Abstract
This qualitative study of Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany implements a most different systems design (MDSD) as the basis for its comparative analysis. A cross-examination of Johnson Sirleaf’s and Merkel’s personal backgrounds, their leadership styles in their political careers before they became the heads of their governments, and their level of political participation in democracy or liberalization movements prior to their rise to power is conducted in this study. Key strands of feminist approaches in IR, such as liberal feminism, difference feminism, and postmodern feminism add to this study's discourse on Johnson Sirleaf’s and Merkel’s rise to political power. The basis for this study is that women comprise an underrepresented minority within politics is needed for equitable gender representation in politics.

Key Words: women, politics, leadership, Angela Merkel, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

Methods
Qualitative and comparative analysis via a Most Different Systems Design (MDSD)
- Adam Przeworski & Kenny Teune’s 1997’s MDSD (most different systems design)

Dependent variables: Merkel and Johnson Sirleaf are female heads of government
Independent variables:
1. Merkel and Johnson Sirleaf’s personal backgrounds
2. their leadership styles in their political careers before they became the heads of their governments
3. their level of political participation in democracy or liberalization movements prior to their rise to power

Data Analysis
Personal Backgrounds
E.J.S.-father in Liberian legislature, mother a travelling Christian pastor, grew up middle class in a poor country, domestic violence in marriage, motherhood
A.M.-father a Protestant pastor, mother a language teacher, doctorate as nuclear physicist, fall of the Berlin Wall and Communism

Leadership Styles
A.M.-strategic, intelligent, prowess at leadership, background in Russian, math, religion, authoritative & determined, early-weak public speaking skills
E.J.S.-was honest, hardworking, and dignified throughout her career in politics, connection with Liberian people, helping abused women, tenacious public speaking skills

Activism
E.J.S. returned to Liberia from U.S. job at Citibank to help challenge Doe dictatorship, good speeches that drew attention despite being a woman, helped Liberia overcome the Doe regime (187), the Charles Taylor War (165), 1994’s mass genocide in Rwanda [as head of the Africa bureau] (198), being an exile (221), among other obstacles.
A.M.-35-year-old physicist, was keen on starting a political career after the fall of Communism and the fall of the Berlin Wall, volunteered to work for the organization [Democratic Awakening (DA)], started her political career by distributing leaflets in Marienstrasse in the center of Berlin, steady progression of increase in political leadership within DA party, until leaving DA for CDU

Conclusions
Liberal President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and German Chancellor Angela Merkel are examples that it is possible to overcome fear, gender stereotypes, bias, and so many other negatives. Their rise to power is analyzed to having been attributed to their personal backgrounds, their leadership styles, and their activism in democratic and/or liberation movements prior to achieving their country’s highest political offices.

Works Cited