15], 329	-2.61, 0.61, [-3.92--1.53], -4.48, -0.44

Note: CI=confidence interval.

Appendix Table 3 Change in Rapist by School Tier

	School Tier				
Assailant Occupation	No School	Primary	Secondary	Advanced	Total
School-based	6 (24.0)	12 (35.0)	67 (40.6)	7 (41.0)	92 (38.2)
Non-school	19 (76.0)	22 (65.0)	98 (59.4)	10 (59.0)	149 (61.8)
Total	25 (100.0)	34 (100.0)	165 (100.0)	17 (100.0)	241(100.0)

Note: $\chi 2 = 2.73$, p=0.44, Gamma= -0.18, ASE = 0.13. (Not significant at p = 0.05 level). Observed frequency outside parentheses. Percentages in parentheses. The contingency coefficient C = sqrt chisq/chisq + n = sqrt 1.98/1.98 + 241 = 0.05. Odds-ratio for girls statutorily raped by school-based assailant with no education verses secondary schooling: (19*67)/(6*98)= 2.2, $\chi 2$= 2.53, p=0.11, phi=0.12. Odds-ratio for girls raped by school-based assailant with no education verses primary schooling: (19*12)/(6*22)= 1.7, $\chi 2$ = 0.87, p=0.35, phi= 0.12.

Appendix Table 4 Differences in Girl's Education Level on Responses to Key Binary OM KAP Items

Variables	Girl's Edu Level		
	Traditional Response M, SE, SD [CI], N	Modern Response M, SE, SD [CI], N	Difference M, SE, [CI], t Value, Cohen's d
Young Women's OM-			
Public participation 2-belong to any orgs	8.13, 0.36, 3.89 [7.41-9.13], 115	9.46, 0.16, 3.98 [9.13-9.78], 588	-1.33, 0.41, [-2.12- -0.53], -3.28, -0.33
Women's rights 3-marry parent choice even if not like him	7.60, 0.41, 4.09 [6.78-8.41], 99	9.50, 0.16, 3.91 [9.19-9.81], 609	-1.91, 0.43, [-2.75- -0.07], -4.47, -0.48
Women's rights 4-marry her choice even if parents don't approve	9.05, 0.19, 4.01 [8.63-9.43], 452	9.56, 0.15, 3.87 [9.08-10.06], 245	-0.52, 0.31, [-1.14- 0.10], -1.65, -0.13
Family planning 1-limit # of children	8.41, 0.43, 4.03 [7.56-9.28], 98	9.36, 0.16, 3.93 [9.05-9.53], 608	-0.94, 0.43, [-1.79- -0.09], -2.13, -0.24
Family planning 2-	7.80, 0.52, 4.65	9.47, 0.15, 3.95	-1.67, 0.46, [-2.58- -0.80],

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girl can say doesn't want to sleep with man	[6.77-8.83], 81		[8.98-9.57], 615		-3.60, -0.43			
Parent's OM- Family planning 4- use male protection like condoms	9.96, 0.33, 4.09 [9.30-10.61], 152		9.09, 0.20, 3.65 [8.65-9.72], 314		0.87, 0.38, [0.13-2.58- 1.60], 2.31, 0.23			

Note: CI is confidence interval. Cohen's d = 0.2, 0.5 and 0.8 correspond to small, medium and large effect size.

Appendix Table 5 Regression of Household KAPs on Education Attainment

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Girl's Edu Level				Parent's Edu Level			
Young women's OM								
Public participation- total sub-scale	0.35**	0.21			-0.10	0.02		
	(0.17)	(0.18)			(0.31)	(0.36)		
Edu aspiration 1	0.51	0.26			1.34	1.24		
	(0.52)	(0.58)			(0.81)	(0.81)		
Edu aspiration 2	1.23***	1.18***			0.06	0.09		
	(0.24)	(0.24)			(0.44)	(0.44)		
Citizenship 1	0.32*	0.42**			0.38	0.33		
	(0.18)	(0.19)			(0.32)	(0.33)		
Citizenship 2	0.16	0.09			0.39	0.27		
	(0.20)	(0.20)			(0.33)	(0.35)		
Efficacy 1	0.15	0.12			-0.76**	-0.74**		
	(0.19)	(0.19)			(0.33)	(0.35)		
Women's rights 1	-0.04	0.01			0.42	0.47		
	(0.21)	(0.23)			(0.40)	(0.41)		
Women's rights 2	-0.78***	-0.75**			-1.09**	-1.11**		
	(0.30)	(0.30)			(0.50)	(0.53)		
Women's rights 3	0.95**	0.84*			-2.67***	-2.73***		
	(0.46)	(0.46)			(0.69)	(0.71)		
Women's rights 4	0.62*	0.52			-0.18	-0.38		
	(0.32)	(0.33)			(0.56)	(0.57)		
Family planning 1	0.71	0.71			0.33	0.58		
	(0.48)	(0.49)			(0.78)	(0.79)		
Family planning 2	1.36**	1.14**			0.85	0.82		
	(0.57)	(0.56)			(0.94)	(0.95)		
Parent's OM Public participation 1			1.21***	1.06***			1.53***	1.66***
			(0.34)	(0.34)			(0.39)	(0.40)
Public participation 2			-1.34**	-1.00*			-0.69	-0.38
			(0.55)	(0.56)			(1.07)	(1.06)
Public participation 3			0.11	0.19			-0.91	-1.96
			(0.98)	(1.22)			(1.65)	(1.44)
Public participation 5			-0.29	-0.30*			0.22	0.19
			(0.18)	(0.18)			(0.24)	(0.24)
Edu Aspiration 1			-0.80*	-0.99*			1.14	1.25
			(0.47)	(0.52)			(0.98)	(0.94)
Edu Aspiration 2			-0.09	-0.02			1.59***	1.35***
			(0.35)	(0.38)			(0.51)	(0.51)
Edu Aspiration 3			0.13	0.26			0.78*	0.59
			(0.31)	(0.31)			(0.42)	(0.42)
Citizenship-			-0.19	-0.21			0.64***	0.61***

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
total sub-scale			(0.14)	(0.14)			(0.19)	(0.20)
Efficacy 1			0.35	0.45			0.28	0.42
			(0.32)	(0.34)			(0.48)	(0.49)
Efficacy 2			0.29	0.24			0.52	0.57
			(0.29)	(0.29)			(0.42)	(0.43)
Efficacy 3			-0.23	-0.32			-0.77**	-0.89**
			(0.26)	(0.25)			(0.35)	(0.37)
Efficacy 4			-0.03	-0.00			0.01	0.29
			(0.30)	(0.31)			(0.43)	(0.43)
Efficacy 5			0.22	0.32			-0.21	-0.14
			(0.40)	(0.41)			(0.57)	(0.58)
Women's rights 1			-	-			1.16***	1.01**
			0.78***	0.79***				
			(0.27)	(0.27)			(0.41)	(0.44)
Women's rights 2			-0.04	-0.15			0.59	0.43
			(0.35)	(0.36)			(0.44)	(0.48)
Women's rights 3			-0.38	-0.35			0.33	0.22
			(0.32)	(0.32)			(0.46)	(0.47)
Women's rights 4			1.25**	1.12**			-0.99	-0.90
			(0.50)	(0.52)			(0.73)	(0.76)
Women's rights 5			-0.04	0.20			-0.81	-1.12*
			(0.42)	(0.46)			(0.69)	(0.67)
Women's rights 6			0.89	0.77			1.00	1.06
			(0.56)	(0.57)			(0.73)	(0.80)
Family planning-total sub-scale			-0.02	-0.17			0.01	-0.01
			(0.21)	(0.22)			(0.28)	(0.30)
Age (Fixed Effects)		Y		Y		Y		Y
Constant	-2.8	-1.3	11.4***	11.4***	8.7**	8.5**	-13.3**	-9.9*
	(2.44)	(2.55)	(3.55)	(4.01)	(3.96)	(3.96)	(5.79)	(5.47)
Observations	615	599	339	334	415	406	339	333
R-squared	0.12	0.15	0.15	0.20	0.08	0.13	0.24	0.31
r2_a	0.10	0.11	0.09	0.10	0.05	0.06	0.19	0.22

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses; *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$

Appendix Table 6 Regression of Safety of School Environment on Female Education Attainment

	(1)	(2)
VARIABLES	Girl's Edu Level (grade level)	
Young woman's Total CFS Score	0.07**	0.14***
(risker 15-36 pts. safer)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Parent's Total CFS Score		-0.07*
(risker 21-48 pts. safer)		(0.03)
Age (Fixed Effects)	Y	Y
Constant	7.08***	7.48***
	(0.91)	(1.37)
Observations	548	363
R-squared	0.09	0.15
r2_a	0.06	0.10

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$.

Appendix T Critical Statements by Key Informant Stakeholders on Rural Communities

The District Education Officer (DEO) identifies "traditional festival, like the poro and sande society, especially within the hinterland or remotest part of Liberia." The mother states, "[M]ost people of the middle class know these things [about education and child protection policies], but people of the lower class they don't, most of them don't know…[Liberia has] more of the lower class people." Likewise, the sociology professor shares that school access in rural areas is poor as is the quality of learning, which in his view, diminishes local support for education. Supposing himself in the shoes of the rural poor, he says with rural schools being so inadequate, many in "some villages" would rather "will sit down and start having some children" or start a family. Moreover, the police officer indicates that policy knowledge in rural areas is more limited. Additionally, he shares that sexual assailants often hide in rural communities, where they often can escape the law, and families may be more likely to keep child abuse quiet or "within the family" instead of reporting it as the law dictates.

Appendix U Mandated Liberian Child Protection Policy Procedures

As of 2018, these procedures mandate that parents/guardians of child victims seek immediate support services at a registered medical facility, where medical care is administered, and physical evidence of abuse is recorded. Social workers, some NGOs, and CSOs are trained to act as intermediaries who help families to seek proper help but are prohibited from investigating/interfering in the case without law enforcement permission. Medical staff and parents must alert proper authorities including local/district zone police who will ensure the child's safety and begin investigating the case, including collecting testimonials and physical evidence and detain the suspect if they can find him. Main police stations usually have trained female officers who are part of the Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Crimes Unit tasked to handle rape cases. These officers are trained in reporting and investigation techniques that improve their ability to document and bring these cases to higher standards of justice with help from UN Police (UNPOL) and nonprofit capacity development and funding support. Funding and resourcing for this unit has diminished since the downsizing of UNIMIL in country. Police work alongside MoGCSP officials to ensure the long-term safety of the victim and her family, including offering counseling and safe house lodging outside of the community during the investigation and into the trial. If enough evidence is collected and the victim and her parents are willing to proceed, the case will be registered with the Liberian Court 'E' and placed on the docket. The perpetrator may face extended jail before and during the trial, as rape is considered a 'non-bailable' offense. If and when the case comes to trial, witnesses will be called and evidence given to a judge who will then give the verdict and/or sentencing, which can result in ten years to a lifetime sentence in prison. There are Liberian families who during any of these phases may decide to turn to informal justice structures, including

community palaver/mediation between parties, or justice seeking from community/traditional leadership, especially in highly-ethnic and rural areas such as in the hinterlands like Grand Bassa, Lofa, Nimba, Maryland, and River Cess *(see Appendix 6: Liberian Child Protection Laws).*
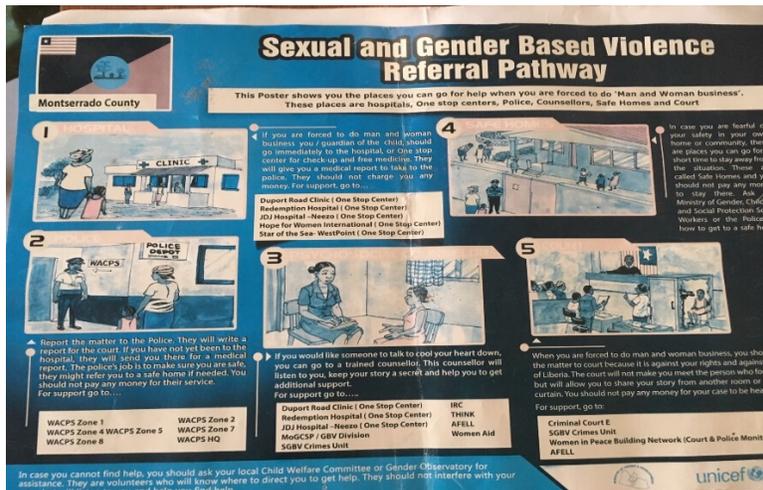
Appendix Figure 1 Poster on Sexual and Gender-based Violence

The figure above is based on official documents and media products used by the government of Liberia, such as the following poster, entitled "Sexual and Gender Based Violence Referral Pathway." This is made specifically for the main county, Montserrado, but similar referral procedures are listed in most counties countrywide. They include specific hospitals/clinics and police stations that should be used.

In cases of sexual abuse reportingly occurring in schools, government policies as enforced by the Ministry of Education (MoE), represented in the 2014 MOE codes of ethical conduct (CoC), which all education staff take an oath to. Policy requires school staff including administration to immediately inform parents/guardians of the child while maintaining their privacy, as well as MoE officials at the district or county level. District Education Officers will assess the case with school staff, parents, and law enforcement. If there is physical evidence like a pregnancy or witness

testimony of illicit relationships with a student, the suspect perpetrator will be suspended from the school until the investigation is complete. Ministry staff are also supposed to work with PTA and school staff to investigate any other probable cases of abuse. If a teacher gets a student pregnant once, he may be suspended for a semester, and if there is a second case, he may be permanently dismissed. If the legal investigation and trial find the suspect guilty of abuse, the MoE permanently dismisses the man, including revoking teaching and administrative licensure, or banning an adult-students from re-entering the school.

Appendix V Reconceptualizing Modernity vs. Traditionalism

Future theoretical research may be beneficial in reconceptualizing the plane of modernization and traditionalism based on knowledge, attitudes and belief structures. The purpose is to examine the level of complexity in culturalism. In much of international development programming and policy, one of the key contemporary markers of impact is a change in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors or practices. In considering culture as the norms, beliefs, rule, and customs in an area binding people consciously in groups (Tang, Hasbullah, & Sudirman, 2018), much of international development work in essence attempts to shift cultures in low-income countries to mimic globalized culturalism of which the global North holds court. Behavior change models are a dominant paradigm often presenting Third World nations as held back by traditional culture inhibiting development, with the lack of modern culture as a means to transition to the modern stage, and thus there is the need to adopt modern attitudes, knowledge, and beliefs (Waisbord, 2018). While it important for any nation's citizenry to have the education and preparation enough to compete in a globalized market, people also can benefit from a traditional cultural education, where traditional culture can be represented by ethnic or religious systems that make up individual or group heritage.

An initial theoretical modern culture and traditional culture are by no means linear as often presented in scholarship. They are not opposing forces battling over the sociological state of a human soul, where one represents the side of good and the other the side of evil. When taking on this linear assertion, research can lead to conclusions such as Greenfield (2018) stating "Globally dominant sociodemographic trends are: rural to urban, agriculture to commerce, isolation to interconnectedness, less to more education, less to more technology, lesser to greater wealth, and

larger to smaller families/households. These trends lead to both cultural losses (e.g., interdependence/collectivism, respect, tradition, contextualized thinking) and cultural gains (e.g., independence/individualism, equality, innovation, abstraction)" (84).
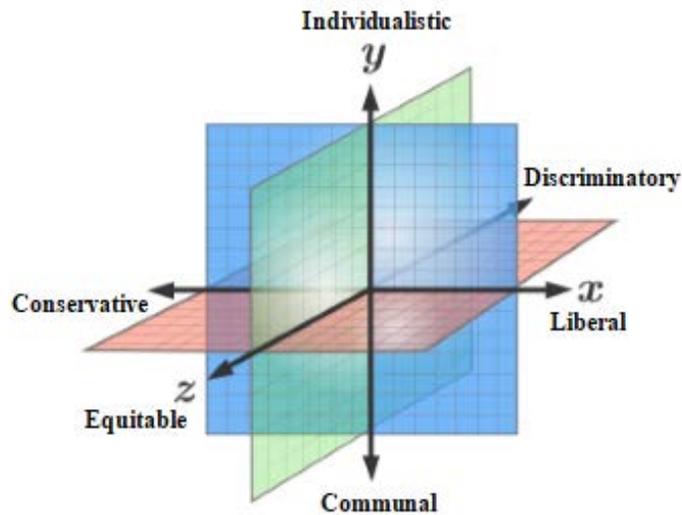
Appendix Figure 2 Reconceptualization of Modernity/Traditionalisms

We may consider instead the dynamic plane as a multifaceted matrix in which plurality is a primary driver. In this model, it is assumed that a person can vary in their personal culture, taking on different levels of modernity or traditionalism across sociological values of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. Further, it is unsophisticated to postulate that either modern culture or traditional culture are negative or positive for unlocking human development, capacity, and potential. The presented figure depicts the valuation of a person's culture, qualifying their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors equivocated to falling somewhere on the spectrum of a XYZ coordinate system.

The y-axis of individualism-communalism acknowledges contemporary scholarship that demonstrates that among many peoples worldwide the tendency to value the individual and his/her

rights compared to the valuation of communal wellbeing (Dwairy, 2019; Greenfield; Howard-Hassmann, 2018; Tang et al.; Triandis, 2018). It is highly ethnocentric, even discriminatory, to state a person or persons who value community, tribe, or family as primary to the individual self is degrading progress, primitive, or resistant to advancement. It is true that when the rights of one individual in a society are held back by traditional systems then something within the culture should rupture (Howard-Hassmann), but that change should involve the volitional determination of members of that society, and only imposed by international agendas. There are solid benefits to communal thinking, such as a conscious weighing of one's benefit collaboratively with others who are important within the human ecology's micro and meso systems, which may equate to a more equitable advancement of dignity, rights, and voice. This axis measures a person's knowledge, attitude, or practice/belief as a consideration of the individual self-verses the community unit of which s/he is apart.

The x-axis scales a person's individual units of knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs as falling to some degree between liberal and conservative perspectives. The liberalistic-conservative dynamic presented here is not necessarily related to the left-right of the political spectrum, although this can be represented in sociological variables related to political affiliation and participation. For this chapter, liberalistic is defined as an open, tolerant or flexible acceptance to definitions of norms, beliefs, and customs that guide knowledge, attitude, and behavior. The meaning takes on the standard definition to be open to new behaviors and opinions, and while willing to forgo traditional norms or customs, are still tolerant of others to choose them. They place less restrictions on their personal or relational expectations towards knowledge, attitudes and behaviors, yet seek to broaden a person's general knowledge, open-minded to all types of education and learning. A liberalistic adult may be more broad-minded to the benefit of broad,

multicultural educational background, including for his/her children. In contrast, a conservative person by this modeling tends towards more conventional or orthodox ways on either a specific unit or grouping of knowledge, attitudes, and practices. This person often has moderate or strong traditional value systems, cautious or even weary against change from set patterns within his/her community, whether ethnic, localized, politically affiliated, or religious.

Lastly, the z-axis specifically targets identifying the scope of which individual knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors reflective of a person's cultural value human rights and dignity. The z-axis scales where a unit of culture of an individual is represented on the plane of equity and discrimination. Equitable is defined as fair and impartial, while discriminating knowledge, perspectives, or customs differentiates. Discrimination lends to unjust, unfair, or prejudicial distinction in the treatment of people, whether family, societal members, or outsiders, categorizing them on the grounds of their distinction, such as sex, age, practices, religious beliefs, or ethnicity/race. As presented in Chapter 2.3, all cultures- urbanized or traditional, liberal or conservative, mono ethnic or diverse- have practices and definitions of sexuality and gender that both positively and negatively influence an individual's sexual identity, freedom, initiation, and experiences. What is essential is to understand how specific customs, beliefs, social interaction, and cultural shifts can be harmful or discriminate between people. This dissertation finds that one of the most pertinent ways to identify a cultural practice or attitude as harmful towards female sexual protection is whether it is misogynistic. Misogyny in any culture, whether modern or traditional, can hinder the rights of a girl and place her at harm for sexual abuse or exploitation, and so, it is a priority of focus for this research.

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