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UNDERSTANDING SEXIST BIAS IN THE BUEA MUNICIPALITY: TYPES, CAUSES AND EFFECTS

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AVERTISSEMENT

DEDICATION

TO MY FAMILY

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AS	:	Ambivalent Sexism
ASI	:	Ambivalent Sexism Inventory
BOCES	:	Boards of Cooperative Educational Services
BS	:	Benevolent Sexism
CEDAW	:	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
DF	:	Degrees of Freedom
HRBA	:	Human Rights Bases Approach
HS	:	Hostile Sexism
ICERD	:	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
NGO	:	Non-Governmental Organization
OHCHR	:	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
RH	:	Research Hypothesis
SPSS	:	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SRH	:	Secondary Research Hypothesis
SRO	:	Secondary Research Objectives
SRQ	:	Secondary Research Question
STD	:	Standard Deviation
UDHR	:	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	:	United Nations
UNDP	:	United nations development programme
WHO	:	World Health Organizations
WILPF	:	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom – Cameroon section

ABSTRACT

Sexist bias remains a pervasive issue in Cameroon, with women facing discrimination and unequal treatment in various spheres of society. This project understanding sexist bias in the Buea municipality examines the different types of sexist bias present, the present underlying causes, and the far-reaching effects in the municipality of Buea. The problem of this work being exploring the prevalence, various types, and underlying causes and effects of sexist bias in the Buea municipality. This research problems aims to explore and analyze the various dimensions of sexist bias in the town of Buea, shedding light on its different manifestations, underlying causes and the far-reaching consequences it has on the individuals in Buea municipality and society. This project outlines forms and types of sexist bias like hostile, benevolent, ambivalent, interpersonal, institutional and internalized sexism. Causes are traced to deep-rooted patriarchal norms, gender roles, religious and cultural traditions, Anglophone crisis and lack of women's representation in decision-making roles. The results show that there's the existence of sexist bias in Buea municipality in the employment sector, education, social life and the community. Men and women experience sexist bias but women are more vulnerable and the most affected. The consequences are wide-ranging including perpetuation of harmful stereotypes, discrimination and unfair treatment, limited opportunities, lack of equality and equity in treatment. This work equally looked at the response mechanism like engagement in sensitization campaigns, capacity building and collaborative efforts. Some successes like positive outcomes in skill development and leadership, increases awareness of sexist bias and challenges like limited resources and cultural challenges were encountered during our research and which led to some recommended strategies like: adoption of affirmative actions, early education and sensitization and enhanced collaboration for gender equality advocacy to address sexist bias in the Buea municipality. Addressing sexist bias in Buea requires a multi-pronged approach targeting legal reforms, awareness campaigns, and empowerment of women.

Key words; *sexist bias in Buea, causes, types and effects*

RESUME

Les préjugés sexistes restent un problème omniprésent au Cameroun, les femmes étant victimes de discriminations et d'inégalités de traitement dans diverses sphères de la société. Ce projet de compréhension des préjugés sexistes dans la municipalité de Buea examine les différents types de préjugés sexistes présents, les causes sous-jacentes actuelles et les effets à long terme dans la municipalité de Buea. La problématique de ce travail est d'explorer la prévalence, les différents types, les causes sous-jacentes et les effets des préjugés sexistes dans la municipalité de Buea. Cette problématique de recherche vise à explorer et analyser les différentes dimensions du sexisme dans la ville de Buea, en mettant en lumière ses différentes manifestations, ses causes sous-jacentes et les conséquences profondes qu'il a sur les individus de la municipalité de Buea et sur la société. Ce projet décrit les formes et les types de préjugés sexistes tels que le sexisme hostile, bienveillant, ambivalent, interpersonnel, institutionnel et intériorisé. Les causes en sont les normes patriarcales profondément enracinées, les rôles des hommes et des femmes, les traditions religieuses et culturelles, la crise anglophone et le manque de représentation des femmes dans les rôles décisionnels. Les résultats montrent l'existence de préjugés sexistes dans la municipalité de Buea dans le secteur de l'emploi, de l'éducation, de la vie sociale et de la communauté. Les hommes et les femmes sont victimes de préjugés sexistes, mais les femmes sont plus vulnérables et plus touchées. Les conséquences sont multiples : perpétuation de stéréotypes néfastes, discrimination et traitement inéquitable, opportunités limitées, manque d'égalité et d'équité dans le traitement. Ce travail s'est également penché sur les mécanismes de réponse tels que l'engagement dans des campagnes de sensibilisation, le renforcement des capacités et les efforts de collaboration. Certaines réussites, comme les résultats positifs en matière de développement des compétences et de leadership, la sensibilisation accrue aux préjugés sexistes, et certains défis, comme les ressources limitées et les défis culturels, ont été rencontrés au cours de nos recherches et ont donné lieu à des stratégies recommandées, comme l'adoption d'actions positives, l'éducation et la sensibilisation précoces et le renforcement de la collaboration pour la défense de l'égalité des sexes, afin de lutter contre les préjugés sexistes dans la municipalité de Buea. La lutte contre les préjugés sexistes à Buea nécessite une approche multidimensionnelle ciblant les réformes juridiques, les campagnes de sensibilisation et l'autonomisation des femmes.

Mots clés : préjugés sexistes à Buea, causes, types et effets

SUMMARY

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

I. CONTEXT AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Historically speaking, the treatment of individuals based on their sex is probably as old as humankind. However, the social recognition that unequal treatment is discriminatory, and the ensuing notion of "sexism", is far more recent. Long before gender inequality was recognized as a societal problem, early feminists such as Christine de Pizan in the 15th century in France, Mary Wollstonecraft in the 17th century in Britain, and more recently Simone de Beauvoir, only to name a few, denounced the arbitrariness and the illegitimacy of the hierarchical organization of gender differences in the society. But it was not until a speech on *"Women and the undergraduate"* by Pauline M. Leet at an US university in 1965 that the term sexism entered lay people's vocabulary, and became a matter of debates.

Audre Lord in 1984 defines sexism as the inherent superiority of one sex over the other and thereby the right to dominance. Sexism is a form of prejudice or discrimination treatment based on a person's sex. The coinage of this term occurred in concomitance with the realization that the persistent social disadvantage of women urged a collective response. Until World War Two, the term "minority" typically referred to the numerical inferiority of national and linguistic groups. Only in the 50s its meaning made a significant shift to label groups that are inferior in status, or are stigmatized, such as women, people with disabilities, or the elder. The movement for the empowerment and autonomy of women in Cameroon, and the improvement of their political, social, economic, and health status, has walked a long distance, but is still far from reaching its intended destination.

The Buea municipality located in the south west region of Cameroon is a heavily patriarchal society, which treats women and girls as inferior to men in daily life. The latest UNDP Gender Inequality Index ranks Cameroon 150th among a total of 189 classified countries. This is nine places lower than the previous year, indicating how the status of women and girls has been in a downward spiral. According to a report on gender equality in Cameroon by Gender Standby Capacity Project, half of the female population lives below the poverty line, whereas only a quarter of men do. Gender inequality remains a major barrier to sustainable development, negatively impacting the health and wellbeing of women and girls and society of Buea municipality at large. Gender equality is a building block for thriving economies, growth and peaceful societies yet substantial work remains to close the gender gap. Sexist bias is a pervasive issue in many societies, including the municipality of Buea. In Buea, there has been great progress when it comes to equality through progressive legislation

and the work of individuals and groups advocating and working towards gender parity. However, the gender gap is still persistent and pervasive. Norms, believes and traditions continue to exclude women and girls from participating in schools, workplaces and beyond. In worst cases, they perpetuate sexual and gender-based violence *(GBV)*. We look at the case in the neighborhood of Buea where a female neighbor always complains of wage gap and inequality at her jobsite compared to her male counterparts and bias when it comes to missions and roles at her workplace despite the fact that she has higher qualifications and experiences in her field of work. We bring the case of a widow who loses her husband to death and is being maltreated and discriminated upon because she's a woman who finds herself in a patriarchal society structure with traditional gender roles and cultural norms with lack of legal protections and measures which ensure her rights.

Sexist bias in Cameroon, like in many other countries, can be analyzed and understood within the broader context of gender inequality and traditional gender roles that exist within the society. Justifying the existence of sexist bias includes recognizing the historical, cultural, and socio-economic factors that contribute to its persistence.

II. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Over the past decades and recent times, sexist bias has increasingly come to be recognized as a serious problem at the national and international level, not only for women but also for the attainment of equality, development and peace. Sexism defines as the systemic discrimination, prejudice, and bias against individuals based on their gender, remains a pervasive issue in societies worldwide. Cameroon, a country located in Central Africa, and Buea which is located in the southwest region of Cameroon is of no exception. Despite efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, sexist bias continues to persist, negatively affecting various aspects of individuals 'lives, including education, empowerment, healthcare, and social interactions. The problem of this work being exploring the prevalence, various types, and underlying causes and effects of sexist bias in the Buea municipality. Understanding the types, causes, and effects of sexist bias in Buea is crucial for developing strategies to address and ameliorate this problem. This research problems aims to explore and analyze the various dimensions of sexist bias in the town of Buea, shedding light on its different manifestations, underlying causes and the far-reaching consequences it has on the individuals in Buea municipality and society.

Sexist bias can be found in various aspects of life and can manifest in various domains but not limited to education, employment, healthcare, media representation, and social interactions. 0ne of the problems with sexist bias is the perpetuation of gender stereotypes, beliefs, and discriminatory practices that contribute to gender inequality. According to the OHCHR and women's human rights and gender equality, Gender stereotyping refers to the practice of ascribing to an individual woman or man specific attributes, characteristics, or roles by reason only of her or his membership in the social group of women or men. Gender stereotyping is wrongful when it results in a violation or violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Two international human rights treaties contain express obligations concerning harmful stereotypes and wrongful stereotyping.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

> Article 5: *States Parties shall take all appropriate measures… to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women;(* CEDAW *1979)*

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

> *Article 8(1)(b): States Parties undertake to adopt immediate, effective and appropriate measures to combat stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices relating to persons with disabilities, including those based on sex and age, in all areas of life*.(CRPD 12 December 2006)

Gender stereotype assign predefined roles and expectations to individuals based on their gender. These stereotypes often portray men as assertive, dominant, and career-oriented, while women are depicted as nurturing, submissive, and focus on domestic responsibilities. Discriminatory practices based on gender restricts access to education, employment and leadership positions, these stereotypes and beliefs creates double standards that hold individuals to different expectations or standards based on their sex. According to the social role theory, social roles are shared expectations applicable to people based on their social position or membership of certain groups or categories (Biddle, 1979). Conceptualizations of gender roles extend this, and consider gender roles to be shared expectations about the attributes of men and women or boys and girls, based on self-identification as a woman or man or a boy or girl (Eagly & Karau, 2002). These gender roles are based on both descriptive norms which define consensual expectations about what group members do and typically align with traditional definitions of gender stereotypes and

injunctive norms which define what should be done (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). Gender bias, prejudices and stereotypes are costly at an individual and population level: they may limit educational, recreational and ultimately employment opportunities for girls and boys (Arthur et al., 2008), as well as health and well-being.

Gender activism is essentially about 'equal opportunities' between women and men in terms of rights to and control over resources. Many African governments have adopted gender equality as a means to promote their self-image in order to secure further development assistance, but without necessarily being committed to the political project. For instance, few of those who are appointed as ministers to ensure implementation of gender equality have previously exerted much, if any, effort in campaigning for it. Rather, gender equality is increasingly politicized as a springboard for a few elite women to move up the hierarchy and enhance their professional qualifications (Egbe orock 2007). The Cameroonian gender-activist movement is largely concerned with ensuring that women and men have equal opportunities in the workplace; but the distribution of such benefits in practice depends on factors such as social, economic, and educational background. Despite the rhetoric of gender equality, it is clear that how men and women perceive equality or inequality (discrimination) relates to differences in social status. Thus the degree of gender (in)equality experienced by rural women will not be the same as that experienced by their urban counter parts. Likewise, gender inequality among urban women will vary according to their occupational status. It will also depend on the types of social network such as clubs and 'meetings' to which a woman belongs, which in turn will affect her own self-respect and her sense of the right to equal opportunities within that community. Various organizational structures have been created through women's efforts to overcome discriminatory practices, so that women at all levels of society have begun to make their voices heard. To a large extent, however, such efforts have been confined to lobbying for women to be able to play the same roles and perform the same tasks as men in the prestigious and lucrative political, managerial, and professional spheres in both the public and the private sectors (Egbe orock 2007).

One of the largest areas in which girls still face discrimination in the developing world is education, and Buea is no exception. While we believe that every child has a right to a good education and deserves the opportunity to reach their full potential, this often isn't the case for young girls. A child should have the opportunity to be anything that they put their mind to, no matter their sex. However, it's reported that 130 million girls worldwide remain out of school. From distance to schools, early marriage and even violence against girls in schools, girls face

multiple barriers to their education. Cameroon has made strides in recent years to improve its education system, helping more and more children to break the poverty cycle. It currently has a record number of children enrolled in its school system which is amongst the highest in West Africa. However, despite this, there is still a widely notable gender gap. Between the ages of 6 and 14, only 80% of girls attend school in comparison to 94% of boys. This evidence shows that even in a country which is making waves for education, young girls are still missing out (Nikki Brown 2020).

The stigma associated with Sexist bias can stop the victims from sharing their experiences, reporting the incidents and accessing support. Some of these victims are more vulnerable to violence such as living in poverty, mental health problems, low self-esteems, immigration status and discrimination due to age, race and sexual orientation which in turn affects the society of Buea. By addressing sexist bias, we can work towards achieving gender equality which means ensuring that people of all genders have equal rights, opportunities and access to resources. Combating sexism can lead to the empowerment of women, reduced stereotypes, improved mental health, increased innovation and productivity, societal progress, and stronger and healthier relationships. The effects of sexist bias on the socio-economic and everyday life of the society in Buea have been numerous and alarming and these effects are experienced at all levels. Although there have been several measures put in place by NGOs, legal institutions, social institutions to combat this gender stereotypes in Buea, the gender stereotypes still continues and leaves us with its numerous social and economic effects.

III. PROBLEMATIC

The problematic is a set of problems that arise on a given subject. It's about knowledge scrutinized for falsifiability which allows the production of knowledge in the field of scientific research. The development of the problem of this research will be preceded by a review of known scientific productions on the subject of the research. Aware of the fact that "*man is never the beginning. Every man is an heir"* (Elias, 1993: 34), the literature review will allow us to stand out in a unique way in terms of the approach already documented on sexist bias its types, causes and effects. Sexist bias remains a persistent issue in societies worldwide. We cannot talk of sexist bias without talking of equality. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are

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taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should be endorsed by men as well as women.

III.1. United Nations Declaration of Human Rights

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is the over-arching UN document that formally recognizes universally agreed human rights. The UDHR was followed by the adoption of legally binding treaties: in 1965 the (ICERD) and one year later two covenants on civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights respectively. The strategy for implementing human rights in UN programming is called the HRBA. The human rights framework is oriented towards advancing progressively human rights, based on the following principles:

• Empowerment that gives all citizens, men and women, girls and boys the power, capacities, capabilities and access to resources to enable them to change their lives

• Substantive Equality

• Non-discrimination on the basis of gender, social, racial, cultural, and religious or any other means, especial focused on most excluded groups

• Participation and inclusiveness in the process of decision making by all affected, particularly women and poor

• Accountability that enables right holders – women and men – to claim their rights and ensures that State fulfill its obligations

The Buea municipality located in southwest region of Cameroon is not immune to this concern. Sexist bias can manifest in various forms, such as gender stereotyping, occupational bias, pay inequality, sexual harassment, glass ceilings, and double standards. Understanding the types, causes and effects of sexist bias in the municipality of Buea is crucial for promoting gender equality and creating an inclusive community.

III.2. Sexism in Buea Cameroon

Sexist bias in Buea takes various forms across different domains. Gender stereotyping is prevalent, often leading to assumptions about individual's characteristics or abilities based on their gender. Several factors contribute to the perpetuation of sexist bias in Buea. Cultural norms and traditions play a significant role, as deeply rooted gender stereotypes and

traditional gender roles often perpetuate biased attitudes and behaviors. (Adichie 2014), lay emphasis on the box in which society places both genders in the name of gender roles. *"Teach her that the idea of gender roles is absolute nonsense''.* The society of southwest Cameroon buea has allotted specific roles to both gender and the first problem with this is the generalization involved in it, the second problem with gender roles in Buea municipality is at the flip side of the coin, which is the problem of exclusion. For example, a lady will be slow to venture into a cab service, because men are predominantly the ones in that box, hence excluding women like her who have the capability. This is the same story with whatever gender roles or gender sensitive jobs exist, it is a negative thing for both genders. More so according to (Adiche) *"because you are a girl''* should never be a reason for doing something. During my research in the municipality of Buea, I however noticed that specific kind of toys for boys to play with are different from the toys of the girl child; as such children grow up with gender roles which confines them to specific fields as they grow older. Adichie's feminist philosophy suggests that we have to question some of our cultural beliefs especially those that are responsible for sustaining the hold of patriarchy in our society today. According to Adichie, *"culture does not make people. People make culture. If it is true that the full humanity of women is not our culture, then we can and must make it our culture"* (Adichie 2014 p15). For Adichie we often use biology to explain the privileges that men have and the most common reason being men's physical superiority. This follows her Sublime Ted Talk The Dangers of a Single Story Today. *"The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story"* (Chimamanda N Adichie July 2009).

There is the cultural belief that the man is greater than the woman because of the single story of the woman being physically weaker than the man and as Adichie says *''it is impossible to talk about the single story without talking about the power''.* The Palestine poet Mourid Barghouti writes that *"If you want to dispossess a people, the simplest way to do it is to tell their story and to start with secondly*'' In almost every instance, most indigenous cultures in Buea municipality begin the story of the woman as '*secondly'* which creates stereotypes.

Occupational bias restricts job opportunities and limits career growth for individuals based on their gender (Ruggs, Harrington, Brown, Park, Marshburn, & Martinez, 2018 pp191-210). Social groups that are valued in society generally reap benefits such as access to education, housing, and increased employment opportunities. On the other hand, social groups that are devalued experience stigmatization and marginalization, and they must overcome

barriers to get access to the same opportunities as other social groups (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994). Although such barriers are institutional, they are also perpetuated interpersonally. This perpetuation of devaluation is often referred to as bias, and it can manifest in several ways at the individual and interpersonal levels (Hebl, Foster, Mannix, & Dovidio, 2002; Ruggs, Martinez, & Hebl, 2011).Bias underlies discrimination, inequality, mistreatment, and incivility or rudeness toward others (Cortina, 2008). Within the workplace, discrimination and other forms of mistreatment can perpetuate systemic barriers by increasing exclusion of marginalized employees from certain positions and inequities between employees based on group membership. At the individual level, discrimination and mistreatment have been shown to be related to negative employee outcomes such as lower job satisfaction, lower organizational commitment, and increased turnover intentions (Cortina, Leskinen, Huerta, & Magley, 2013;oi Lim, Cortina, & Magley, 2008)

Discrimination can lead to increased psychological distress and decreased overall health (Chrobot- Mason, Ragins, & Linnehan, 2013; Kabat-Farr & Cortina, 2014; Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009).The expression of bias within organizations can create environments where individuals do not want to work, and it can ultimately hurt employees in organizations. As a result, it is important for organizations to understand why bias is perpetuated and how to actively respond to bias. Pay inequality persists, with individuals of a particular gender receiving lower salaries or wages for performing the same work. According to World Bank, gender data in Cameroon, women spend 3.5 times as much time on unpaid domestic and care work than men. The data, expressed as a proportion of time in a day, measure the average time an individual spends on household provision of services for own consumption. In 2014, women in Cameroon spent 15.8% of their day and men spent 4.6% of their day on unpaid work. Data compiled from the most recent data point between 2010 and 2019. According to the World Bank (2015), Cameroon has the following statistics in gender inequality on health, and employment.

On the issue of health in Cameroon, Barro and Lee (2014) give the following statistics:

• In 2013, there were 4 900 maternal deaths, representing 590 deaths for 100 000 births.

• In 2013, the adolescent fertility rate was 113 births per 1 000 adolescent girls.

• In 2011, 24% of women had an unmet need for family planning.

Concerning employment, the data shows that:

• In 2013, 65% of the female working-age population was part of the labor force, while 77% of the male working-age population was part of the labor force.

• In 2013, women represented 46% of the total labor force.

• In 2010, 58% of women in the labor force were employed in agriculture compared to 49% of men in the labor force. • In 2010, 87% of women in the labor force were employed in vulnerable employment compared to 67% of men in the labor force.

Equally, the presence of glass ceilings hinders women's advancements to top level positions, and double standards impose different expectations and rules based on gender. The lack of education and awareness about gender equality issues also contributes to the persistence of sexist bias. According to the Cooperazione internazionale in the Far North of Cameroon, girls' access to education is still a problem that needs solving, combined with a conviction that is deep-rooted in local culture, whereby only boys have the right to continue studying and girls are oriented from an early age towards domestic life and engaged to be married instead. Gender inequality is also reflected in the common failure to register the birth of girls at the register office, due to the distance between rural villages and towns. According to the World Bank (2015), Cameroon has the following statistics in gender inequality on education. The World Bank (2015) provides the following information regarding gender inequality in education:

• In 2012, the ratio of female to male primary school enrolment was 88%.

• In 2012, 86% of girls were enrolled in primary school compared to 97% of boys.

• In 2013, the ratio of female to male secondary enrolment was 87%.

• In 2013, 37% of girls were enrolled in secondary school compared to 43% of boys.

• In 2010, 65% of women aged 15+ were literate compared to 78% of men.

• In 2010, women had on average 6 years of schooling compared to 7 years on average for men.

Additionally, media influence through biased portrayals of gender roles can reinforce and perpetuate sexist attitudes and stereotypes. According to (Wood) all forms of media

communicate images of the sexes, many of which perpetuate unrealistic, stereotypical, and limiting perceptions. Three themes describe how media represent gender. First, women are underrepresented, which falsely implies that men are the cultural standard and women are unimportant or invisible. Second, men and women are portrayed in stereotypical ways that reflect and sustain socially endorsed views of gender. Third, depictions of relationships between men and women emphasize traditional roles and normalize violence against women. Family and upbringing contribute to early socialization, shaping individuals' beliefs and potentially perpetuating sexist biases.

In most cultures, traditional beliefs, norms and social institutions legitimize and therefore perpetuate violence against women. According to a 2013 world health organization (WHO) report on violence against women, about 35% of women worldwide have experienced either physical or sexual intimate partner violence or non-violence in lifetimes. In addition a staggering 45% of women 15years and older in Africa have experience physical or sexual violence (WHO, 2013: 26). Sexist bias occur in both the private and public sphere, such violence not only occurs in the family and in the general community but it is sometimes perpetuated by the state through policies or the actions state such as police, military or immigration authorities. Sexist bias occurs in all societies, across all social class, ethnicity, race with women particularly at risk from men they know. However, sexist bias is not exclusively a woman's concern it is both causes and consequences of gender perceptions (Prevention of domestic violence and trafficking in human beings, 2001)

Sexist bias has far-reaching effects on individuals and the Buea community as a whole. It perpetuates gender inequality, limiting opportunities and resources for individuals of a particular gender. The psychological impact of sexist bias includes low self-esteem, stress, anxiety, and depression among individuals who experience it. Pay inequality and limited career opportunities result in financial disadvantages for individuals affected by sexist bias. Sexist bias creates social divisions and tensions between genders, hindering social cohesion and cooperation. Furthermore, sexist bias contributes to the underrepresentation of certain genders in various fields, limiting diversity and innovation.

III.3 Policies addressing sexist bias

In response to these problems many non–governmental organizations (NGOs) have sought to design and implement interventions that address the problem. These NGOs use particular strategies, how they engage with the survivors of gender inequality and the effects

of any engagements on the success of such strategies. Some laws have equally been put in place by the state, and organizations like the ministry of women empowerment and family center.

The role of the non-governmental organization working in the field of women's rights in the country can be traced with the help of evaluating the contribution of a few NGOs. The organizations working in the country are a few and rendering a variety of services rendering them counseling, shelter homes and legal aid. NGOs like the Reach Out Cameroon (REO), Ndes foundation, Hadassah foundation, Mike Yanou NGO, Reachers, Nadev foundation, and the Demtou humanitarian among others which supports under privileged groups in the communities on health, wealth creation, provides capacity building and information through the use of participatory approaches and advantages. They also respect human rights and democracy, develop strategies and resources in securing compliance with human rights and to improve human rights situations.

In 2012, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had recommended to Cameroon the adoption of a comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation listing all prohibited grounds for discrimination, as set out in article 2, paragraph 2, of the Covenant of 16 December 1966, *"The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to guarantee that the rights enunciated in the present Covenant will be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status",* and article 3 of the covenant which states that *"The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights set forth in the present Covenant".* Cameroon responded in its report submitted to the committee in December 2017, detailing the various legal instruments to combat various forms of discrimination (WILPF Cameroon 2019). Article 241 of the penal code of 12 July 2016/007 sanctions with imprisonment and fines insulting behaviors against a race or a religion, and explains in paragraph 3 that the "the *penalties provided in paragraph 1 and 2 above are doubled when the offence is committed with the aim of provoking hatred or contempt among citizens"* (WILPF 2019).The Committee again expresses concern that legislative provisions discriminating against women, the repeal of which it recommended in its previous concluding observations, are still in force in the State party (art. 3*).*

"The Committee urges the State party to ensure that the relevant provisions of the Family Code, the Labour Code and the Criminal Code are amended as quickly as possible and that any provisions discriminating against women are dropped from bills currently under consideration. It recommends that these new laws should be couched in terms that enable the State party to meet its obligation to ensure gender parity in the exercise of economic, social and cultural rights, in accordance with article 3 of the Covenant. In this regard, the Committee draws the attention of the State party to its general comment No. 16 (2005)" (14 November-2 December 2011).

It also recommended the strengthening of the legislative framework to combat violence against women and girls including criminalizing, domestic violence, sexual harassment and marital rape.

In its report to the committee, Cameroon indicates that discriminatory provisions of this text concerning adultery, rape, and the sanction of early marriages have been removed in the revision of the penal code. In addition it indicates that despite the absence of specific provisions, domestic violence, as well as marital rape, sexist bias, gender discrimination may be sanctioned by certain provisions of the penal code. Domestic violence, gender discrimination could thus fall under article 277 to 281 0f the penal code, which punishes assault battering.

A specific law on preventing and combating violence against women has not been adopted despite the inclusion of some aspects in the new penal code. Despite the creation of call centers for victims of bias and gender-based violence in some of the regions of the country, women who are victims of violence and discrimination still do not always receive adequate support from public services. During the universal periodic review (3rd cycle 2018) recommendations was made calling on Cameroon to review laws that discriminate against women, in particular articles 1421 and 1428 of the civil code relating to the administration of family assets *"According to articles 1421 and 1428 of the Civil Code, women were not fully entitled to use, enjoy or sell their property, although this was stipulated in the Constitution" (*CEDAW 12-30 June 2000). However, the government has only taken note of this recommendation without providing any justification.

Understanding and addressing sexist bias in Buea is of paramount importance for achieving gender equality, promoting social justice, and fostering an inclusive community. The findings of this research will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on sexist bias,

particularly in the context of the buea municipality. The insights gained from this study can inform policymakers, community leaders, and organizations in developing strategies and policies to combat sexist bias and create a more equitable and inclusive society in the Buea municipality.

IV. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

They are sub divided into two sections, namely the main question and secondary questions.

IV-1 Main Research Question

To what extend does sexist bias exist in the Buea municipality, and what are the specific manifestations of this bias in different domains such as education, employment and social interactions?

IV-2 Secondary Research Questions

SRQ1: What are the underlying factors contributing to the perpetuation of sexist bias in the municipality of Buea, including cultural norms, socio-economic conditions and institutional practice

SRQ2: What are the social and psychological effects of sexist bias on individuals within the municipality of Buea

V. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

According to Madeleine Grawitz, any work of research requires the formulation of hypotheses which remain prior to the accomplishments of the task. Thus it defines hypotheses as a proposition of the question posed. Below are the hypotheses to my research questions. They are divided into two sections, one main hypothesis and two secondary hypotheses.

V-1 Main Research hypothesis

There is a significant presence of sexist bias in the municipality of Buea with observable manifestations in education, employment, and social interactions.

V-2 Secondary Research hypotheses

SH1: Cultural norms, socio-economic conditions and institutional practices are significant contributing factors to the perpetuation of sexist bias within the Buea municipality

SH2: Experiencing sexist bias in the Buea municipality has negative social and psychological effects on individuals.

VI. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives have been divided into main and secondary objectives.

VI-1 Main objective

To investigate the prevalence and manifestation of sexist bias in various domains within the municipality of Buea such as: education, employment and social interactions.

V-2 Secondary objectives

SO1: To identify the underlying factors contributing to the perpetuation of sexist bias in the municipality of Buea, including cultural norms, socio-economic conditions and institutional practices.

SO2: To examine the social and psychological effects of sexist bias on individuals within the community of Buea

VII. METHODOLOGY

VI.I. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

In the context of data production in the social sciences, the theoretical framework occupies a place that cannot be neglected. According to Madeliene Grawitz theory is *''an explanatory organization that experiments confirm or not''* it is the set of structured hypotheses, her articulation with reality must make it possible to falsify it. The theory sheds light observation and understanding of the research object, it promotes the explanation of the phenomenon studied. We chose three theories namely the Gender Socialization theory, the Social dominance and power comparison theory and the theory of social representation.

VI.1.1. The Gender Socialization Theory by Elham Hoominfar 2019

''Gender socialization" as a *"process by which individuals develop, refine and learn to 'do' gender through internalizing gender norms and roles as they interact with key agents of socialization, such as their family, social networks and other social institutions*" (p. 6) (John et al. 2017). Gender is socially constructed and is a psychological and cultural term. It means that gender is often considered by sociologists to be socially constructed, that is, roles that are conferred by society in which those who are labeled "*women*" are expected to perform certain

tasks, while those who are labeled "*men*" are expected to perform different tasks. We cannot talk about sexist bias without gender as sexist assumptions about women and men, which manifest themselves as gender stereotypes can rank one gender as superior to another.

Agents of Gender Socialization

The main agents of gender socialization include family, the media, school, and peers. These factors form a child's self-concept and gender identity and teach gender roles to children, making them the main factors in the processes of gender socialization in different societies.

Family: Family is considered to be the first and one of the most important agents of gender socialization (Blakemore and Hill 2008; Bandura and Bussey 2004). Parents have different behavioral expectations of their children based on children's gender. Parents create a gendered world through having different languages, tolerance levels, and behaviors toward girls and boys and teach different values to their children based on their gender roles (Emolu 2014; Leaper and Farkas 2014; Blakemore and Hill 2008; Pomerlea et al).

Peers: Peers have strong impacts on forming gender self-concepts and gender stereotypes through interactions, friendships, and group norms (Leaper and Friedman 2007; Witt 2000). Among peer groups, children can show and develop their social self in a different environment than family, and this is the second step for them to recognize their identities in a social group.

Schools: School has a significant role in the process of gender socialization. Formal education systems are designed to transfer the values, behavior patterns, and standards to children through interaction with teachers, peer groups, textbooks, and curriculum (Wentzel 2014; Witt 2000). Therefore, teachers, as leaders in classrooms, can create a completely gendered environment based on gender stereotypes and gender roles.

Media: Media as an agent of socialization develops and internalizes gender stereotypes (Prot et al. 2014; Collins 2011). Media misrepresents women's social life and also women from different races and ethnicities, sexual ordinations, abilities, and nations, among other identity categories. Media transfers gender stereotypes and gender roles to people in different ages and social groups.

Socialization theories explain the process of the individual development of a human personality within a social environment, with specific living conditions (Hurrelmann & Bauer, 2015: p. 156). They show that individuals acquire language, knowledge, social skills, norms, values, and customs that are necessary for participating in and integrating into a group or community. Socialization is a combination of willed conformity and externally imposed rules, mediated by the expectations of other persons. Thus, socialization influences the socio-structural organization of a common existence, and simultaneously attains cultural and social continuity (White, 1977; Grundmann, 2006; Hurrelmann, 2009). It is through socialization, that one tries to change their desires and instincts into ways that are accepted by society. This theory argues that sexist bias is primarily a result of socialization processes. From early childhood, individuals are exposed to societal norms, values and expectations regarding gender roles. These socialization processes reinforce stereotypes and biases, leading to internalization of sexist attitudes and behaviors.

VII.1.2.The Social Dominance Theory and Power Comparison by Robin Bergh, Gregory K. Davis, Sa-Kiera T. J. Hudson, and Jim Sidanius 2020

Power is inherently comparative, defined as the ability to exercise influence over others, as well as to control resources (Johnson & Lammers, 2012). Having or lacking power plays a large role in how a person thinks, feels, and acts (Galinsky, Rucker, & Magee, 2015; Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003), and this in turn influences the perceptions and treatment by others. Individuals are therefore motivated to (a) accurately determine the structure of power hierarchies in any given context and (b) know their level of power compared to others in the situation. Power and status hierarchies are self-reinforcing (Magee & Galinsky, 2008), and with particularly well-reinforced hierarchies, those who have power engage in behaviors that allow them to maintain their power or gain more, while those who do not have power engage in behaviors that reinforce their lower status, others as well as to control resources.

According to Pratto, Stewart, and Zeineddinea on the social dominance theory by (Jim Sidanius, Erik Devereux, and Felicia Pratto), the Social dominance theory was developed to account for why societies producing surplus take and maintain the form of group-based dominance hierarchies, in which at least one socially-constructed group has more power than another, and in which men are more powerful than women and adults more powerful than children. This theory posits that sexist bias is rooted in power dynamics and the desire for one

group to maintain dominance over another. It suggests that sexism is a means of exerting control and preserving social, economic, and political advantages for the dominant group. According to the theory, group-based inequalities are maintained through three primary mechanisms: institutional discrimination aggregated individual discrimination, and behavioral asymmetry.

Marxist theory posits that societal advancement occurs through five stages: primitive community to slavery to feudalism to capitalism to communism (Marx & Engels, 1848/1952). Social dominance theory, however, has claimed that all surplus-producing societies inevitably will be structured as group-based dominance hierarchies, and that alternative societal organization, or shifts from and to such organization - what we term societal change rarely occurs or persists. For example, Sidanius and Pratto (1999,p.38) state that *"While age and gender-based hierarchies will tend to exist within all social systems, arbitrary set systems of social hierarchy will invariably emerge within social systems producing sustainable economic surplus"* and Sidanius and Pratto (1993, p. 207) state that *"any ... social policy effort directed at eradicating inequality and discrimination ... will not only fail to achieve their publicly-stated goals, but the efforts themselves will be ultimately unsustainable.''*

VII.1.3.The theory of Social Representation by Serge Moscovici 1961

The concept of social representation was developed by Serge Moscovici in 1961 as a social psychological approach articulating individual thinking and feeling with collective interaction and communication. Social Representations are conceived as symbolic forms that come about through interpersonal and media communication. There is a link between the concept of social representations and Durkheim's concept of *"collective representations"* which refers to common ways of conceiving, thinking about and evaluate social reality. According to Moscovici (2000) this concept by Durkheim is, however, too static in relation to how we should understand contemporary society. It does neither catch the dynamics of and changeable character, nor the variability and plurality of social cognitions of the age in which we now live, he claims. To include all this he therefore suggests the new concept *"social representation"*. Social representations are always related to social, cultural and/or symbolic objects, they are representations of something (Höijer B). Moscovici defines it as

> *"Transfer to modern society a notion that seemed to be reserved to more traditional societies [in response to the] necessity of making representations into a bridge between individual and social spheres, by associating them with the perspective of a changing society".* (Moscovici, 1989: 82)

First, Moscovici considers that representations are not the product of society as a whole, but the products of the social groups who build this society. Second, he focuses on communication processes, considered as explaining and transmitting social representations. The first point allows the conception of a social mentality which is over determined by societal structures and by the insertion of individuals in these structures, in such a way that different social representations of the same object are seen to exist within a given society. The second change to the representation theory, introduced by Moscovici, permits the conception that through communication and the influence, normalization and conformity processes that go with it individual beliefs can be the object of a consensus at the same time as collective beliefs can impose themselves on the individual (Rateau, Moliner, Guimelli, & Abric. 2012)

From our youngest age, school, the family, institutions and the media, instill in us certain ways of seeing the world and offer us a particular vision of the things around us, presenting us largely with a ready-made construction of the world in which we grow up, the values with which it is invested, the categories which govern it and the principles themselves by which we understand it. Our perception of the environment is next shaped by the groups, the associations, and the clubs that we become part of. It is very largely in our exchanges and our communications with others that our reality of the world around is formed. In the course of our contacts and our multiple involvements with different social groups we ourselves acquire and transmit knowledge, beliefs, and values that allow us to share a common conception of things and of others. The theory of social representations highlights how individuals' attitudes and behaviors are shaped by these broader, socially constructed understandings. It provides valuable insights into how sexist bias becomes entrenched in society.

VII.2. Research Design

A research design is "a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the validity of the findings" (Burns & Grove, 2003, p.195). This research used a mixed research approach. In mixed research, "the invigilator collects and analyses, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods in a single study" (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007). This approach was suitable for this research because it enabled the researcher to gather both quantitative and qualitative data to answer the research questions.

Williams, Wiggins and Vogt (2022) define quantitative research as an investigation in which the data that are collected and coded are expressible as numbers. Kothari (2004) provides a comprehensive overview of quantitative research, emphasizing its focus on generating data that can be subjected to rigorous quantitative analysis in a formal and rigid manner. The quantitative approach enabled the research to gather quantifiable responses on the manifestation, types, causes, and consequences of sexism in the municipality of Buea. The data was obtained through the survey method and expressed in statistical form using frequencies and percentages. The outcome of the quantitative approach can be generalized to the entire population.

Creswell (2014) defines qualitative research as an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The qualitative approach provides an opportunity for the researcher to gather in-depth information from the Representative of the South West Regional Delegate of Women's Affairs, the Assistant Head of Department at Reach Out Cameroon, the programme Coordinator of Reachers Foundation, the Director of the Mike Yanou Foundation, the Assistant Director of the Ndes Foundation, Project Coordinator of Demtou Humanitarian, the Foundation Manager of Hadassah, and the Programme Coordinator of Nkong Hill Top Association for Development on the causes, manifestation, and consequences of sexism in the Division. The interviewees were interviewed and they provided the researcher with insights on the strategies put in place to mitigate sexism in the division.

The qualitative method supported the quantitative method. The qualitative method provided an elaboration on the quantitative findings. This is known as the sequential exploratory design, where information obtained from qualitative data is used to give further explanations of the quantitative data. Thus, the mixed research approach was appropriate for this research because it permitted the researcher to gather information from diverse sources to provide a holistic answer to the research questions. The combination of these approaches helps overcome the weaknesses of each other.

VII.3 Population of the Study

Popoola (2011:2) in Yaya (2014) defines population as the "totality of the items or objects under the universe of study. It often connotes all the members of the target of the study as defined by the aims and objectives of the study". It also refers to "the total set of observations from which a sample is drawn" (Akinade & Owolabi, 2009:72)

This research focuses on a diverse population comprising directors and employees of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the municipality of Buea. Notable organizations within this population include ReachOut Cameroon, Nkong Hill Top Association for Development (NADEV), Ndes Foundation, Mike Yanou Foundation, Reachers Foundation, Demtou humanitarian, and the Hadassah foundation. These NGOs were selected due to their active involvement in promoting gender balance within the Division.

The study population also encompasses health personnel at the Buea Regional Hospital, the Seventh Day Adventist, Christians in Buea, Teachers at the Bilingual Grammar and Government Technical High School Molyko, and employees at the South West Regional Delegation of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family (MINPROFF). This inclusive approach ensures a comprehensive representation of the diverse stakeholders contributing to gender-related initiatives.

VII.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

According to Mills (2021, p.1), sampling refers to the selection of a smaller group of participants from the population of interest. While it would be ideal for the entire population to take part in a study, logistically, this may not be feasible. Therefore, by researching a smaller and representative group obtained from your population of interest, we can generalize the findings back to and make inferences about the whole population

This study employed a combination of simple random and purposive sampling techniques. Simple random sampling is a method of selecting a sample from a larger population in a way that each member of the population has an equal chance of being chosen. In essence, every individual or element within the population had an equal probability of inclusion (Creswell, 2012). This approach was specifically employed to provide employees from non-governmental organizations, Buea Regional Hospital, Seventh Day Adventist Hospital, the South West Regional Delegation of MINPROFF, Bilingual Grammar School and Government Technical High School, Christians in buea, and the unemployed with an equitable chance to participate in the research. The quantitative sample size is made up of 70 participants from the aforementioned institutions.

The purposive sampling technique was employed to select the interview participants. This method is endorsed by (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan, and Hoagwood (2015), who assert that purposive sampling "allows researchers to target and select participants with expertise and experiences relevant to the research topic and questions" (p.

622). This approach specifically aimed to identify and include individuals with comprehensive knowledge and first-hand experiences pertinent to the research focus.

The sampling technique was utilized to carefully select Directors of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Buea and the South West Regional Delegate for the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family (MINPROFF). These chosen participants possess the expertise necessary to provide valuable insights into the manifestation, causes, consequences, and mitigating strategies of sexism. Their active involvement in the fight against sexism and their knowledge of the subject matter makes them particularly well-suited contributors to the research, enhancing the depth and relevance of the collected data.

VII.5 Research instruments

The research used two principal instruments for this research. They include a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide.

VII.5.1 Questionnaire

Mcleod (2023), states that a questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions to gather information from respondents. He further notes that questionnaires can effectively measure relatively large subjects' behavior, attitudes, preferences, opinions, and intentions more cheaply and quickly than other methods.

The questionnaire for this study was divided into four sections. The first section is centered on demographic information. This included gender, age range, marital status, employment status, religion, and respondents' perceptions of gender, mostly affected by sexist bias. The second section measures the types and manifestations of sexist bias prevalent in Buea. This section enables the researcher to identify the different categories of sexism prevalent in the division.

The third section examines the causes of sexism in the municipality of Buea. The five-point agreement scale was used to measure the extent to which different factors contribute to the prevalence of sexism in the division. These factors included traditional gender roles, a lack of exposure to information challenging gender stereotypes or promoting equality, cultural practices, the media's promotion of women as objects in advertisements, power imbalance, the absence of laws or policies to address gender discrimination, childhood development, peer pressure, insufficient education on gender equality, and the existence of a few women at the top of decision making.

The fourth section of the questionnaire assessed the consequences of sexism, and challenges in mitigating sexism, and sought recommendations on reducing its prevalence in the division. The ultimate goal was to contribute to the creation of an inclusive society free from gender stigmatization and violence.

The administered questionnaires targeted employees from diverse institutions, including non-governmental organizations, Buea Regional Hospital, Seventh Day Adventist Hospital, the South West Regional Delegation of MINPROFF, Bilingual Grammar School, and Government Technical High School, Christians and Unemployed people of Buea.

VII.5.2 Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Three semi-structured interviews were designed for this research. A semi-structured interview guide is a flexible set of open-ended questions and prompts designed to facilitate a qualitative research interview. Unlike a fully structured interview with a rigid set of predetermined questions, or an unstructured interview with no predetermined questions, a semi-structured interview allows for a balance between structure and flexibility (Kallio, Pietilä, Johnson, & Kangasniemi, 2016). Two different, semi-structured interview guides were produced. The first was meant for directors and representatives of non-governmental organizations in the municipality of Buea, and the second was for the South West Regional Delegate of Women's Empowerment and the Family.

VII.6 Data collection

Creswell (1998: 110) sees data collection as a series of interrelated activities aimed at gathering information to answer research questions. It involves locating the site or individual(s) to study, gaining access and establishing rapport so that participants will be willing to provide information, determining the strategy for purposeful sampling of site or individual(s) and determining the rationale for the selected site or individual.

The data collection for this research lasted for one month (March 2024). Within this period, questionnaires were administered to employees of various non-governmental organizations that are involved in mitigating the prevalence of sexism in the municipality of Buea. Some questionnaires were also administered to staff of Bilingual Grammar School, Government Technical High School, Buea Regional Hospital, Seventh-day Adventists, Christians, and the unemployed. The questionnaire administration enabled the research to measure the prevalence of sexism in Buea, the causes, consequences, challenges, and mitigating strategies.

Table 1: Summary of Quantitative Data Collection

S/N	Respondents/Institutions	Number of Questionnaires Administered
1	Employees of MINPROFF SWR	7
2	Staff of Bilingual Grammar School	11
3	Employees of Government Technical High School	10
4	Employees of Buea Regional Hospital	13
5	Staff of Seventh-day Adventists	3
6	Unemployed	26
7	Christians	70
Total		**70**

Source: Tanyi Christabel Fieldwork, 2024

Interviews were also conducted with directors and representatives of non-government Organizations such as the Nkong Hill Top Association for Development (NADEV), the Ndes Foundation, the ReachOut Cameroon, the Demtou humanitarian, the Mike Yanou Foundation,, the Hadassah foundation and the Reachers Foundation. The South West Regional Delegate of MINPROFF was also interviewed. The interviews provided the researcher with in-depth information on the causes, manifestations, challenges, and consequences of sexism.

Table 2: Summary of Qualitative Data Collection

S/N	Non-governmental Organisations	Position of Interviewee	Number interviewees
1	MINPROFF SWR	Regional Delegate	1
2	Mike Yanou Foundation	Director	1
3	NDES Foundation	Assistant Director	1
4	Reachers Foundation	Programme Coordinator	1
5	NADEV	Programme Coordinator	1
6	Hadassah foundation	Foundation manager(GBV expert)	1
7	ReachOut NGO	Assistant Head of Department	1
8	Demtou humanitarian	Project coordinator Chef de bureau	2
Total			**9**

Source: Tanyi Christabel Fieldwork, 2024

VII.7 Data Analyses

Taherdoost (2020) asserts that data analysis is simply the process of converting the gathered data to meaningful information. It is also the organization, categorization, and sorting of data into patterns, categories, and basic units of description. The objective of data analysis is to uncover valuable insights (Bhumi Varta Technology, 2023). Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 was used to analyze the quantitative data (questionnaires), while thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data (interviews)

VII.7.1 Statistical Package for Social Sciences

The quantitative data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27. Nagaiah and Ayyanar (2016) explained that SPSS is a Windows-based programmer that can be used to perform data entry and analysis and to create tables and graphs. SPSS is capable of handling large amounts of data and can perform all of the analyses covered in the text and much more.

SPSS is widely used for data analysis. The software was used because of its efficiency in categorizing, arranging, and presenting data in an orderly manner. Different data analysis tests, such as descriptive analysis, cross-tabulation, one-sample t-tests, and independent sample t-tests, were performed. The data is presented using frequencies and percentages.

The questionnaires were coded by trained research assistants. The assistants were mentored on data coding to ensure efficiency. A code guide was designed to assist the researcher in the coding process. The code manual was divided into three sections: variable ID, variable label, and response category. The codes were entered in the designed SPSS programme, cleaned, and analyzed.

VII.7.2 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis was conducted for this study. Thematic analysis involves identifying patterns in a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This analysis was suitable for the qualitative data because it is flexible, simple, and easier to implement. The following steps were used in conducting the analysis:

Table 3: Steps in analyzing qualitative data

Steps	Description
Familiarization	The researcher familiarizes herself with the data by reading through the participants' accounts several times.
Identifying significant statements	The researcher identifies all statements in the accounts that are of direct relevance to the phenomenon under investigation.
Formulating meanings	The researcher identifies meanings into themes that arise from a careful consideration of the significant statement. The researcher must reflexively "bracket" his or her pre-suppositions to stick closely to the phenomenon is experience (though Colaizzi recognise that complete bracketing is never possible).
Clustering themes	The researcher clusters the identified meanings into themes that are common across all accounts. Again, bracketing of pre-suppositions is crucial especially to avoid any potential influence of existing theory.
Developing an exhaustive description	The researcher writes a full incorporating all the themes produced in step 4.
Producing the fundamental structure	The researcher condenses the exhaustive description down to a short, dense statement that captures just those aspects deemed necessary to the structure of the phenomenon.
Seeking verification of the fundamental structure	The researcher returns the fundamental structure statement to all participants (or sometimes a sub-sample in larger studies) to ask whether it captures their experience. He or she may go back and modify earlier steps in light of this feedback.

Source: Colaizzi (1978)

Following Colaizzi's (1978) methodology, the data underwent recording and transcription processes. Subsequently, the information was categorized into themes aligning with the objectives of the research. A comparative analysis was conducted to explore similarities and

differences in both questions and answers, and the findings were presented in thematic patterns.

VII.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in research are a set of principles that guide your research designs and practices. These principles include voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, potential for harm, and results communication. Scientists and researchers must always adhere to a certain code of conduct when collecting data from people.

Confidentiality: The researcher did not disclose any confidential information about the interviewees and respondents to third parties. Confidential information included the phone number and names of the research participants. Also, the respondents were not allowed to write their names on the questionnaires. Codes were attributed to the interviewees.

Voluntary participation: The principle of voluntary participation was applied to this study. The research participants were not coerced to take part in this study. Participation was voluntary. Also, the respondents and interviewees were free to withdraw from the study at any given point especially when they were no longer comfortable in providing the necessary information to answer the research questions.

Full consent: The full consent of the respondents and interviewees was obtained. The research participants were drilled on the purpose of the research and assured that their information would be used only for academic purposes. The researcher has not used the information for personal or commercial motives.

Anonymity: It is not possible to link research participants to the data collected for this study. This is because personal information such as respondents' names, phone numbers, email addresses, photo, videos and physical characteristics were not collected.

Potential to harm: The research participants were not subjected to social, physical, psychological and legal harm. The researcher also avoided questions that could evoke negative emotions from the respondents and interviewees. This was to avoid psychological and physical harm as a result of this research.

VIII. Definition of concepts

The definition of concept is an essential step in scientific research because it allows the researcher to give explicit meaning to the concept she uses, in order to avoid falling into confusion. In this part, we explain the different concept that are in the research subject, which is; Sexist bias and gender discrimination.

VIII.1. Sexist bias;

Sexism or discrimination based on sex or gender, especially against women and girls. Thou its origin is unclear, the term sexism emerged from the "second-wave" feminism of the 1960s through '80s and was most likely modeled on the civil rights movement's term racism that is prejudice or discrimination based on race. Sexism can be a belief that one sex is superior to or more valuable than another sex. It imposes limits on what men and boys can and should do and what women and girls can and should do. The concept of sexism was originally formulated to raise consciousness about the oppression of girls and women. Sexism is a form of oppression and domination. As author Octavia Butler put it: *"Simple peck-order bullying is only the beginning of the kind of hierarchical behavior that can lead to racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, classism, and all the other 'isms' that cause so much suffering in the world."(Octavia Butler)*

The word "sexism" became widely known during the women's liberation movement of the 1960s. At that time, feminist theorists explained that the oppression of women was widespread in nearly all human society, and they began to speak of sexism instead of male chauvinism. Whereas male chauvinists were usually individual men who expressed the belief that they were superior to women, sexism referred to collective behavior that reflected society as a whole. According to the European Institute for Gender Equality

> *''Sexism is linked to power in that those with power are typically treated with favor and those without power are typically discriminated against. Sexism is also related to stereotypes since discriminatory actions or attitudes are frequently based on false beliefs or generalizations about gender, and on considering gender as relevant where it is not ''.(2024 European institute for gender equality)*

Sexism in a society is most commonly applied against women and girls. It functions to maintain patriarchy, or male domination, through ideological and material practices of individuals, collectives, and institutions that oppress women and girls on the basis of sex or gender. Such oppression usually takes the forms of economic exploitation and social

domination. Sexist behaviors, conditions, and attitudes perpetuate stereotypes of social gender roles based on one's biological sex.

VIII.2. Gender discrimination

Generally, discrimination involves treating a person with a particular characteristic less favorable than others because of feelings of dislike or hostility toward persons with their characteristics (Bracken 2017; Adamiv Malta 2006; McCrudden). CEDAW, defines discrimination against women as

> *"any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying there cognition, enjoyment or exercise by women irrespective of their marital status, on the basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field"* (Article 1,CEDAW, 1979)

Gender discrimination is defined as the unequal treatment of an individual based on their gender identity. (Page, Montgomery, Akinbayo, Huey, and Stangle 2022) Gender has historically been perceived as binary, like sex. However, an individual may choose to identify in multiple ways, including male, female, transgender, and nonbinary. Gender identities are categorized relative to a person's assigned sex. Gender discrimination is defined as

> *"any distinction, exclusion, or restriction made on the basis of socially constructed gender roles and norms that prevent a person from enjoying full rights"* (World Health Organization 2001).

Gender is a human construct that creates a societal social and moral implication to justify sexual differentiation. Against this background, human beings construct and promote stereotypes and segregation based on their belief and assertion over gender roles which have largely been developed socially and traditionally (Rivers 2007). Consequently, gender-related discrimination contributes to the prevalence of sexual and domestic violence, poverty, hunger, harassment, and unequal treatment against women, girls, men, and sometimes transgender people. Interestingly, the elimination of gender-related discrimination is recognized as Goal 5 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (Obodo 2020). Gender discrimination against women is an old-time global phenomenon not new to human race. Regardless, gender has been a particularly important basis for discrimination and a key factor operating in everyday life of every human being. In this regard, scholars sometimes describe gender discrimination through multifaceted concepts such as gender gaps, gender equality, gender

imbalance, gender bias, gender inequality, and differentials (Steele 2010; Radacic 2008; Bell2004; Murray 1982). Therefore, there is no agreed single conceptual expression of gender-related discrimination as they all examine differential treatments and the consequences of such unfair treatment to human beings

XL. Research Delimitation

My research on "Understanding sexist bias in the Buea municipality: Types, causes and effects" is thematic and partial. It is thematic while taking an interdisciplinary approach as it is located in the field of sociology of 'gender' and the management of sexist bias. In terms of the period of time, the research took an interval of 2022 to march 2024. The focus population of the study being Non-Governmental Organizations, the Ministry of Women Empowerment and the Family Center Buea, the Bilingual Grammar School and the Government Technical High School Molyko, Buea Regional Hospital and Seventh Day Adventist, the Christians and Unemployed individuals in Buea. Questionnaires, interviews and analyzing already existing data were used to gather data.

Partially, the research took place in the municipality of Buea located in Fako Division in the South West Region of Cameroon. The results and information collected on sexist bias in Buea is valid up to the period when the data was collected.

Photo 1: Spatial layout of Buea Sub-division
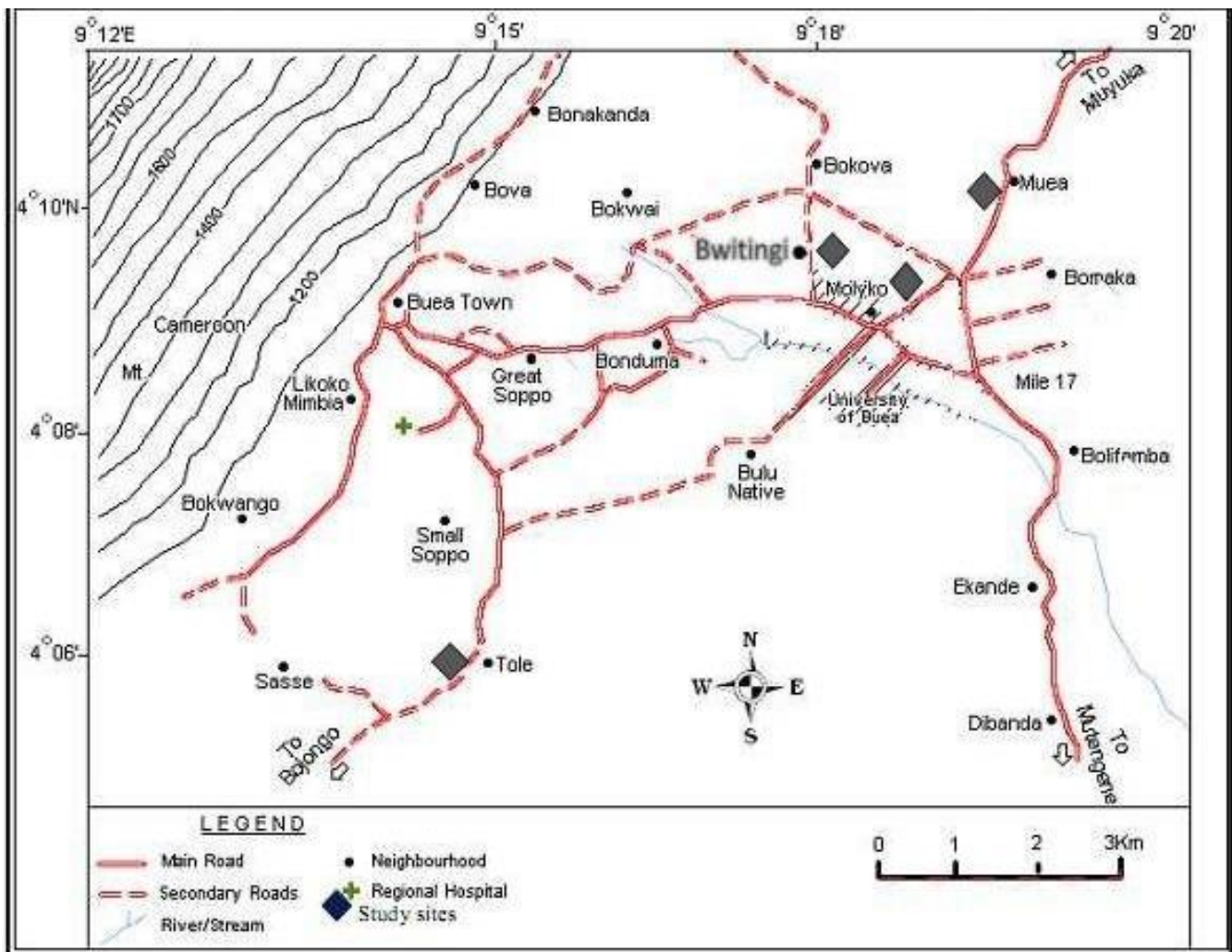
Source : J.O. Akpotuzor, December 2018

X. DISSERTATION PLAN

The structure of this work is formulated in two parts, which is subdivided into four chapters. The first part substantially looks at the notion of sexist bias, types and the theoretical framework. In the first chapter, we define, understand the concept of sexism and identify the different types of sexism. The second chapter looks at the theoretical framework of the research which includes sexism as a whole and universal thing and not just in the municipality of Buea in southwest Cameroon. This brings out a better understanding of the concept sexism and framework in our work

The second part deals with empirical data on the manifestation, causes, successes, challenges and response mechanism and strategies to overcome sexist bias in Buea. Chapter three presents and interprets quantitative and qualitative findings on sexist bias in Buea and this carries us to the fourth chapter. Chapter four examines the measures taken by non-governmental organizations to address sexist bias in Buea and ends with some recommended strategies proposed by the organizations interviewed.

FIRST PART:

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING OF SEXIST BIAS

The first part consists of two chapters which is the chapter one and chapter two.

The first chapter examines the dynamisms and theoretical frameworks of sexist bias. It discusses the understanding, types and frameworks for the prevalence of sexist bias in society. The first chapter looks at the history of sexism and its components. It brings to us the different types of sexism and it identifies and discusses related concepts connected to the research topic.

The second chapter identifies theoretical frameworks related to sexist bias. The theoretical and conceptual explication of sexist bias provides clarity to the researcher and equally helps to facilitate comprehension for the readers. They also enable readers to help to facilitate the comprehension of sexist bias and its general concepts.

Sexist bias in the Buea municipality is one social reality in society of Buea which takes place in many different forms and types. This chapter examines the dynamisms of sexist bias; it identifies and discusses the related concepts connected to the research topic. This chapter looks at the coinage of the term sexism and the different definitions and contributions given by authors and writers. This chapter looks at the contribution of African culture to sexism and discrimination. It discusses the various and different types of sexism, and helps the reader to understand the dynamics of sexist bias universally and in the Buea municipality in south west region of Cameroon. It identifies and discusses related concepts connected to the research topic.

1. Historical understanding of sexist bias

The "discovery" of sexism, Unequal treatment of individuals based on their sex is probably as old as humankind. However, the social recognition that unequal treatment is discriminatory, and the ensuing notion of "sexism", is far more recent. Long before gender inequality was recognized as a societal problem, early feminists such as Christine de Pizan in the 15th century in France, Mary Wollstonecraft in the 17th century in Britain, and more recently Simone de Beauvoir, only to name a few, denounced the arbitrariness and the illegitimacy of the hierarchical organization of gender differences in the society. But it was not until a speech on *"Women and the undergraduate"* by Pauline M. Leet at an US university in 1965 that the term sexism entered lay people's vocabulary, and became a matter of debates.

Leet explained this notion by establishing a parallel with racism, a construct that people were already familiar with: *"When you argue… that since fewer women write good poetry this justifies their total exclusion, you are taking a position analogous to that of the racist - I might call you in this case a "sexist"… Both the racist and the sexist are acting as if all that has happened had never happened, and both of them are making decisions and coming to conclusions about someone's value by referring to factors which are in both cases irrelevant."* (p.3, quoted in Shapiro 1985, p6)

Sexism is a form of prejudice or discriminatory treatment based on a person's sex (e.g., Ku 2010). The coinage of this term occurred in concomitance with the realization that the persistent social disadvantage of women urged a collective response. Until World War Two, the term *"minority"* typically referred to the numerical inferiority of national and linguistic groups. Only in the 50s its meaning made a significant shift to label groups that are inferior in status, or are stigmatized, such as women, people with disabilities, or the elder. Since then, the notion of minority has become *"a general term for all groups subjected to prejudice and discrimination"* (Meyers 1984, p. 1). This was also a starting point for the study of prejudice (Adorno et al. 1950; Allport 1954).

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Sexism is linked to beliefs around the fundamental nature of women and men and the roles they should play in society. Sexist assumptions about women and men, which manifest themselves as gender stereotypes, can rank one gender as superior to another. Such hierarchical thinking can be conscious and hostile, or it can be unconscious, manifesting itself as unconscious bias. Sexism can touch everyone, but women are particularly affected. Sexist practices are prohibited under Article 1(d) of the Staff Regulations within the European institutions, which prohibits discrimination based on sex (among other forms of discrimination), as well as under Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2024).

Feminist philosopher Marilyn Frye defines sexism as an attitudinal conceptual cognitive or oriental complex of male supremacy, male chauvinism and misogyny. According to Frye, the term *"sexist'' "characterizes cultural and economic structure which creates and enforces the elaborate and rigid patterns of sex making and sex –announcing which divides the spies along"* lines of sex, into dominators and subordinate''. For Frye, acts that reinforce those cultural and economic structures are sexist act and acts that work to undermine those structures are acts of resistance to sexism. Frye's analysis of sexism aims to make the systemic structures of sex making and sex announcing more visibly by identifying some of the different ways in sex differences are reinforce in our society. The continued cultural emphasis on sex difference for Frye serves only to reinforce and perpetuate acts of domination and subordination (Frye 1983 p845-85).

When interest in studying sex differences began to grow, sexist ideology was embedded in the questions asked. Society and researchers until the beginning of the 20th

century assumed that physiological and biological characteristics such as males' bigger brain size and physical strength were evidence of men's superiority. Early research used such characteristics to examine their role in predicting intelligence (Gould 1981). But extensive research by Terman and his collaborators could not show any evidence of consistent differences in intelligence between men and women, which resulted in the revision of intelligence tests based on this assumption (Terman & Merrill 1937). Many subsequent empirical studies indulged in identifying and quantifying sex differences in behavior and personality. These efforts were summarized and interpreted by Maccoby & Jacklin (1974). Their comprehensive summary of the literature led them to conclude that most beliefs about existing sex differences, such as "girls are more sociable than boys" or "boys are better at cognitive tasks", were not supported by empirical research. Overall, this research showed more similarities than differences between the sexes.

Maccoby & Jacklin (1974) nonetheless acknowledged the existence of specific differences such as men's superiority in math and spatial aptitudes, and women's superiority in verbal tasks. However, instead of advocating causes related to innate characteristics of the sexes, they suggested that such differences could be adequately accounted for by socialization processes and stereotypes about women and men. As a consequence, further research in the social sciences began to focus on learning processes, rather than biological sex, as factors influencing the observed sex differences.

Maccoby and Jacklin's work was criticized due to its narrative approach. It was not until recently that Hyde (2005) conducted a more sophisticated analysis of this past and the subsequent literature. Despite the use of more rigorous meta-analytic methodologies, her analysis basically corroborated Maccoby and Jacklin's conclusions. The findings allowed for the conclusion that, overall, "Women and men are more alike than they are different" (2005: p. 581), and that differences between the sexes are smaller than the differences that can be found within each sex.

> *''The gender similarities hypothesis holds that males and females are similar on most, but not all, psychological variables. That is, men and women, as well as boys and girls, are more alike than they are different. In terms of effect sizes, the gender similarities hypothesis states that most psychological gender differences are in the close-to-zero (d ≤ 0.100.10) or small (0.11 ≤ d ≤ 0.35) range, a few are in the moderate range (0.36 ≤ d ≤ 0.65), and very few are large (d ∥ 0.66–1.00) or very large (d ⊣ 1.00)''* (Hyde 2005, p581).

Though advocating a provocative gender similarities hypothesis, Hyde likewise mentioned exceptions, for instance motoric behaviors and sexuality, but most importantly differences in self-attributions of traits associated with two key-dimensions of stereotypes: warmth and competence. Women were shown to develop interdependent and relational self-construal, while men appeared to focus on independence and agency. As we know today, these differences derive from the gendered treatment of men and women. Contemporary research on sexism is highly influenced by the distinction between these two types of self-construal, and focuses on the negative consequences of applying them when distinguishing between men and women (e.g., Wood & Eagly 2010).

1.1 The shift from biological approaches of sex differences to social and cultural ones

This urged a revision of concepts and terminology. Differences between men and women that could be accounted for by stable biological factors are since denoted with the term sex, while differences due to more malleable cultural factors are denoted with the term gender (Deaux 1985; Unger 1979). An important discovery in empirical research was that social context moderates differences that were thought to be rooted in the biological sex, thus making the term gender more accurate. As Deaux and Major write *"Now you see them, now you don't"* (1987: p. 369), meaning that in certain contexts we observe differences in attitudes and behaviors between men and women, while in other contexts these differences vanish.

A seminal experiment by Goldberg (1968) showed that evaluations of a piece of work like an article varied as a function of the presentation of the author as female or male. Thus, it was not the actual competence of the article's author that led to perceptual and stable differences in the article's quality, but the observers' precognitions in the form of gender stereotypes. Although Goldberg's findings have suffered from a lack of replication (Swim et al.1989) the idea of social context as an important moderator of sex differences crucially influenced the upcoming work. In virtually all countries around the world, men are in socially dominant positions relative to women (Glick 2006; Sidanius & Pratto 1999). From this observation, and drawing on the evidence of contextual effects on sex differences, most work on sexism has focused on the status differentials between men and women. It is of no surprise that the mere use of the term 'sexism' conveys the idea of discrimination against women, not men. Although there are incidences of sexism against men, that is reverse sexism, the consequences of gender discrimination are usually psychologically more harmful for the powerless (Schmitt et al. 2002).

1.1.2 Discrimination

The mistreatment and relatively poor life events that result from discrimination represent threats to psychological well-being. In other words, discrimination can harm psychological well-being by making it hard to find a good job or apartment, undermining learning in educational settings, or depriving people of adequate health care. In general, being treated relatively poorly and having worse life outcomes than others can harm psychological well-being; however, there may be additional consequences for psychological well-being when mistreatment and disadvantage are subjectively understood as discrimination. As an explanation for negative outcomes, perceived discrimination implies something about one's place in society and thus can have consequences for well-being that go beyond the consequences of the negative treatment itself'' (Schmitt &Branscombe,2002b).

References to sexism against men are seldom. The ambivalence toward men inventory (Glick & Fiske 1999) is one of the few attempts to measure sexist beliefs against men. Despite differences between the gender status-system and other long-term status systems, notably ethnicity, age, or social class (Fiske 2010), the study of status hierarchies has provided valuable insights for understanding how gender operates at a more general level. The assumption that men have higher status and greater power than women is central to many social psychological analyses of sexism (Wood & Eagly 2010)

In postindustrial societies, for example, men are more likely than women to be employed, especially in authority positions, and women are more likely than men to fill caretaking roles at home as well as in employment settings. Men and women are differently distributed into social roles because of humans' evolved physical sex differences in which men are larger, faster, and have greater upper-body strength, and women gestate and nurse children. Given these physical differences, certain activities are more efficiently accomplished by one sex or the other, depending on a society's circumstances and culture. This task specialization produces an alliance between women and men as they engage in a division of labor. Although these alliances take some-what different forms across cultures, task specialization furthers the interests of the community as a whole (Wood & Eagly, 2010, p459).

Stereotypic beliefs about men and women are firmly rooted in society's gendered division of labor, and therefore in the social structure (Guimond et al. 2013; Eagly & Steffen 1984). In general, less prestigious roles and occupational domains (e.g., nurse) ask for

communal behavior, whereas more prestigious ones (e.g., bank trader) ask for argentic behavior. The diffuse knowledge that men and women are unevenly distributed in the occupational hierarchy boosts the belief that, in actuality, men are argentic and women are communal. Accordingly, perceivers come to believe that men and women possess the personality characteristics that are required to perform their respective social roles. Overall, then, the empirical evidence shows that men and women are attributed traits and characteristics deriving from implicit assumptions about their respective social status, overriding to a large extent the role of biological sex. In a seminal demonstration of this central hypothesis of social role theory, Eagly and Wood showed that, knowing only the gender of the protagonist of an influence scenario, participants inferred higher status for men than for women. In contrast, when both genders were portrayed in an ostensibly similar occupational role, the impact of gender stereotypes was reduced.

1.2 CULTURE

Anthropologists use the term "*culture*" as a concept that refers to the perspective and actions that a group of people consider nature and self -evidence. These perspective and actions are rooted in shared meanings and the way people act in a social group. The process of learning a culture begins at birth and that is partly why our beliefs and conduct seems so natural: we have been doing and thinking in certain ways since we were young. Anthropologist calls this process of learning the cultural roles and logic of a society enculturation.

Anthropologist Clifford Geertz in his seminar work outlines culture as *"a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life"* (Geertz, 1973). Our values and beliefs are shaped by many integrated elements of life experience that can be grouped under the term *"culture*" understanding that culture comprises a dynamic and interrelated set of social, economic and belief structures is key to understanding how the whole of culture operates. People make sense of their worlds and order their lives by participating in social groups. Today, culture can be transmitted face to face or virtually using a variety of technological innovations. Hofstede's (2001) research revealed that on the masculinity and femininity dimension, culture with high masculinity reported distinct gender roles, moralistic views of sexuality and encouraged passive roles of women.

> *"Masculinity stands for a society in which social gender roles are clearly distinct: Men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success; women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life."*

> *"Femininity stands for a society in which social gender roles overlap: Both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life"* (Hofstede 2001, p 297).

According to the above citation, men are expected to be tough while women are expected to be soft. Culture has been a subject of discussion in the public domain on a global level for many years. All human groups have a culture which varies from one group to another. The pioneer English anthropologist Edward b Tylor, in primitive culture (1871, p1) defines culture as a *"a complex whole" which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society*. Tylor terms culture as *"complete whole"* because it provides the multi-dimensional societal factors that are affected by inter and intra-relationships of man in the societal environment. He observes that culture provides people with an ethics which must be honored in both thought and practice. According to him, ethos means a people's self-understanding and its self-presentation in the world through thought and practices.

According to Nnadozie (2001), African cultures are unique and intrinsic, though with many underlying differences. They are also very rich. Five of the world six major divisions of humanity can be found in Africa; namely, black Africans, white Caucasians, (in south Africa),Arabs in (north Africa), Asians,(in Madagascar, Khoisan), the bushman in southern Africa and the pigmies (in central Africa). Nnadozie observes that most African communities are patriarchal and communal in world view. Gender roles are defined by culture and males have far more opportunities than the females in most African setting.

As in most African homes/countries, cultural values, both written and oral, inform daily existence among Cameroonians, and people who view tradition as the bedrock of culture. Music, dance, folklore and expressive originality all mirror the comprehensive world views of this segment of Cameroonian society. While the sources of cultural practices shared the view that oral traditions originated from the gods and goddesses while other says they originated from old people and their experiences. (Ojoade, 1988) to have a better perspective on how men perceive women in communities in Cameroon, the culture must have been taken into consideration.

Culture could consist of folktales, legends, myths, arts, and crafts, proverbs and songs among others. In Cameroon and the locality of Buea Cameroon, proverbs as expressive features carry didactic weight, especially when someone needs to be brought back to track. Cultural practices, proverbs especially, are often taken as gospel truth in Cameroon and Buea, and quite often, they subjugate women. A proverb such as, *"at the center of every woman is the core of a prostitute"* epitomizes women as essentially negative beings with poor morals, whereas in real this is not the case. Harmful views about women influences sexist bias and affect their psychology, but women are reluctant to question them. (Oben, Atanga & Sikod. 2016, p35) views such as the one expressed in the proverb above are distilled from experience and wisdom.

Given that gender is a social construct, the interplay between the cultural and the social is strong. Gannan and Pillai (2015) observe that culture is a fuzzy concept that interacts with political, social and economic forces. They also posit that most cultural views are based on stereotypes which they define as *"a distorted view or mental picture of groups and their supposed characteristic on the basis of which one tends to evaluate individuals from each other"*. In addition, they point out that stereotypes can be erroneous and can lead to unwarranted conclusions, especially if no exceptions are made. For example the view that a woman place is in the kitchen is a stereotypical perception because women can still carry out lots of activities outsiders the private sphere. There has been an increasing interest in studies of men, women and gender equality since the first equality and stable development and fight sexist bias.

Globally, women are often perceived as mothers, child bearers and care providers. The definition of women as *'baby makers'* is almost universal (Bates et al, 1995: 20-21; Evans 2003;, Atanga 2010). During the 19th century, the common view of women was that they are home makers and child–bearers and do not possess the intelligence and strength to be able to participate in activities outside the home. Whether married or single, all Victorian women were expected to be weak and helpless, and fragile like delicate flowers, incapable of making decisions beyond selecting the menu and ensuring that their many children were taught moral values. A woman's main preoccupation was to make the home a place of comfort for her husband and family from the stress of Industrial Britain (Weston Pauline, n.d.) Some scholars support the assertion that 'Wife' and 'Mother 'are important archetypes of woman, and motherhood has been regarded as the ultimate source of power and fulfillment (Oben, Atanga & Sikod 2016).

Liberal feminists have also exposed how the myth and mystique of motherhood keep women in their place - the home. They stress that the institution of motherhood has been used to exclude women from the public life. Betty Frieden, feminist author and activist, in her classic, The Feminine Mystique, examines how the use of negative stereotypes of women oppresses them. She asserts that American culture was based on old prejudices which were disguised in new pseudo- scientific dogmas (the feminine mystique). According to her, the feminine mystique defines woman only in sexual terms as man's wife, mother, love object, dishwasher and general server of physical needs, and never in human terms as a person herself (Frieden,1963). The assumption often made is that mothers contribute nothing to the market economy and as a result no economic recognition is given to such work, thus leaving women economically dependent on men or their husbands.

In Cameroon's society, men and women are socialized in different role which shows the present of gender roles and bias. According to parsons (parson and bales, 1955) a contemporary nuclear family has a bread- winner, and a homemaker and their children. He posits that the nuclear family is efficient for the bread- winner provides for the instrumental needs of the family unit, needs such as food and shelter as well as other material needs, while the wife provides for the expressive needs of the family unit, (affective and emotional needs as well as socialization). This view of the family is called the Breadwinner model. Parson claims that this gendered division of labor is essential for the harmonious functioning of society.

Gender roles can be seen as intrinsically linked to motherhood. In African cultures in particular, women are primarily responsible for domestic and child- rearing/ care activities as well as many other family matters. Some writers have termed these activities "support services" (Oben, Atanga & Sikod 2016). Cameroon is no exception to this global phenomenon. Since men in general are socialized into breadwinners and family heads, women are expected to still be mainly responsible for childcare and domestic work even when they hold heavy responsibilities in the formal work force. Husbands, employers and women themselves continue to view childcare as the woman's rather than as the family's responsibility thus allowing the man to give preference to his job over family responsibility. This bias equally allows employers to define equality in men's terms while not taking into account home responsibility which is left totally in women's care. Given women's multiple roles, they are constantly juggling these roles and very often there is hardly a perfect balance hence their low performance in the labor market. This has led societies to view women

abilities as being below men's standard. Consequentially, women are perceived as being inferior to men, particularly with regards to intelligence. This view is global and pervasive and remains a colonial heritage with the arrival of colonizers in Africa

1.3. TYPES OF SEXISM

Sexist attitudes are rooted in gender stereotypes that ascribe higher status to men than to women. Thus, the concept and the measurement of sexism are largely concerned with gender asymmetries disadvantaging women. The contemporary literature lingers over a distinction between overt and more subtle forms of sexism. This project looks at the study of prejudice and stereotypes which informs the understanding of the current construct and measures of sexism in Buea municipality. In order to study and understand sexism, we need to study, identify and classify the different types of sexism which are

1.3.1 Hostile sexism

This is more overt form of sexism, this generally underpinned by one primary goal to maintaining male dominance. It is an openly antagonizing and negative attitude towards women. People who exercise this kind of sexism may consider men superior to women, suspect women of trying to control men through seduction or manipulation. This type of sexism can sometimes lead to sexual harassments and violence towards women. Since hostile sexism is true to its name, it's generally a little easier to recognize. Victims blaming or saying a sexual assault happened because the person assaulted dressed a certain way or acted a certain way like a "*tease*" (Jost & Bana, 1994; Jost & Burgees, 2000). Thus, men, dominance create hostile sexism, hostile attitude about women. This dominance is largely enacted and reinforce by roles and stereotypes. Furthermore, men often exert their gender power over women within sexual relationship and women can potentially counter men's power through sexuality. Therefore concerns about power, gender differentiation and sexuality are bound together as components of hostile's sexism. In a modern context in which movement and increasing gender equality threaten traditional male dominance, this may be directed most strongly at women who challenge men's power like feminist and status like career women as well as towards women who perceive as using their sexual allure to gain power over men. This is evidenced by an adversarial view of gender relations in which women are perceived as seeking to controlling, whether through sexuality or feminist ideology potential (Glick & Fiske, 1996)

1.3.1.1 Hostile sexism towards women

Hostile sexism is most often associated with negative prejudice against and hostile views of women that are rooted in the beliefs that women are inferior to men. People who harbor hostile sexism attitudes towards women and to view women as intellectually inferior to men.In many cultures , men dominate high status positions in arrears including business , politics , religion , the military , law and other professional careers related to societal power. To maintain male control in society, women are relegated to subservient roles. Hostile sexist ideologies serve to maintain men's dominant roles in patriarchal societies, consequently, women who defy their prescribe gender roles and behave in non-traditional ways are perceived in the negative light, derogated and deemed.

Hostile sexism comprises several philosophies, one is the notion that men need to control their women because women are less intelligent and less competent than men. Women are perceived as too emotional, as easily offended and as having a proclivity to create major issues over trivial events. Because women are perceived as incapable of making important decisions, hostile sexist believe that it is men's responsibility to dictate to women what they should think and how they should behave. This dominate paternalistic view serves to keep women submissive and subvient to men. Hostile sexism also comprises beliefs that women do not belong in the work space and are too sensitive and emotional to be in high status position.

1.3.1.2 Hostile sexism toward men

Although hostile sexism is often associated with feelings and behaviors directed towards women, hostile sexism can also be directed towards men. As a response to being subordinated by men, some women hold negative views against men that include feelings of resentment and disgust. Women with these view turn to perceive, men as inferior in several ways, for example, hostile sexism turns to have a negative perception of men as childlike and in need of someone to take care of them, and for instance they might believe that when men become sick they act like "babies". Hostile sexism toward men also include the idea men are not capable of being successful without women to guide care for them.

1.3.2. Benevolent sexism

Benevolent sexism usually stem from the desire to protect women due to the belief that women are inherently weaker, more sensitive, more innocent than men. Benevolent sexism encourages traditional roles; it can also negatively influence how women view themselves, making them less likely to challenge patriarchal norms or sexist inequalities. .

"Hostile sexism seeks to justify male power, traditional gender roles, and men's exploitation of women as sexual objects through derogatory characterizations of women. Benevolent sexism, in contrast, relies on kinder and gentler justifications of male dominance and prescribed gender roles; it recognizes men's dependence on women (i.e., women's dyadic power) and embraces a romanticized view of sexual relationships with women. Importantly, these attitudes are subjectively positive for the sexist; they encompass feelings of protectiveness and affection toward women" (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

Women who anticipate experiencing benevolent sexism in a particular task are less likely to express their leadership ambitions. This type of sexism tends to happen none subtly and is more socially accepted. So you might not always recognize it as easily as other types of sexism. However, sexual reproduction and men's dependence on women to fulfill domestic roles creates a dependency and intimacy between the two sexist that counterbalances sexist hostility with a subjectively benevolent view of women. Although men dominate cross culturally, they rely on women to produce and to nurture offspring, for domestic labor and fulfill sexual and intimacy needs leading women power in intimate relationships (Guttentage & Secord, 1983).

Benevolent sexism predicts perhaps even causes inequalities between men and women in a way similar to hostile sexism. Adding more concerns is the notion that while hostile sexism predicts violence against women, benevolent sexism tends to predicts victims blaming in the context of that of violence. Although a benevolent sexist man may object to violence against women, he is also more likely fine women partially at fault for violence she has experienced. Benevolent sexism also affects how women view themselves. Women who are exposed to benevolent sexism are less likely to organize against sexist inequalities and less likely to challenge patriarchal norms. In short, benevolent sexism functions as a subtle, yet effective means of perpetuating traditional gender norms. Benevolent sexism may appeal to a sense of entitlement among some women. Taken at face value, benevolent sexism seems to be devoted to the well -being and protection of women, which may seem like a good thing. However, given the impact that benevolent sexism has in discouraging women from engaging in activism against gender-based inequalities, women's endorsement of benevolent sexism may be considered in some ways more subversive to gender equality than hostile sexism. (Joshua, Grubbs, Exline, & Twenge, 2014).

1.3.2.1 Components of Benevolent Sexism

There are three sub components of benevolent sexism

- Protective paternalism, which is the belief that because women are warm, caring, and maternal, they should be protected and provided for by men.
- Complementary gender differentiation, which is the belief that women [who are warm, order oriented, morally pure and weak] and men [who are competent, independent, morally corruptive and strong] have contrasting but complementary attributes.
- Heterosexual intimacy is the belief that women and men are dependent on each other for both emotional closeness and reproduction. Although benevolent sexism rewards women with prosaically treatment, it reinforces their subordinate position relative to men and has detrimental effects on women, both as individual and as a collective.

1.3.3 Ambivalent sexism

This type of sexism combines both hostile and benevolent forms. It fuses the seemingly contractor belief that women are both fragile and pure as well as manipulate and conniving. In other words, these attitudes towards women could be described as can't live with them, can't live without them'. Ambivalent sexism was conceptualized by Peter Glick & Susan Fiske to include both negative (hostile) and positive (benevolent) sexism and its measured with the self-report scale they created, the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory. Benevolent sexism predicts positive evaluations of women who conform to traditional gender roles, whereas hostile sexism predicts negative evaluations of women violate traditional gender roles. Thus together they create ambivalent views of women as a whole. An attempt to understand more fully the nuisance of gender based prejudice; peter Glick & Susan Fiske developed the idea of ambivalent sexism in the late 1990s. Although sexism has been the subject 0f academic interest for more than 100years, Glicks & Fiske sought to examine these attitudes in a more complex sexist attitude that may entail both positive and negative attitudes towards women.

At first, hostile and benevolent sexism seem to be incompatible. It may seem impossible for individuals to simultaneously believe that women are both pure and fragile and also manipulative and angry. However, ambivalent sexism may be understood in light of sexism more broadly. Particularly within western societies, sexism largely based on traditional gender norms, which place men in positions of authority in the homes, community and government. In the majority of cultures women are expected to submit to male dominance until relatively recently, the late 19th century until present the system of male

dominance was largely unchallenged in the western world. However, women's liberation, universal suffrage gained much power over the past century and half, and traditional gender norms have progressively become less and less universal. In keeping with these changing societal norms, there have been increasing numbers of women who cannot conform to traditional male dominated gender norms. Herein lays the basis for ambivalent sexism.

The impact of ambivalent sexism is multifaceted. Benevolent sexism may not appear to be as overtly dangerous and attitude as hostile sexism, there are many consequences. Although benevolent sexism is largely associated with positive emotions towards women, it still places men in a position of authority over the perceived weaker sex. Ambivalent sexism may extend beyond simple dichotomies between men and women. Although women are typically the target of sexist attitudes and behaviors, men are not only the perpetrators of such attitudes. Women can be prejudiced too in both hostile and benevolent ways.

Glick & Fiske (1996, 1999) developed a scale to measure hostile and benevolent sexism towards women, The Ambivalent Sexism Inventor (ASI). The ASI is a 22-item measure that captures the complicated nature of perceptions related to women, as perceptions can be positive and negative. Negative perceptions of women are described as Hostile Sexism (HS) in this measure. Positive perceptions of women are described as Benevolent Sexism (BS); sub-scales include protective paternalism, complementary gender differentiation, and heterosexual intimacy.(Glick, & Fiske, 1996, p124).

Categories

Geographies Tested: United States of America
Populations Included: Female, Male
Age Range: Adolescents, Adults
Items:

Hostile Sexism

- Women exaggerate problems they have at work.
- Women are too easily offended.
- Most women interpret innocent remarks as being sexist.
- When women lose to men in a fair competition, they typically complain about being discriminated against.

- Many women are actually seeking special favors, such as hiring policies that favor them over men, under the guise of asking for "equality".

- Feminists are making entirely reasonable demands of men.*

- Feminists not seeking for women to have more power than men.*

- Women seek power by getting control over men.

- There are actually very few women who get a kick out of teasing men by seeming sexually available and then refusing male advances.*

- Once a woman gets a man to commit to her, she usually tries to put him on a tight leash.

- Most women fail to appreciate all that men do for them.

Benevolent Sexism

Protective Paternalism

- A good woman should be set on a pedestal by her man.

- Women should be cherished and protected by men.

- Men should be willing to sacrifice their own well being in order to provide financially for the women in their lives.

- In a disaster, women need not be rescued first.

- Complementary Gender Differentiation

- Women, compared to men, tend to have a superior moral sensibility.

- Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess.

- Women, as compared to men, tend to have a more refined sense of culture and good taste.

Heterosexual Intimacy

- Every man ought to have a woman he adores.

- Men are complete without women.*

- No matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he has the love of a woman.

- People are often truly happy in life without being romantically involved with a member of the other sex.*.

At first the notion of women endorsing sexist values and behaviors seems absurd. After all if sexism is inevitably damaging to women, then it makes little sense that women would endorse such attitudes. As a by-product of living in a patriarchal society, both men and women are raised in an environment that subtly as well as openly enforces sexist deals. In the face of rampant inequality, women are forced to either challenge the inequality by embracing more egalitarian and feminist values or accept the inequality by embracing sexist attitudes. Women are less likely than men to endorse HS, but they are often just as likely as men to endorse BS values.

1.3.3.1 Societal level effects;

Glick and Fiske, as well as other researchers argue that the combination of hostile and benevolent sexism contributes to societal gender inequality. BS is pro-social treatment directed towards gender conforming or traditional women (mothers, wives), and thus rewards women for staying in lower-status roles relative to men. Indeed, national levels of benevolent sexism have been shown to be objective indicators of societal gender inequality. In cultures characterized by a high level of HS, women are more likely to endorse benevolent sexism, suggesting that they may enact gender conforming, lower-status behaviors to earn protection rather than risk overt hostility from men. Benevolent sexism may weaken women's resistance to sexism and gender inequality.

1.3.3.2 Individual level-effect;

A great deal of research has shown that negative effects of BS on individual women. Rudman and Glick presented evidence that paternalistic benevolent sexist beliefs in employment settings can prevent women from being offered high-risk/ high status opportunities, slowing their career advancement. Instead they are offered lower-status communal job roles that are more congruent with traditional gender norms. Benevolent sexism is often unrecognized sexist, yet research shows that it can have damaging consequences on individual women's lives (Rudman & Glick, 2010, 386 pp).

1.3.4. Institutional sexism

Institutional sexism is where the basic institutions of our society like government, schools and corporations are sexist at a fundamental level. To exactly understand what this means look at some examples against both men and women. Because traditional society valued women primarily for their reproductive potential, we've historically institutionalized societal control of their individual bodies. Example: states at one point passed laws requiring

a woman to get their husband's permission for hysterectomies or sensitization procedures. Even though those laws have been long since abolished or struck down by federal courts, some medical providers are under the expression these restrictions exist making difficult for women to get operations. Our culture readily sexualizes women; It puts high value on their sexual appeal and prioritizes it over another attribute.

1.3.4.1 Work place discrimination

The work place is by far where women face the most institutionalized sexism. The traditional male gender role is provided and labor. As result, most labor structures are designed for men. Even if work place does not consciously discriminate against women in hiring and promotion, women may be treated as outsiders in some male dominated industries. Male bosses more readily build relationships with male employees, making it more difficult for women to climb the ladder.

1.3.4.2 Legal sentencing discrimination

Due to a social effect called the *"women are- wonderful- effective"* society views men as morally inferior to women. Even when women don't equally bad things, people still assume they are somehow victims. Men, however, are always considered morally corrupt and must be separated from society and punished.

Institutional sexism refers to invidious sexual equalities in the explicit rules and implicit norms governing and structuring social institutions. Religious institutions provide a useful example of how explicit rules and implicit norms structure institutions. In the Catholic Church for instance it is an explicit rule that all priests are men and all nuns are women. Only priest can run the church hierarchy and priest outrank nuns in most decisions- making situations. While it is clear how explicit rules can govern and structure institutions, these examples can also help us to see that, implicit rules can govern and structure catholic experience and create sexual inequality. In additions, to the more explicit rules- governed institutions of government, religion, family, health care and education, they are crucially important informally or implicit structure institutions prime among them being language, and the sites of cultural and artistic production to say that sexism is systematic social injustice based on one's sex, or a discriminatory sex-role differentiation, is to speak of institutional sexism. Sexism then must be understood as a part of a social order, similar to the economic order of capitalism or the political order of liberalism. (Cudd, Jones, 2008, P.109)

1.3.5 Internalized sexism

The fabric of internalized sexism

Internalized oppression (Allport, 1954; Cudd, 2006; Freire, 1970; Jackins 1997; Lewin 1941/1977; Roy & Steiner, 1994; Tatum, 1997), Consist of oppressive practices that continue to make the rounds even when members of the oppressor's group are not present. In Buea municipality growing up poor might receive the message (in school, on television, from employers). *"People like you never amount to anything"*. This is an example of external class oppression. If, after multiple repetitions of that message from the outside, she begins to say to herself *"I will never amount to anything"* and if her behavior aligns with this belief, she will have internalized oppression. She might then pass the message on to others in her socioeconomic stratum, perhaps to her children or her neighbors. Passing the massage along is another sense in which she may enact internalized oppression, in this case internal to her group, a group that is a target of class oppression.

Internalized oppression is the genus of which internalized sexism is a species (chesler, 2001, cowan,2000, Cowan, neighbors, Dela Morceaux, Behnke, 1998, wiseman, 2002) Some people have more power than others, easier access to social and physical resources, greater safety, and more freedom to envision and pursue the lives they choose. At the level of the individual, people's unique personalities and propensities play a role in who gets more or less of these desired resources. At the group level, members of different social classes different systematically in the source of support and sources of stress they encounter in their daily lives. These group level inequalities and established and maintained by institutionalized mistreatment of people on the basis of their group membership (Cudd, 2006, Freire, 1970, Engels & Marx 1848/1977, Memmi, 1965). Nearly any difference between people seems to serve as sufficient justification to divide us into groups, one of which maintains more social power than the other via oppression (jackings 1997). A key feature of sexism, as with oppression against any group, is that there is an institutionalized power differential between the oppressed group (men in the case of sexism) and the oppressed group (in sexism, women).

Internalized sexism is not merely sexism perpetrated by women upon women. Sexism involves two distinct groups, one of which is systematically denied power by the other, internalized sexism involves the internal dynamic with the oppressed group. It helps to maintain sexism as a whole via a system of social expectations and pressures enabled between women. Sexism, though it is built, into the institutional structures of a culture, does not persist on its own. To persist, it must be practiced, and so it may be productive to consider internalized sexism to be a set of practices. These practices vary from one cultural context to

another (Bonvillian, 2001) and are not universal or essential to gender. All forms of oppression accumulate power for one group at the cost of reducing power for another. Internalized oppression helps to maintain the power symmetry by keeping members of oppressed groups feeling powerless, and therefore acting powerless (Freire, 1970; Jackins 1997)

1.3.6. Interpersonal sexism.

This is sexism that occurs at the level of daily interactions with other people. It is sexism that occurs between people and can be more easily combated because it comes in a more tangible form. The idea that one group is better than another and has right to control the other, which gets structured onto institutions, gives permission and reinforcement for individual members of the dominant group to personally disrespect or mistreat individuals in the oppressed group. These manifests during interactions with others.it can occur in the work place within relationships among family members, and in interactions with strangers.

This chapter has presented us the historicity of sexist bias, historical understanding definitions and different contributions by authors and writers. This chapter talks of the impact of culture in the society and how culture impacts sexist bias attitudes in the Buea municipality. This chapter ends with helping the readers to understand the different and various forms of sexist bias which are present and their manifestations on individuals and the society. This chapter ends and leads us to the second chapter which talks of the theoretical and conceptual explication of sexist bias which will help the readers to chronologically understand the concept of sexist bias.

CHAPTER 2:

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL EXPLICATION OF SEXIST BIAS

The history of sexist bias is several decades old and the link between sexuality and gender is far back as the two phenomenon's are intertwined. In reality, sex and gender interact as they mutually shape one another to form individual bodies, cognitive abilities, and disease patterns. (Nowatzki & Grant, 2011; Fausto-Sterling, 2012; Schiebinger & Stefanick, 2020; Ritz & Greaves, 2022). In brain research, observed sex differences in biologic characteristics cannot be readily disentangled from social factors (Rippon et al., 2014). Gender norms shape dietary habits, physical activities, experience, and education all of which are connected to brain functioning. This chapter identifies theoretical frameworks related to sexist bias and how discrimination based on sex is found in organizations, and how sexism is an indicator of gender inequality and discrimination. The theoretical frameworks provide clarity to the research and facilitate comprehension for the readers.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1. The Theory of Gendered Organization

The theory of gendered organizations formulated by Joan Acker, the American Sociologist provides the central analytical structure for the study. It is a framework that facilitates the identification of diverse organizational dimensions: structures, processes, and resources of the researched phenomenon. In the theory of gendered organizations, Acker (1990, 1992, and 1998) presents and identifies how these three dimensions reproduce and maintain gender. When examining the organizational processes, Acker has focused attention on the dimensions of processes that reproduce and maintain gender within organizations. With such organizational processes, Acker refers to activities that are made up of people's conversations as well as manners of thinking and acting, which remarkably define everyday functions of an organization. Acker (1990) coined gendered organizations as the *"advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity of men and women"* within organizational spaces (p. 146).

The meaning of gender equality always has been highly debated within feminist theory and today, as much as any other time in history, it is capable of generating continuous questions and dilemmas. What is the problem of gender in/equality? What could be a solution to the problem? Should the goal be equality? or difference? or diversity? Here is little consensus among actors from politics, from civil society, and from academia on what gender equality actually means and should In this vein, gendered organizations constitute five processes that reproduced gender in these spaces and in turn have produced challenges to women in the superintendence. According to Acker (ibid.), these processes are inter- twined rather than separate entities. These included:

2.1.1 Division of labor: same expectations, different playing field

Division of labor or gendered divisions tied to behaviors, physical space, and established power dynamics resulting from divided labor markets, the family, and state. Within organizations, division of labor is maintained in the structures of the workplace and family, wherein men often maintain the highest rank (Acker, 1990). Findings revealed that 94% of respondents remained in their job and had the same expectations as men superintendents, but there were inherent challenges. For example, only 27% of women were DS' and though 64% of women were in leadership, they also worked under men DS'. Several respondents discussed that most of the BOCES cabinet were men. The BOCES cabinet includes but is not limited to the district superintendent, dS, ASs, human resources, finance, and curriculum leadership staff. For example, Superintendent 19 said: "the upper echelon of our organization and districts are men.... they're all men. It's not uncommon for me to be the only female in the room.

Hiring and respect;

Respondents indicated gender was a challenge in attaining a BOCES superintendency or moving up the career ladder. Not only was gender prompting a division of labor between men and women, which also prevented women from advancing, but respondents discussed workplace pressure and the politics associated with gaining the respect of men colleagues. Nevertheless in addition to Ackers division of labor, there is also the social division of labor where there are some roles which by nature are predesigned for the male and female gender like breastfeeding for the female sex and providing for the family in traditional societies and settings by the male gender.

2.1.2 Cultural symbols: looking the part

The second process of gendering organizational theory involved gendered symbolism, beliefs and imagery that are assumed to strengthen or oppose organizational processes and the division of labor (Acker, 1990, 2006a, b). For BOCES women superintendents, this entailed displaying an appearance aligned with white, middle-class, heteronormative gender roles with approximately 50% of respondents indicating that professional image and dress was significant to their role. In addition to expected "displays" of femininity in the workplace, this also involved traditional understandings of motherhood.

Perception and reception of appearance

Interviews illustrated that perception and reception of one's physical image, including conservative dress, hair, make-up, and weight, was key to the success of woman superintendents and to that end, traditional status quo cultural norms about beauty continued to inculcate disadvantages for women. Multiple statements exemplify the internal and external connections respondents made between appearance and self-worth, and thus the kind of gendered symbolism required of BOCES women superintendents. For example, Superintendent 1 said, *"your looks will get you in the room; you then have 10 minutes"* Finally, some respondents discussed how gender and appearance directly affected their ability to attain and remain in a superintendency. Gendered biases existed about women's ability and being on the *"instructional side of the house", while men were on the "fiscal, operational, and tech side of the house."*

Professional legacy, parenting, and work-life balance

Respondents talked about staying in the superintendency because of legacy, the example they set for family and society, and presence of traditional views of parenting within the workplace. Notably, 27 out of the 32 women (84%) interviewed had children and nine out of the 32 women (27%) were single mothers at some point in their career. Regardless of having children, all respondents indicated that their family and the example they set was a significant aspect of their careers. Regarding legacy and inspiring their children to break traditional gender roles, Superintendent 3 said, *"I hope that I'm showing my daughter that she can have it all, a family and a career, and showing my son women can do this.*"

2.1.3 Workplace interactions: Can you hear what I can see?

Interactions between men and women, women and women, and men and men comprise *"patterns that enact dominance and submission"* (Acker, 1990, p.147). In the BOCES, interactions between women and men involved men appropriating women superintendent ideas, dismissal, interruption, and inappropriate comments, in fact, 22 out of 32 women (69%) experienced these behaviors. Interactions between men and men offered advantages, whereas women and women interactions were less advantageous.

Idea theft, mansplaining, and other rude behavior

Respondents discussed having to work through and process how many times their contributions were dismissed and or they did not receive the same acknowledgment as men (and often for the same idea). As Superintendent 9 put it, *"I'll have an opinion or a point of view on something, and it will be dismissed, and then a man in the room will have the same opinion, and suddenly that's a great idea, and you think, wait a minute, what just happened there?"*

Respondents tied lack of credit, primarily from men colleagues, to other forms of disrespect, which when "*produced and reproduced in interactions on the job between colleagues*" can enhance domination and subjugation (Acker, 2012, p216). The first of such behaviors included interruption, with the terms *"interrupt/interruption"* used 33 times in interviews. After detailing a story about a man who shouted at her to *"finish up that conversation"* because he needed the office space, Superintendent 31 said, *"many times, I feel interrupted, talked over, sometimes invisible, ignored."*

Another problematic interaction with men was mansplaining or when a man explains something to a woman in a condescending manner that assumes she does not understand the issue (Merriam-Webster, 2023).

The harassment line

A clear complication for gender equity in working relations involves inappropriate comments, sexual joking, and harassment (Acker, 2006a). Approximately 50% of respondents discussed navigating environments where inappropriate, degrading, and *"joking around"* comments regularly were made by men. This includes comments that range from stereotypical assumptions about women's leadership to actual harassment. Furthermore, when it was

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brought to their attention as problematic, men were ambivalent about their behavior. This finding does not indicate that success as a woman superintendent means tolerance for such behavior. Rather, it underscores the need of immediate change in educational leadership organizational culture.

2.1.4 Individual identities: here I am, this is me

Acker's (1990) fourth process, individual identities, is shaped by gendered substructures outside of and constructed within the organization. A core finding was that remaining in the superintendency meant navigating workplace labeling and stereotypes, which also influenced their individual identities. Respondents also commented on the gendered organizational expectations around emotional support in the workplace. Finally, multiple respondents discussed a "24/7" work culture, and that remaining in the superintendency meant proving oneself through longer work hours. Multiple respondents discussed the harms caused to their identities by workplace labeling and stereotypes. Respondents shared the sentiment that, *"people feel they can be more dismissive of our gender" (Superintendent 29)*. Examples of traditional gender role labeling discussed by respondents included, but were not limited to, assertive women as "*bitchy*" and that woman leaders need to prove themselves. Reflecting on the gendered ideas about assertiveness Superintendent 9 said, It's always a man saying to me, we do not want to get micro-manager here…. I often wonder, is it a female thing? If I was sitting in the room and I was a man leader and asked the same question about a procedure down in Human Resources, I might just get the answer. I think that there is a stereotype about women leaders that they are micromanagey, assertive, aggressive, or nosey.

Providing emotional support (in a 24/7 work culture)

Being emotionally nurturing was discussed by respondents as a *"gendered expectation"* that had real world consequences on their leadership identity. To begin, Superintendent 28 discussed how strength, leadership, decisiveness, and assertiveness were associated with men, while emotionality was related to women. She remarked, "*Yes, we are too emotional, but if I were a man, you would call it decisive, in control, and in charge."* In a similar vein, respondents discussed how emotional support was a gendered expectation of one's leadership.

Tied to their emotional support role, which often resulted in colleagues relying upon them and thus their time, more than that of men, findings revealed that respondents felt

pressured by a "24/7" work culture (Jabbar et al., 2018). In fact, the phrase *"all the time"* was used by respondents 83 times underscoring those women had to exude a workplace identity in support of an "around-the-clock" culture.

2.1.5 Organizational logic: Women are not abstract workers

According to Acker (1990),

> *"gender is a constitutive element in organizational logic or the underlying assumptions and practices that construct most contemporary work organizations"* (Acker,1990, p. 147).

Thus, gender neutrality is discussed in reference to an abstract, bodiless worker. Contrary to this process, BOCES women superintendents were not bodiless workers, but embraced motherhood and their identity as a woman. Also, tangible items, such as the job evaluations as referenced in Acker's gendering organizational theory, were personalized, based on the superintendent's individual and organizational goals embracing motherhood.

The abstract ideal worker for organizational hierarchies involved a genderless and bodiless male worker, void of children and home obligations (Acker, 1990). Yet, 27 out of the 32 women (84%) had children. Motherhood, professional legacy, and parenting not only were important symbolic aspects of women superintendents' career trajectories, but their ability to successfully navigate that trajectory. Furthermore, establishing a healthy work-life balance was not, at least in the perspective of respondents, a major concern of men counterparts.

Thus, contrary to an abstract, genderless, and ethereal male worker, BOCES women superintendents were highly gendered, but seemingly in a manner that supported traditional gender roles. This finding raises questions around the continued presence of white, middle-class, and heteronormative workplace conventions concerning femininity and masculinity.

In addition to economic, ideological, and political resources, working human bodies are the organizations resources as Acker (1992: 254) points out. Embodiment and sexuality arrange an entire organization by creating various divisions (for example, segregation, pays gaps, men's and women's break facilities), interaction, images, and self-definition (Acker, 1992). When organizational practices and policies are examined, the supposed universal person manifests, for example, disregard for unwanted sexual attention or sexist bias. Consequently, this situation excludes certain bodies as equal, intellectual, and deserving of dignity. The gender produced in organizations is linked with other societal organizations that

maintain and produce gender, and these determine the status of bodies in society as a whole (Acker 1992). Furthermore organizational resources may be understood as simply financial resources, but may also refer to work and additional assignments for employees, such as gender equality work in universities. Acker perceives that, to avoid oversimplifying realities, the category of gender must be understood as fundamentally complicated by class, race/ethnicity, and other differences (Acker 1992, 2006).

Acker (2006) has been developing an analytic approach, which she names organizational inequality regimes to conceptualize intersectionality and identify barriers to creating equality. She defines inequality in organizations as *''...systematic disparities between participants in power and control over goals, resources, and outcomes"* (Acker, 2006: 443).

These disparities include those encountered in decisions, such as how work is organized; opportunities for promotion and interesting work; security in employment and benefits; pay and other monetary rewards; respect; and pleasures in work and work relations (ibid.). Additionally, I emphasize bodily integrity, because all organizations are made up of physical bodies, and how these bodies are treated and respected influences the practical functioning of an organization. Acker defines organizational inequality regimes as *"the interlocked practices and processes that result in continuing inequalities in all work organizations"* (Acker 2006: 441). Work organizations are also the target of many attempts to alter patterns of inequality (Acker 2006); such attempts include the definition of gender equality and equal opportunities in legislation. Intersectionality is generally regarded as strictly connected to social theory that focuses on complex and multiple forms of discrimination/privileges, multiple dimensions of inequalities, and relations of oppression, dominance, and violence (Hornscheidt, 2009).

2.2 Gender Equality

Nordic countries are acknowledged as forerunners in gender equality initiatives.. Iillie Olsen's (2011) comparative analysis of Nordic countries (Norway, Sweden) and Anglo-Saxon nations (UK, US, and Canada) gives rise to important perspectives on equality. In Nordic countries, significant gains include redressing social inequalities, especially in groups; establishing labor movements, women's groups, and civil rights groups; as well as effective collaboration and organization amongst various other actors. In Anglo-Saxon nations, the emphasis has been on the protection of individual liberal rights. Nordic gender equality work also reaches the above-mentioned sectors. The cumulative ideals of equality start from the

basic understanding of equality as foundational/intrinsic equality, followed by equal opportunity and equality of condition, and ending with equality of outcomes, the most far-reaching ideal of equality (Lynch 2000, Lynch 1995, Olsen 2011).

Nordic equality has a long history, and universities in Nordic societies have been developing their infrastructure towards greater gender equality. Nevertheless, progress in gender equality has been slow, as indicated by, for instance, the low percentage of women in top positions compared to their completed PhD degrees in the twenty-first century. Nordic gender equality researchers (Peter Magnusson et al. 2008) define the current situation as a contradiction between the seemingly universal acceptance of a general discourse on gender equality and skepticism about its practical consequences, as well as resistance to attempts to produce gender equality. This contradiction is crucial to understanding the complexities of the issues. Gender and equality are phenomena that are constructed, maintained, produced, and reproduced in relations amongst individuals, groups, and societal structures.

The meaning of gender equality always has been highly debated within feminist theory and it is capable of generating continuous questions and dilemmas. What is the problem of gender inequality? What could be a solution to the problem? Should the goal be equality? or difference? or diversity? Here is little consensus among actors from politics, from civil society, and from academia on what gender equality actually means and should. Verloo &Lombardo therefore explores the diverse and contested nature of gender equality. It does so by relating to three different levels of analysis:

- the first concerns the existence of different visions of gender equality
- the second focuses on the different political and theoretical debates that arise within the framework of these visions
- Third refers to the different contextual locations in which such visions and debates over gender equality take place in actual policy practices.

In the *"equality as sameness"* approach, the problem is seen to be that women have been excluded from the political arena and decision-making process. The proposed solution is to include women, as they are, in the gendered world that is, in politics and decision-making organizations without challenging the underlying male norm and dominating hierarchical gender relations, which Verloo & Lombardo (2007) terms "*patriarchy*". The idea is that each individual, regardless of gender, should have access to rights and opportunities and should be treated according to the same principles, norms, and standards, thereby aspiring for gender

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neutrality (Squires 1999, Verloo 2005). Contrary to the previous in the equality as difference view, 'male as norm' is problematized. The solution to inequality is then to seek recognition of non-hegemonic gendered identities and inclusion of differences. The notion of positive actions that require considering gender in employment, promotions, and participation in decision making originates from this approach. In the previous views, "*exclusion of women*" or "*existence of a male as a norm*", were problematized and, in the *"equality as diversity"* view, the gendered world is problematized (Verloo & Lombardo 2007).

The solution is to adopt diversity politics, a process that implies the continuous questioning of established categories and meanings for the purpose of displacing them. The strategy for change should also involve empowerment as an expression of the on-going feminist debates over the meaning of gender equality (Verloo, & Lombardo 2007). The diversity view continues as intersectionality debate, which is perhaps the most challenging current feminist debate about gender equality.

The intersectionality debate pertains to how gender equality is framed in the context of the multiple differences and inequalities that exist because of race, class, age, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, ability, and other complex issues that maintain inequalities (Acker 2006, Lorde 1988, Nussbaum 2000b). Some feminists are concerned over losing gender and gender equality in the intersectionality debate (Woodward 2004 Squires 2005). According to Verloo and Lombardo (2007), however, the current political and theoretical debate acknowledges the relevance of intersectionality to gender equality policymaking (Verloo 2006). Verloo and Lombardo (2007: 26) conclude that, while clearly relevant, it seems to be still at an embryonic stage when it comes to policymaking. Practices, Tools, such as gender-disaggregated statistics, are used, and equality indicators for policy formulation, delivery, monitoring, and evaluation are constructed.

2.2.1 Bodily Integrity: As an Indicator of Equality

Martha Nussbaum's conception of the capabilities approach is philosophical (2000a, 2000b, 2005). Some aspects of the capability approach can be traced back to, among others, Aristotle, Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill and Karl Marx (Nussbaum 1988; 2003b; Sen 1993; 1999), but the approach in its present form has been pioneered by the economist and philosopher Amartya Sen (Sen 1980; 1984; 1985b; 1985a; 1987; 1992; 1993; 1995; Drèze and Sen 2002), and more recently also been significantly developed by the philosopher Martha Nussbaum

(Nussbaum 1988; 1992; 1995; 2000; 2002a; 2003a). Sen argued that in social evaluations and policy design, the focus should be on what people are able to do and be, on the quality of their life, and on removing obstacles in their lives so that they have more freedom to live the kind of life which, upon reflection, they find valuable:

> *"The capability approach to a person's advantage is concerned with evaluating it in terms of his or her actual ability to achieve various valuable functioning's as a part of living. The corresponding approach to social advantage for aggregative appraisal as well as for the choice of institutions and policy takes the set of individual capabilities as constituting an indispensable and central part of the relevant informational base of such evaluation"* (Sen 1993: 30).

The capability approach has been advanced in somewhat different directions by Martha Nussbaum, who has used the capability approach as the foundation for a partial theory of justice. Nussbaum's approach of central human capabilities is a firmly articulated defense of universalism grounded in the Marxian/Aristotelian idea of 'truly human functioning'. Her version of capabilities approach is based on the idea of basic minimum which requires a *''threshold level of each capability, beneath which it is held that truly human functioning is not available to the citizens''*. Thus, the government must be concerned with assuring the threshold limit at which a person's capabilities becomes worthy of a human being. It is closely related to human rights, providing the philosophical underpinning for basic constitutional principles and covering both 'first- generation rights' that are political and civil liberties and 'second-generation rights' that are economic and social rights. The capabilities approach is a normative approach to human welfare that concentrates on the actual capability of persons to achieve lives they value rather than solely having a right or freedom to do so. It was conceived in the 1980's as an alternative approach to welfare economics. In her own words, Nussbaum argues that*"is the capabilities approach makes it clear that securing a right to someone requires making the person really capable of choosing that function"*(2005: 175).

The 10 central human functional capabilities in Nussbaum's list are

- Life – Able to live to the end of a normal length human life, and to not have one's life reduced to not worth living.
- Bodily Health – Able to have a good life which includes (but is not limited to) reproductive health, nourishment and shelter.
- Bodily Integrity – Able to change locations freely, in addition to, having sovereignty over one's body which includes being secure against assault.

- Senses, Imagination and Thought – Able to use one's senses to imagine, think and reason in a 'truly human way'–informed by an adequate education. Furthermore, the ability to produce self-expressive works and engage in religious rituals without fear of political ramifications. The ability to have pleasurable experiences and avoid unnecessary pain. Finally, the ability to seek the meaning of life.

- Emotions – Able to have attachments to things outside of ourselves; this includes being able to love others, grieve at the loss of loved ones and be angry when it is justified.

- Practical Reason – Able to form a conception of the good and critically reflect on it.

- Affiliation. (A). Able to live with and show concern for others, empathize with (and show compassion for) others and the capability of justice and friendship. Institutions help develop and protect forms of affiliation.

B. Able to have self-respect and not be humiliated by others that is, being treated with dignity and equal worth. This entails (at the very least) protections of being discriminated on the basis of race, sex, sexuality, religion, caste, ethnicity and nationality. In work, this means entering relationships of mutual recognition.

- Other Species. Able to have concern for and live with other animals, plants and the environment at large.

- Play – Able to laugh, play and enjoy recreational activities.

- Control over One's Environment

A. Political – Able to effectively participate in the political life which includes having the right to free speech and association.

B. Material – Able to own property, not just formally, but materially (that is, as a real opportunity). Furthermore, having the ability to seek employment on an equal basis as others, and the freedom from unwarranted search and seizure. (Nussbaum 2000b).

The items are, to some extent, differentially constructed by different societies (Nussbaum 2000a). Nussbaum has constructed an approach that is based on a cross-cultural normative account of central human capabilities that remains open-ended and can be contested and remade. The relationship between rights and capabilities would be to view rights as 'combined capabilities', which may be defined as internal capabilities combined with suitable external conditions for the exercise of function (2000b). Realizing one of the items on the list of combined capabilities entails not only promoting the appropriate development of people's internal powers, but also preparing the material and institutional environment so that

it is favorable to the exercise of practical reason and other major functions (Nussbaum 2000b, 2000a).

Nussbaum is convinced of people's capability to produce an account of these elements that she considers to be necessary to genuine human functioning. She is also convinced that human capabilities commands a broad cross-cultural 'over- lapping consensus', and that the list can be endorsed for political purposes by people who otherwise have very different views of what a complete, good life for human beings is. The list is supposed to accord emphasis to quality of life assessment and political planning. It enables the selection of capabilities that are central, whatever else the person pursues. The list is therefore appropriate for supporting political purposes in a pluralistic society. Part of the idea of the list is that its components can be more concretely specified in accordance with local beliefs and circumstances. The core idea appears to be that of the human being as a dignified free being who shapes his/her own life in cooperation and reciprocity with others, rather than passively being shaped or pushed around by the world. Equality defines this relation accurately.

Nussbaum (2000a) is interested in the boundary level at which a person's capability is *"truly human", i.e. "worthy"* of a human being. The idea therefore reflects a notion of human worth or dignity. The approach makes each person a bearer of value, as well as an end in a society in which individuals are treated as worthy of regard, and in which each is in a position to live humanly (Nussbaum 2000a: 231). Furthermore, Nussbaum argues that a focus on capabilities as social goals is closely related to a focus on human equality, in the sense that discrimination on the basis of race, religion, sex, national origin, caste, or ethnicity is taken to be itself a failure of associational capability, a type of indignity or humiliation' (Nussbaum 2000: 86). Emphasizing that capability, not functioning, is the appropriate political goal is also important (Nussbaum 2000a, 2000b).

2.2.2. Sexism as a Form of Inequality and Discrimination

According to Lorde*,"Sexism, the belief in the inherent superiority of one sex over the other and thereby the right to dominance"* (Audre Lorde, 1988:352)

Overt, covert, and subtle types of sexism have various outcomes that devalue women, in particular, but also other human beings that do not fit within the ideological confines of supremacy (Swim & Cohen). According to various feminist researchers, sexism is a hegemonic ideology and, therefore, prevails in all levels of society, culture, organizations (including universities), and individual relations. Sexism may be intertwined with racism,

classism, and xenophobia, as well as with other differences in, for example, race/ethnicity/nationality, socio-economic class, and age. Thus, researchers have also considered the concept of multiple oppression discussed also as intersectionality, to better explain the complexity of sexism. Feminism holds that sexism should be the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1994) defines violence against women as *"any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life"*.

Sexism refers to identifiable attitudes, policies, and practices that affect individuals' lives. Sexism operates on that basic level that structures what we come to think of as reality. In this manner, sexism limits our possibilities and person- hood by internalizing beliefs that distort our perspectives (Rothenberg 1988). In addition to individual-level prejudices, organizational and structural levels also characterize discrimination and, therefore, words such as sexism and oppression capture the comprehensive, systemic nature of the phenomena, i.e. the systems of beliefs, policies, practices, and attitudes that interrelate with incredible intricacy and subtlety (Rothenberg 1988,). Sexism can be conscious or unconscious, intentional or unintentional; thus, people can passionately believe that they are not sexist but only misunderstood. Gender and sexuality, in addition of power and violence, are central concepts in studies on Sexist bias. Judith Butler (1990) has been analyzing gender and elaborating the link between gender and sexuality by looking into how gender is produced or acted upon. *"But what is the link between gender and sexuality that I sought to underscore? Certainly, I do not mean to claim that forms of sexual practice produce certain genders, but only that under conditions of normative heterosexuality, policing gender is sometimes used as a way of securing heterosexuality."* Catharine MacKinnon offers a formulation of this problem as she writes: *"Stopped as an attribute of a person, sex inequality takes the form of gender; moving as a relation between people, it takes the form of sexuality. Gender emerges as the congealed form of the sexualization of inequality between men and women''*. The author argues that forms of sexual practice do not produce certain genders, but that under conditions of normative heterosexuality, policing gender is sometimes used as a way of securing heterosexuality. Butler, points out that sexual hierarchy produces and consolidates gender.

"In this view, sexual hierarchy produces and consolidates gender. It is not heterosexual normativity that produces and consolidates gender, but the gender

hierarchy that is said to underwrite heterosexual relations. If gender hierarchy produces and consolidates gender, and if gender hierarchy presupposes an operative notion of gender, then gender is what causes gender, and the formulation culminates in tautology." (Judith butler, 1990)

As seen on the citation above, sexual hierarchy and orientation is what causes gender. As an individual attribute, sex inequality takes the form of gender on any way by which gender is performed. Sexual bias may be seen as the paradigmatic allegory for the production of gender. The act of bias may be one in which a person is "made" into a certain gender and therefore a provisional distinction between gender and sexual discrimination is important. This view is in relation to the sexist claim that a woman exhibits her womanness in the act of heterosexual coitus, in which her subordination becomes her pleasure an essence emanates and is confirmed in the sexualized subordination of women. Therefore, the sexual bias resembles heterosexist relations or reproduces it and could be reasonably seen as sexist bias.

From the perspective of Epstein's (1997), conceptualization, bias can be examined as misogynist behavior produced and reproduced by a culture of hegemonic masculinity. The phenomenon in its various forms is understood as a manifestation of gender discrimination (Thomas & Kitzinger 1997): that is, by obtaining power from cultural representations of gender to construct a sex-based hierarchy. However, gender or sex discrimination does not fully define the core of sexism. I therefore observe that the umbrella concept of 'sexist bias' is appropriate in referring to all the aforementioned bias incidences, and that gender and other identity signifiers intersect. When talking generally about the phenomenon behind Sexist bias incidences and the ideology, I use the term *"sexist discrimination"*. Thus, sexist discrimination is parallel with other forms of discrimination. These concepts are highlighted in the current research to identify a slight difference in emphasis from previous studies, and at the same time, to ensure the continuation of research tradition. The prevalence of the discrimination framed as Sexist bias presents challenges to the further consideration of equal rights and human capabilities in achieving wider gender equality. In its various forms, Sexist bias constitutes one of the inequality areas within academia.

2.2.3. Inequality and Discrimination From a power perspective

Power is a fundamental concept in a discussion of discrimination and social inequality. Neutral rules, policies, and practices will continue to perpetuate discriminatory patterns in the structure of current society unless they are carefully examined and then modified or eliminated.

Discriminatory actions by individuals and organization are not only pervasive in every sector of society, but also cumulative with effects (Rothenberg 1988). Thus, the process of discrimination may extend across generations, organization, and social structures in self-reinforcing cycles, passing the disadvantages incurred by one generation in one area to future generations in many related areas. (Olsen, 2011) view of power is grounded on a comparative study on equality in Nordic and Anglo-Saxon democratic societies, as well as on an influence on decision making. Social inequality is created, reproduced, institutionalized, legitimated, and perpetuated by the people who hold the most resources in society. (Lukes's 2005) perspective of power focuses on control over political agendas. Lukes maintains that power is one of those concepts which is unavoidably value-dependent, that is, *"both its definition and any given use of it, once defined, are inextricably tied to a given set of (probably unacknowledged) value-assumptions which predetermine the range of its empirical application"* (Lukes, 2005: 30).

Together, these theoretical views provide a sufficient basis for looking more closely into sexist discrimination as an inequality problem within an organization suffused by power, policies, and politics. (Olsen 2011) presents power as a capacity that is asymmetrically distributed across society. Power is typically attained through command over other resources. Olsen identifies three levels of power: (1) situational, (2) institutional, and (3) systemic/societal. Three central forms of power economic, ideological, and political are each based on different, but often closely related, types of resources. The balance of power in society largely reflects the access of groups to these resources for example, gender balance, representation of ethnic, sexual, linguistic minorities, and their ability to organize, within the context of the capitalist system (Olsen 2011). According to (Olsen 2011), in capitalist societies, the most important resources are (1) material or economic resources (i.e., wealth, capital, property, jobs) (2) normative or ideological resources (i.e., the media, education), and (3) explicitly political resources (i.e., influence over state policy).

Power has a fluid meaning in that, through organization and access to alternative power resources, other actors can increase their strength, altering the balance of power in society. In this case, the issue is about situational power. Power is inscribed in the dominant institutions in society. Oppressed people's ability to organize and the kinds of actions they may take are determined largely by institutional rules. The power used in these measures is conceptualized as institutional power. According to Olsen (ibid.), all central social institutions for example, the state, the educational system, including universities, and the media are permeated by

institutional biases that are reflected in the dominant culture, popular norms, attitudes, values, practices, and traditions. Unlike situational power exercised by actors, however, power expressed through institutional biases often goes virtually undetected because such biases are widely accepted as commonsensical. The important point is that the 'generally accepted' or dominant standards and values of society that are socially constructed, as well as continually renewed and defended, are not often acknowledged; they are simply taken for granted and left unquestioned, consequently serving to secure the position of the powerful (Olsen 2011). This view of Olsen's relates closely what Lukes refers as third dimension of power that operates on an ideological sphere (2005). For systemic power, power resource theorists highlight two broad, central types of resources that can enable the oppressed groups to shift the power balance in society. The first types of resources that they emphasize are organizational /associational ones to speak with 'one voice'; the other comprises political resources that represent the interests of oppressed and other organized groups in the state (Olsen 2011).

As seen above, Olsen analyses power from a structural point of view. Lukes approaches power through organizational processes that are linked to decision making. The focus in Luke's conceptual analysis of power (2005) is on control over political agendas, although not necessarily exclusively through decisions. Conflicts that appear in control over political agendas may be observable both overtly and covertly or latently. Lukes states that the view on power that he presents is 'operational', that is, empirically useful in that hypotheses can be framed in terms that are in principle verifiable and falsifiable (Lukes 2005). Lukes offers a generic definition of power: *"I have defined the concept of power by saying that "A" exercises power over "B" when "A" affects "B" in a manner contrary to "B's" interests"*. He draws three conceptual maps, which aim to reveal the distinguishing features of three views of power. The first view of power involves a focus on behavior in decision making regarding issues over which there is an observable conflict of interests revealed by political participation.

> *"Thus I conclude that this first, one-dimensional, view of power involves a focus on behavior in the making of decisions on issues over which there is an observable conflict of (subjective) interests, seen as expressing policy preferences, revealed by political participation"*(Luke, 2005).

In the framework of the one-dimensional view, power is understood as influence or control given the capacity of one actor to affect another; such influence changes the probable pattern of specified future events (Lukes 2005). The first view of power focuses on studying

decision making through observable behavior, either first hand or by reconstructing behavior from documents, informants, newspapers, and other appropriate sources. Thus, power can be analyzed only after careful examination of a series of concrete decisions which are assumed to involve direct (i.e., actual and observable) conflict of selected key issues (Lukes 2005: 19). In the one-dimensional view of power, interests are assumed to be understood as policy preferences, so that a conflict of interests is equivalent to a conflict of preferences. This view opposes any suggestion that interests may be unarticulated or unobservable and, above all, that people may actually be mistaken about, or may be unaware of, their own interests.

The two-dimensional view of power allows for consideration of the ways in which decisions are prevented from being considered in potential issues over which a conflict of interests is observable; this conflict is embodied in expressed policy preferences and sub-political grievances (Lukes 2005). The two-dimensional view involves examining both decision making and non-decision making. Luke's (2005: 22) presents Bachrach and Baratz's definition according to which *"a decision is a choice among alternative modes of action"* and *"a non-decision is a decision that results in suppression of a latent to manifest challenge to the values or interests of the decision maker''*(Bachrach & Baratz, 1962:39). This citation however shows the difference between a decision and a non-decision.

> " *Thus to the extent that a person or group -- consciously or unconsciously -- creates or reinforces barriers to the public airing of policy conflicts, that person or group has power.*"(Bachrach & Baratz, 1970:8)

The second dimension of power reveals that identifying potential issues, which non-decision making prevents from being actualized, is crucial. Why do some issues remain covert and unarticulated in politics? Methodologically, the second view of power is individualistic because the issue revolves around the probability of individuals realizing their will despite the resistance of others. The power to control political agendas and exclude potential issues, on the other hand, cannot be adequately analyzed unless it is seen as a function of collective forces and social arrangements. A common denominator between the first and second power dimensions is a focus on observable conflict: overt or covert; additionally, interests are consciously articulated and observable. However, Lukes (2005) notes that control takes many fewer total and more mundane forms through the control of information, through the mass media, and through the process of socialization. Moreover, the most effective and insidious use of power is to prevent a conflict from arising in the first place. The second view of power is therefore insufficient; a third dimension that considers the issue more carefully is needed.

Third dimensional view of power; A third view of power aims at a deeper and more satisfactory analysis of power. It involves a thoroughgoing critique of the behavioral focus of the first and second views as too individualistic and allows for consideration of the ways in which potential issues – such as sexist discrimination – are kept out of politics, whether through the operation of social forces and institutional practices or through individual decisions. The three-dimensional theory of power turns to a different problem - the fact that people sometimes act willingly in ways that appear contrary to their most basic interests. So the third dimension is the set of ways in which the powerful transform the powerless in such a way that the latter behave as the former wish without coercion or forcible constrain.

> *"The trouble seems to be that both Bachrach and Baratz and the pluralists suppose that because power, as they conceptualize it, only shows up in cases of actual conflict, it follows that actual conflict is necessary to power. But this is to ignore the crucial point that the most effective and insidious use of power is to prevent such conflict from arising in the first place"* (Luke 2005, p27).

And again:

> *"What one may have here is a latent conflict, which consists in a contradiction between the interests of those exercising power and the real interests of those they exclude. These latter may not express or even be conscious of their interests, but ... the identification of those interests ultimately always rests on empirically supportable and refutable hypotheses*"(Luke, 2005 p28-29)

The three- dimensional view addresses the socially structured and culturally patterned behavior of groups and practices of institutions, which may be manifested by individual inaction that sustains the bias of the system in ways that are neither consciously chosen nor the intended result of specific individual choices. This manifestation is especially important to consider in relation to such socio-cultural discriminative patterns of behavior as sexism. Power analysis should therefore pay attention to an organization and its procedures because,

- While a policy or action of a collective may manifest, it is not attributable to specific individual decisions or behavior because of
- The phenomenon of systemic or organizational effects, from which the mobilization of bias results.

The perceptions, cognitions, and preferences of people may be shaped in a way that promotes acceptance of their roles in the existing order, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, because they regard it as natural and unchangeable, or because they value it as beneficial. In these cases, the issue is false or manipulated consensus. The use

of power can occur in the absence of actual observable conflict, which may have been successfully averted although an implicit reference to potential conflict remains. Identifying these interests rests on empirically supportable and refutable hypotheses presented in this study in relation to sexist bias.

2.3 Epistemological Standpoint

Feminist epistemology and the philosophy of science de- and re-constructs the ways in which the concepts used in science and practices of knowledge attribution, acquisition of knowledge, as well as its justification influence inequality among disadvantaged, subordinated, or underrepresented groups (Anderson 2009).

Knowledge reflects the particular perspectives of the knowing subject. Moreover, knowledge and power are internally linked. As (Harding 2008: 117) puts it, *"they co-constitute and co-maintain each other"*. Taking this statement into a societal context, it means that the way societies are structured has epistemological consequences. Feminist researchers are interested in how gender situates/locates these knowing subjects. Particular relations of knowers to what is known and in relation to other knowers are conceived in feminist epistemology as situated. What is known, and the way that it is known, thereby reflects the situation or According to (Anderson 1995), knowledge practices may maintain subordinated groups in a disadvantageous position by 1) excluding them from inquiry, 2) denying them epistemic authority, 3) denigrating cognitive styles and modes of knowledge that differ from the mainstream ones labeled for instance as 'feminine', 4) producing theories that represent subordinated groups as inferior, deviant, or significant only in the ways they serve dominant group's interests, 5) producing theories of social phenomena that render subordinated group's activities and interests, or gendered power relations, invisible, and 6) producing knowledge (science and technology) that is not useful for people in subordinate positions or oppressed groups, or that reinforces gender or other social hierarchies.

According to Harding (2004,), scientific inquiry is unavoidably linked to standpoints, but some standpoints are epistemologically better than others. For Harding, standpoint means engagement to a certain social positioning, a consciously acquired standpoint. A standpoint is not an easily accessible 'perspective'. It is rather, as Nancy Hartsock has pointed out, "an *achievement that requires both science and politics (in Harding, 2004): science in order to see beneath the hegemonic ideologies within which everyone must live; and politics because*

to engage in such science requires material resources and access to dominant institutions to observe how they function."

The traditional assumption in epistemology, according to which conditions for knowing are the same regardless of who the knower is, are questioned, with the argument that a person's position partially determines what kind of awareness he or she develops and that, therefore, his or her experiences within the social reality also differ. This assumption should also be taken into consideration in the analysis of knowledge (Harding 2004). Therefore, Harding argues that the whole concept of objectivity should be understood differently: objectivity is not freedom from standpoints or locating oneself above them but rather presenting the world from a specific socially located point and explicating it in a scientific inquiry. Haraway has a slightly different view on the matter, but she argues that the objectivity of research requires that the researcher locates her/himself and attempts to make the limitations and partiality of one's research transparent (Haraway 1991). For her, the concept of partiality is central to the redefined objectivity of the research. According to Haraway, we need 'the ability partially to translate knowledge among very different and power-differentiated communities' (Haraway 1991: 187). She continues that situated and embodied knowledge are against various forms of unlocatability and, therefore, irresponsible knowledge claims. Haraway (1991) writes as follows:

> *"We need the power of modern critical theories of how meanings and bodies get made, not in order to deny meaning and bodies, but in order to live in meanings and bodies that have a change for a future"* (Haraway 199, p.187)

Furthermore, the standpoint of the research may be located in methodological choices, i.e., in how the researched phenomenon will be conceptualized, as well as which kind of data are considered relevant for it and which are considered problematic (Rolin 2005b).

Standpoint epistemology consists of an idea that it is possible to make visible, heard, and seen the disparities that societal power structures reproduce, which could be otherwise covered by ideologies. Therefore, research that is politically engaged can also be understood as such an endeavor. Feminist standpoint theory's argument (Harding 1987, 1991, 2004, 2008) concerning privileged knowledge applies particularly to the knowledge that addresses societal power structures. An argument for privileged knowledge is closely attached to Harding's attempt to redefine the concept of objectivity. Harding states that the thought of an objective research free from a standpoint or above all standpoints is false. According to Harding (2008), a goal in research should be 'strong objectivity', which requires taking into a serious consideration the standpoint of the marginalized, i.e., perspectives and voices of those

who are not in a dominating position. In addition to gender, for example, sexual orientation and social class influence what kinds of experiences people have from their societal reality. Demand to do justice to the subjects of study and other inquirers – to respect them as equals, to respond to their arguments, evidence, and criticism to secure the objectivity of science as a social practice reveal that justice, not value-neutrality, offers the proper model of objectivity in science, argues Anderson (2007).

In conclusion, this second chapter shows the theory of gender in organizations and how Acker classifies them in the suprintendecy. This chapter shows us how sexuality and gender are intertwined, helps us to understand gender equality, sexism as a form of inequality and discrimination, and inequality and discrimination from a power perspective. The second chapter ends and leads us the third chapter of our work which shows us the manifestations, causes and consequences of sexist bias in the Buea municipality.

SECOND PART:

SEXIST BIAS IN BUEA: ANIFESTATIONS, CAUSES, RESPONSE MECHANISMS, SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES.

This second part provides empirical data on the manifestations, causes, successes, challenges, response mechanism and strategies to overcome sexist bias in buea. The data was obtained quantitatively and qualitatively from the employed, unemployed, the ministry of women's empowerment and family center, and directors of non-governmental organizations in Buea, and these non-governmental organizations provided information's necessary to answer the research questions. The second part is divided into two chapters which chapter three and four of our work.

Chapter three looks at the manifestation, causes and consequences of sexist bias in Buea. It presents and interprets the the qualitative and quantitative findings of our work. It shows us the causes, manifestation and consequences of sexist bias in Buea from the findings and information gotten from our questionnaires and interviews.

Chapter four, deals with response mechanism, successes, and challenges. It presents us with the responses, successes and challenges faced by organizations who are actively involved in the fight against sexist bias in Buea municipality.

CHAPTER 3:

MANIFESTATIONS, CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF SEXIST BIAS IN BUEA

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and interprets the quantitative and qualitative findings of our work. The quantitative data were obtained from employees of MINPROFF-SWR, Bilingual Grammar School Molyko, Technical High School Molyko, Buea Regional Hospital, Seventh-day Adventists Buea, Christians and unemployed individuals in Buea. The qualitative data were obtained from the Representative of the South West Regional Delegate of MINPROFF, the Director of the Mike Yanou Foundation, the Assistant Director of NDES Foundation, the Programme Coordinator of NADEV, the Programme Coordinator of Reachers Foundation, the Assistant Head of Department at Reach Out Cameroon, Project Coordinator of Demtou Foundation and the Foundation Manager of the Hadassah Foundation.

3.2 Demographic Analysis

A total of 70 individuals in Buea took part in this research. The results reveal that 12.9% (9) of the respondents were males, while 87.1% (61) were females. Females were more receptive and willing to fill out the research instrument than males. In terms of age, the findings indicate that 4.3% (3) were less than 20 years, 35.7% (25) were between 21 and 30 years, 32.9% (23) were between 31 and 40 years, and 25.7% (18) were 40 years and above. Some respondents (1.4%) did not disclose their age range.

Equally, 44.3% (31) of the research participants are single, 44.3% (31) are married, 7.1% (5) are widows, and 2.9% (2) are divorced. Also, 1.4% (1) of the respondents did not disclose their marital status. Furthermore, 61.4% (43) of the respondents are employed, 37.1% (26) are unemployed and 1.4% (1) did not indicate their employment status. This result shows that the majority of the respondents are employees. They provide first-hand experience with the prevalence of sexist bias in their workplace. The unemployed also provide first-hand data based on observation. All the research participants were Christians.

Table 4: Demographic characteristics of sample

Demographic variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	09	12.9
Female	61	87.1
Total	70	100
Age		
Less than 20 years	3	4.3
21 to 30 years	25	35.7
31 to 40 years	23	32.9
41 years and above	18	25.7
No response	1	1.4
Total	70	100
Marital status		
Singles	31	44.3
Married	31	44.3
Divorced	2	2.9
Widow/widower	5	7.1
No response	1	1.4
Total	70	100
Employment status		
Employed	43	61.4
Unemployed	26	37.1
No response	1	1.4
Religion		
Christians	70	100

Source: Tanyi Christabel Eyong Fieldwork, 2024

3.3 Quantitative findings on the manifestation of sexist bias in Buea

Table 5: Existence of Sexist bias in Buea

Measurement scale	Frequency		Total
	Male	**Female**	
Strongly agree	0% (0)	14.3%(10)	14.3%(10)
Agree	4.3% (3)	50% (35)	54.3% (38)
Neutral	5.7% (4)	20% (14)	25.7% (24)
Disagree	2.9% (2)	2.9% (2)	5.7% (4)
Strongly disagree	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Total	12.9% (9)	87.1% (61)	100% (70)

Source: Tanyi Christabel Eyong Field work, 2024

The quantitative findings reveal that sexist bias is prevalent in Buea. Based on the findings, 68.6% (14.3% strongly agree and 54.3% agree) of the respondents admitted the existence of sexist bias in Buea, as opposed to 5.7% (5.7% disagree and 0% strongly disagree) of the

research participants who refuted the statements, while 25.7% of the respondents were neutral. This finding indicates that sexist bias exists in the Buea municipality.

Table 6: The Gender mostly suffering from sexist bias

Measurement scale	Frequency	Total
Female	61	87.1
Male	3	4.3
No response	6	8.6
Total	70	100

Source: Tanyi Christabel Eyong Field work, 2024

The findings reveal that both male and female genders are victims of sexist bias in Buea municipality. However, the majority of the respondents indicate that females are more often victims of sexist bias than males. Statistically, 87.1% (61) of the respondents admitted that females are mostly victims of sexist bias in Buea, as opposed to 4.3% (3) of the respondents who argue that males are mostly victims of sexist bias. The no-response category consists of 8.6% (6) of the respondents. Based on this finding, females are mostly victims of sexist bias in the municipality. This includes females in all sectors and occupation.

Hypothesis one: There is a significant presence of sexist bias in Buea with observable manifestations in education, employment, and social interactions

Table 7: One Sample T-test

One-Sample Statistics		One-Sample Test (CI: 95%)	
N	70	Df	69
Mean	3.8	T	13.9
Std. Deviation	0.8	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
		Test Value	2.5
		Mean Difference	1.3

Source: Tanyi Christabel Eyong Fieldwork, 2024

A One-Sample T-test was conducted to determine whether there is a significant presence of sexist bias in Buea community with observable manifestations in education, employment, and social interactions. The result of the test, t (df = 69) =13.9, $p<0.05$ (P=0.001), revealed that here is a significant presence of sexist bias in the Buea community. The result of the test was statistically significant at a 0.05 level with a 95% confidence interval. Also, the mean of the sample (3.8) was significantly higher than the probable test mean of 2.5 (average agreement response).

Table 8: Manifestations of Sexist Bias in Buea

Manifestations of sexist bias	Strongly agree	Agree (75%)	Neutral (50%)	Disagree (25%)	Strongly disagree	Total
Assuming that all women are emotional while all men are assertive and rational.	22.9% (16)	7.1% (33)	17.1% (12)	8.6% (6)	4.3% (3)	100% (70)
Expecting women to primarily take care of household chores	34.3% (24)	32.9% (23)	18.6% (13)	4.3% (3)	10% (7)	100% (70)
Assuming that men should be the primary breadwinners of families	30% (21)	28.6% (20)	20% (!4)	17.1% (12)	4.3% (3)	100% (70)
Paying men and women differently for the same job, even if they have the same qualifications and experience	15.7% (11)	18.6% (13)	8.6% (6)	22.9% (16)	34.3% (24)	100% (70)
The existence of fewer women in top executive positions despite qualifications	30% (21)	42.9% (30)	10% (7)	7.1% (5)	10% (7)	100% (70)
Criticising women for assertiveness while praising men for the same behaviour	25.7% (18)	30% (21)	15.7% (11)	15.7% (11)	12.9% (9)	100% (70)
Judging mothers more harshly than fathers for parenting choices	35.7% (25)	31.4% (22)	15.7% (11)	7.1% (5)	10% (7)	100% (70)
The use of gendered language that perpetuates stereotypes	22.9% (16)	27.1% (19)	32.9% (23)	8.6% (6)	8.6% (6)	100% (70)
The encouragement of boys towards STEM subjects; girls towards humanities	18.6% (13)	45.7% (32)	24.3% (17)	2.9% (2)	8.6% (6)	100% (70)
Judging individuals based on their physical appearance	34.3% (24)	21.4% (15)	27.1% (19)	7.1% (5)	10% (7)	100% (70)
Prevalence of comments like "You must be good at cooking because you're a girl,"	22.9% (16)	28.6% (20)	22.9% (16)	10% (7)	15.7% (11)	100% (70)
Considering all girls to be physically weak and men stronger	30% (21)	24.3% (17)	15.7% (11)	11.4% (8)	18.6% (13)	100% (70)

Source:Tanyi Christabel Eyong Fieldwork, 2024

The findings reveal that sexist bias manifests in various forms in Buea. For instance, 30% (22.9% strongly agree and 7.1% agree) of the research participants affirmed that women are considered to be emotional while men are seen as assertive and rational in Buea. This view was contrasted by 12.9% (8.6% disagree and 4.3% strongly disagree) of the respondents meanwhile 17.1% of the respondents were neutral. This result shows that some persons in Buea consider women to be emotional and men assertive and rational. Also, 67.2% (34.3% strongly agree and 32.9% agree) of the respondents affirmed that women are expected to primarily take care of household chores in Buea as opposed to 14.3% (4.3% disagree and 10% strongly disagree) of the respondents who refuted the statement meanwhile 18.6% of the respondents were neutral. This finding indicates that some Buea inhabitants believe that women are responsible for household chores.

Equally, 58.6% (30% strongly agree and 28.6% agree) of the respondents state that men should be the primary breadwinners of families as opposed to 21.4% (17.1% disagree and 4.3% strongly disagree) of the respondents who negated the statement meanwhile 17.1% of the respondents were neutral. This finding shows that the majority of the respondents considered men as the primary breadwinners of families. Furthermore, 34.3% (15.7% strongly agree and 18.6% agree) of the respondents asserted that it is evident that men and women are paid differently for the same job in Buea even if they have the same qualifications and experience. This view was negated by 57.2% (22.9% disagree and 34.3% strongly disagree) of the respondents meanwhile 8.6% of the respondents were neutral. This result shows that it is rare to experience wage differences between men and women with the same qualifications and experience in Buea.

Additionally, 72.9% (30% strongly agree and 42.9% agree) of the respondents affirmed that fewer women occupied top executive positions despite their qualification in Buea as opposed to 17.1% (7.1% disagree and 10% strongly disagree) of the respondents who denied the assertion meanwhile 10% of the respondents were neutral. Based on this finding, most respondents believe that women are rarely allowed to occupy top executive positions despite their qualifications. Also, 55.7% (25.7% strongly agree and 30% agree) of the respondents admitted that women are criticized for being assertive while men are praised for the same behavior in Buea as opposed to 28.6% (15.7% disagree and 12.9% strongly disagree) who rebutted the statement meanwhile 15.7% of the respondents were

neutral. This shows that some Buea inhabitants criticize women for being assertive and praise men for the same behavior.

Equally, 67.1% (35.7% strongly agree and 31.4% agree) of the respondents disclosed that women are judged more harshly than men for parenting choices as opposed to 17.1% (7.1% disagree and 10% strongly disagree) of the respondents who refuted the statement meanwhile 15.7% of the respondents were neutral. Similarly, 50% (22.9% strongly agree and 27.1% agree) of the respondents admitted the prevalence of the use of gendered language that perpetuates stereotypes as opposed to 17.2% (8.6% disagree and 8.6% strongly disagree) of the respondents who denied the statement meanwhile 32.9% of the respondents were neutral. This shows that some Buea inhabitants use gendered language that perpetuates stereotypes in their interactions.

Furthermore, 64.3% (18.6% strongly agree and 45.7% agree) of the respondents admitted that boys are encouraged towards STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and girls are encouraged towards humanities. This view was refuted by 11.5% (2.9% disagree and 8.6% strongly disagree) of the respondents meanwhile 24.3% were neutral. In the same vein, 55.7% (34.3% strongly agree and 21.4% agree) of the respondents asserted that individuals are judged based on their physical appearance as opposed to 17.1% (7.1% disagree and 10% strongly disagree) of the respondents who refuted the statement meanwhile 27.1% were neutral.

Additionally, 51.5% (22.9% strongly agree and 28.6% agree) of the respondents admitted the prevalence of comments *like "You must be good at cooking because you're a girl" or "You throw like a girl"* in Buea as opposed to 25.7% (10% disagree and 15.7% strongly disagree) of the respondents who refuted the statement meanwhile 22.9% of the respondents were neutral. These results indicate the existence of sexist bias comments in Buea. Also, 54.3% (30% strongly agree and 24.3% agree) of the respondents admitted that all girls are considered to be physically weak and men stronger in Buea as opposed to 30% (11.4% disagree and 18.6% strongly disagree) of the respondents who refuted the statement meanwhile 15.7% of the respondents were neutral. This finding indicates that some Buea inhabitants consider all girls to be physically weak and men stronger.

3.4 Qualitative findings on the manifestation of sexist bias in Buea

3.4.1 School Attendance

The findings reveal that sexist bias manifests in the education sector. The Executive Director of the Mike Yanou Foundation asserts that certain cultures favour the education of boys over girls. The interviewee cited the Muslim culture, which she revealed often supports the education of boys and limits girls to marital and family responsibilities. The expectation that girls will be married off at a young age reduces the perceived value of investing in their education, as their primary role is seen as fulfilling familial duties rather than pursuing academic or professional aspirations.

> *"Sexist bias manifests in Muslim culture. In this culture, parents often send boys to school, while females at the age of thirteen are already sent off for marriage."* (Female, 53 years, C.E.O Mike Yanou Foundation, 12/03/2024, GRA, Buea town)

The findings note that Muslim families often prioritise investing in the education of boys over girls. This preference stems from traditional gender roles and expectations, where males are often viewed as the primary breadwinners and guardians of family honour. As a result, resources and support for education are disproportionately allocated to male family members, perpetuating gender disparities in access to educational opportunities. In line with this finding, the World Bank (2015) provides some relevant information on gender inequality in Cameroon. It notes that in 2012, 86% of girls were enrolled in primary school compared to 97% of boys and in 2013, 37% of girls were enrolled in secondary school compared to 43% of boys.

3.4.2 Culture and Inheritance

The findings reveal that sexist bias is prevalent in some cultures in Buea. The result indicates that cultural biases are deeply ingrained in societal practices, such as inheritance laws favouring male heirs over females. The Representative of the South West Regional Delegate of MINPROFF asserts that some traditional practices in the community often dictate that the next of kin for the family should be a boy rather than a girl. This leads to women being excluded from inheritance opportunities.

> *"There is bias in culture in terms of who inherits in the family. In land cases, you will see that most parents have the habit of making the next of kin for the family be a*

boy rather than a girl."(Female, 45years, Representative of the SWR Delegate of MINPROFF.27/02/2024, Soppo Buea)

"Most of the time, in communities, they prefer male children to get the inheritance of the properties of their parents."(Male, 35years, project coordinator Demtou Humanitarian. 21/03/2024, Borstal street Buea)

"Traditionally, females are often denied inheritance rights because of the belief that they will eventually marry and their husbands will inherit their properties. This discrimination stems from the patriarchal system ingrained in society, where women are viewed as property themselves. Consequently, as property, they are deemed ineligible to inherit properties." (Male, 30years, programme coordinator Reachers Foundation.12/03/2024,bokwai Buea)

The results indicate that sexist biases are prevalent among certain cultures in the Buea municipality. In these cultures, women are exempted from family inheritance. The cultural norms forbid them from inheriting family properties, such as lands or houses.

3.4.3 Public Transportation Sector

The findings reveal that sexist bias manifests in the public transportation sector in Buea. The Representative of the South West Regional Delegate of MINPROFF enunciates that the transportation sector serves as a specific example of employment discrimination. Women drivers are limited to personal vehicles while employment opportunities in sectors such as taxi services or bike transportation are largely inaccessible to them due to sexist biases.

"If you go out to the streets you will see a lot of women who are drivers but they can only drive their cars most of them are not in the transportation sector..." (female, 45years, Representative of SWR Delegate of MINPROFF.27/02/2024, soppo Buea)

The result shows that sexist bias manifests in the public transportation sector. Women are largely absent from the sector despite their presence as drivers of personal vehicles. In line with this finding, observation shows that there are less than three female taxi drivers in Buea municipality. The sector is dominated by the male gender.

3.4.4 Physical Violence

The findings reveal that sexist bias manifests in the form of physical violence in Buea municipality. Some of the interviewees explain that some men exercise their muscular strength and domination on women. This violence stems from socialisation and conditioning.

From a young age, individuals are socialized into gender roles that perpetuate notions of male superiority and female subordination. Boys may be taught that aggression is masculine and that they have a right to control women, while girls may be conditioned to accept subservience and tolerate abuse. This conditioning makes men physically exert violence against women.

> "We have violence based on gender. You see men beating on women" (Male, 35years, project coordinator Demtou Humanitarian.21/03/2024, Borstal street Buea)

> "We encounter physical violence as a result of sexist bias in our place of work" (Male, 33years, foundation manager Hadassah Foundation.19/03/2024, Sandpit Buea)

Violence against women by men often stems from unequal power dynamics reinforced by sexist beliefs and attitudes. In many societies, men hold greater social, economic, and political power than women, which can manifest in abusive behaviour as a means of asserting dominance and control. In 2013, The World Health Organisation reported that about 35% of women worldwide have experienced either physical or sexual intimate partner violence or non-violence in their lifetimes. In addition, a staggering 45% of women 15 years and older in Africa have experienced physical or sexual violence (WHO, 2013). Glick and Hilt (2000) assert that during puberty, boys develop ambivalent feelings towards girls that include both hostility and benevolence. The boys direct benevolence towards girls who correspond to the feminine stereotype and whom they want to interact with, and hostility towards girls who do not comply with their expectations. In contrast, girls demonstrate awareness of status differences. They perceive higher power in boys, thus experiencing less satisfaction from interactions with boys. Consequently, they hold onto rather hostile attitudes towards boys.

3.4.5 Stereotyping and Prejudice in Security Practices

The findings reveal that sexist bias is visible during military raids in Buea municipality. One of the research participants points out that boys are disproportionately targeted by the military in Buea. The interviewee suggests that the mere presence of young boys seems to invite suspicion and scrutiny from the authorities. This gendered targeting implies a biased assumption that boys are more likely to engage in suspicious or illicit activities compared to girls.

> "In the Buea municipality, I have observed a troubling form of sexist bias where boys are unfairly targeted, particularly amidst the crisis we're facing. Military patrols are a constant presence, and it's consistently the boys who are singled out for scrutiny. Simply being a young boy seems to invite suspicion-they are stopped,

questioned, and their phones searched without justification. Sometimes, even if they have identification, they're still detained or forced onto vehicles without explanation. This biased treatment is evident in many instances, and it raises concerns about the fairness of our security measures." (Female, 53years, CEO Mike Yanou Foundation. 12/03/2024 GRA Buea town)

The research participant mentions that boys are sometimes detained or questioned without any apparent reason, regardless of whether they possess identification cards. This suggests a lack of accountability and justification for the actions taken by the military. The arbitrary nature of these encounters further emphasises the unjust treatment faced by young boys in crisis zones. The biased treatment of boys by the military can have broader implications for the community. It may contribute to feelings of fear, resentment, and mistrust towards authority figures. Moreover, such practices can perpetuate cycles of violence and instability by alienating segments of the population and fostering grievances against the state.

3.4.6 Sexist Bias in Widowhood

The findings reveal that there is a pervasive gender bias when it comes to widowhood. One of the research participants explained a stark contrast in how widowhood is perceived and treated based on gender. She notes that when a woman becomes widowed, she often faces suspicion, discrimination, and additional challenges that are rooted in deep-seated gender stereotypes. Women are frequently viewed with suspicion, accused of wrongdoing, and subjected to cultural rituals or legal processes that insinuate their guilt. On the other hand, when a man becomes widowed, such suspicions and hindrances are notably absent.

"We were discussing widowhood and the struggles widows face simply because they are women. When a woman passes away and her husband remains, he doesn't encounter the same traditional obstacles. It's like the woman is immediately suspected, often accused of causing her spouse's death. In many cultures, widows have to go through certain rituals or legal procedures that stem from this suspicion. It's as if they're automatically assumed guilty. But when it's a man who becomes a widower, these suspicions and rituals are absent" (Female, 53years, CEO Mike Yanou Foundation.12/03/2024, GRA Buea town)

This discrepancy reflects a systemic bias against women, where their autonomy, agency, and innocence are questioned merely because of their gender. Such biases perpetuate unequal power dynamics and hinder women's ability to navigate widowhood with dignity and support. Addressing these biases requires challenging entrenched gender norms and advocating for equitable treatment and opportunities for all individuals regardless of their gender.

3.4.7 Gender Discrimination in Occupation Roles

The findings show the manifestation of sexist bias in occupational roles within Buea municipality. It reveals that discrimination occurs in the assignment of positions between male and female genders. This discriminatory practice mostly affects women due to assumptions about women's reproductive roles and rights. This bias leads to women being overlooked for certain positions, despite possessing the necessary qualifications, solely because of societal perceptions regarding their reproductive capabilities.

> *"In the municipality of Buea, I have noticed discrimination in job positions. It seems that certain roles may be withheld from me simply because I'm a woman and might need maternity leave in the future. This bias overlooks my qualifications and abilities, focusing instead on my gender and reproductive potential."* (Female, 29years, assistant head of department Reach Out Cameroon. 21/03/2024, Borstal street Buea)

The finding indicates that women are denied certain job opportunities or promotions due to concerns about their reproductive roles. This discriminatory practice stems from deeply ingrained gender norms that prioritise men's participation in the workforce over women's reproductive rights and responsibilities. By attributing women's capabilities and potential contributions solely to their biology, this bias perpetuates inequality and limits women's professional advancement.

In line with this finding, The International Labour Organisation (2017, p.3) explains "Globally, women are underrepresented in corporations, and the share of women decreases with each step up the corporate hierarchy. Women encounter many barriers to advancement into corporate leadership positions, and these barriers include gender-based discrimination as well as unconscious gender bias". This bias can be overcome by promoting workplace policies that support work-life balance and fostering inclusive environments where individuals are evaluated based on their skills and qualifications rather than their gender or reproductive status.

3.4.8 Gender Imbalance in Resource Allocation

The findings reveal that sexist bias manifests in the allocation of resources between male and female employees. The result reveals the imbalance in resource allocation, particularly in terms of salary and responsibilities. This discrimination is stimulated by cultural norms that prioritise men as primary breadwinners and assign them greater

responsibilities and rewards, while women are often marginalised and discriminated against, despite their contributions.

> *"At times, there are either limited resources or discrimination leading to significant imbalances in salary and responsibilities allocation. This stems from cultural beliefs that men are expected to shoulder more household responsibilities, resulting in them being favoured for higher pay and greater duties. Conversely, women often seen as not primary breadwinners face discrimination in these aspects."* (Female, 29years, assistant head of department Reach Out Cameroon.21/03/2024, Borstal street Buea)

This finding shows that sexist bias manifests in resource allocation within organisations. Men are often favoured for higher salaries and greater responsibilities based on the assumption that they bear more familial obligations. This bias not only perpetuates gender inequality in the workplace but also undermines the contributions and potential of women, leading to discrimination and unequal treatment. Organisations must strive to address these biases by implementing transparent and merit-based systems that value individuals' skills and contributions rather than their gender or societal roles.

3.4.9 Gender Bias in Professional Opportunities

The findings reveal that sexist bias manifests in professional settings. One of the research participants expressed concerns regarding the unequal distribution of opportunities between genders, with some workplaces, companies (Cos), and executive directors favouring male employees over female employees. This bias is rooted in the belief that men are more capable of delivering greater output or results compared to women.

> *"Certain opportunities are often not extended to women because of the perception that men are more capable of delivering superior results. This bias influences hiring decisions in some workplaces, bus services, companies (Cos), and among certain executive directors who believe that they can achieve better outcomes by working predominantly with men rather than women."* (Female, 36years, programs coordinator NADEV NGO.07/03/2024, rue Hibmat Buea)

The finding indicates that women continue to face barriers to advancement and recognition. The notion that men are inherently more suited for certain roles or tasks perpetuates stereotypes and undermines the capabilities of women. This bias not only affects hiring and promotion practices but also permeates everyday interactions and perceptions of gender roles. The preference for male employees reflects a broader societal bias that associates leadership and competence with masculinity while undervaluing the contributions of women.

3.4.10 Gender Participation in STEM Fields

The finding shows a prevalent bias against females in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education. Women are often discouraged or overlooked in STEM fields due to the misconception that they are inherently less capable or proficient than their male counterparts.

> *"In education, particularly in subjects like science, there's a prevailing notion that these fields are primarily for males. Consequently, females interested in pursuing careers in these areas often encounter barriers and are discouraged from participating. This bias stems from the belief that women are less capable or proficient in subjects like math, science, and technology compared to their male counterparts."* (Male, 30years, program coordinator Reachers Foundation.12/03/2024, bokwai Buea)

The manifestation of sexist bias in education perpetuates gender stereotypes and restricts opportunities for females to pursue careers in STEM. This bias can manifest in various forms, such as implicit assumptions about gender roles and abilities, unequal access to educational resources, and limited representation of women in STEM-related fields.

In line with this finding, Batara, Ngo, See, and Erasga (2018) stipulated that another consequence of hostile sexism is the so-called stereotype threat effect. Women perform typically worse in stereotypically masculine tasks (e.g., a math test) as their gender membership is emphasized, even using subtle reminders (Spencer et al. 1999). Batara, Ngo, See, and Erasga (2018) further assert that women may underperform because of their fear of negative treatment if they reveal good performances. Great achievements by women are often judged as a violation of prescriptive gender stereotypes, and can thus lead to punishments, sabotage, and unfavourable evaluations, a phenomenon called backlash (Eagly & Karau 2002; Prentice & Carranza 2002; Rudman 1998; Rudman & Fairchild 2004).

3.4.11 Marginalization of Women in Decision-Making

The findings revealed the systemic exclusion of women from decision-making processes. Women are systematically pushed behind and denied opportunities to participate in decision-making processes within society. One of the research participants identifies the patriarchal system as the root cause of the marginalisation of women in decision-making.

> *"The society operates under a patriarchal system. Consequently, women find themselves marginalised, lacking any significant role or voice in decision-making*

processes about virtually all aspects of societal affairs."(Male, 30years, program coordinator Reachers Foundation.12/03/2024, Bokwai Buea)

The finding disclosed the significant role of patriarchy in perpetuating sexist bias, wherein women are side-lined from decision-making roles and positions of authority. This exclusion limits their ability to contribute to and shape societal decisions. The manifestation of sexist bias in decision-making reflects deeply ingrained societal norms and power structures that prioritize male voices and perspectives over those of women. Addressing this bias requires challenging patriarchal systems and promoting gender equity to ensure women have equal opportunities to participate in decision-making processes.

Table 9: Areas where females experience sexist bias in the Buea municipality.

S/N	AREAS/SECTORS
1	School attendance
2	Culture and inheritance
3	Public transportation sector
4	Physical violence
5	Participation in STEM fields
6	Resources allocation
7	Decision making
8	Occupational roles
9	Security practices
10	Marital responsibilities
11	Physical appearance
12	cooking

These are the different sectors that male and females are experiencing sexist bias in Buea municipality.

3.5 Quantitative findings on the causes of Sexist Bias in Buea

Table 10: Causes of Sexist Bias in Buea

Causes of sexist bias	Strongly agree	Agree (75%)	Neutral (50%)	Disagree (25%)	Strongly disagree	Total
Traditional gender roles promote believe that some jobs are more suitable for women or men	38.6% (27)	45.7% (32)	10% (7)	4.3% (3)	1.4% (1)	100% (70)
People hold sexist views due to a lack of exposure to information challenging gender stereotypes or promoting equality.	25.7% (18)	45.7% (32)	18.6% (13)	0% (0)	10% (7)	100% (70)
Cultural practices that enforce rigid gender roles, like expecting women to prioritise family over career promotes sexism bias	32.9% (23)	31.4% (22)	22.9% (16)	8.6% (6)	4.3% (3)	100% (70)
Portraying women primarily as objects of desire in advertisements reinforces the idea that their value is tied to physical appearance.	20% (14)	34.3% (24)	25.7% (18)	8.6% (6)	11.4% (8)	100% (70)
Power imbalance between men and women promotes sexism and discrimination	34.3% (24)	44.3% (31)	11.4% (8)	8.6% (6)	1.4% (1)	100% (70)
The absence of laws or policies addressing gender discrimination in the workplace allows sexist bias to persist.	28.6% (20)	47.1% (33)	17.1% (12)	2.9% (2)	4.3% (3)	100% (70)
When boys are encouraged from childhood to be assertive and girls to be nurturing reinforces gender stereotypes	22.9% (16)	44.3% (31)	12.9% (9)	15.7% (11)	4.3% (3)	100% (70)
Interpretations of religious texts that promote the idea of women being subordinate to men promote gender discrimination	21.4% (15)	31.4% (22)	27.1% (19)	2.9% (2)	17.1% (12)	100% (70)
The fear of challenging traditional gender roles promotes gender discrimination	37.1% (26)	32.9% (23)	14.3% (10)	7.1% (5)	8.6% (6)	100% (70)
Individuals are promoting sexist beliefs or behaviours due to peer pressure	18.6% (13)	40% (28)	18.6% (13)	18.6% (13)	4.3% (3)	100% (70)
Insufficient education on gender equality in schools orchestrates sexist bias	27.1% (19)	45.7% (32)	12.9% (9)	11.4% (8)	2.9% (2)	100% (70)
Few women in top leadership positions reinforce the idea that women are less capable or suited for leadership roles	14.3% (10)	24.3% (17)	14.3% (10)	31.4% (22)	15.7% (11)	100% (70)

Source:Tanyi Christabel Eyong Fieldwork, 2024

The findings reveal that the prevalence of sexist bias in Buea is caused by numerous factors. These factors include traditional gender roles, a lack of information challenging

gender stereotypes, cultural influence, media influence, power imbalance, the absence of regulatory policies, parental influence, insufficient education, and peer pressure. For instance, 84.3% (38.6% strongly agree and 45.7% agree) of the research participants affirmed that traditional roles cause sexist bias in Buea, as opposed to 5.7% (4.3% disagree and 1.4% strongly disagree) of the respondents who refuted the statement, meanwhile 10% were neutral. This finding affirms the contributions of traditional gender roles to the prevalence of sexist bias in Buea.

Also, 71.4% (25.7% strongly agree and 45.7% agree) of the research participants admitted lack of exposure to information challenging gender stereotypes or promoting equality is promoting sexist bias in Buea, as opposed to 10% (0% disagree and 10% strongly disagree) of the respondents who disagreed with the statement, while 18.6% were neutral. Similarly, 64.3% (32.9% strongly agree and 31.4% agree) of the research participants acknowledged that cultural practices enforce rigid gender roles in Buea, as opposed to 12.9% (8.6% disagree and 4.3% strongly agree) of the respondents who refuted the statement, while 22.9% were neutral.

Equally, 54.3% (20% strongly agree and 34.3% agree) of the research participants revealed that the portrayal of women as objects of desire in advertisements in Buea reinforces the idea that their value is tied to physical appearance. This view is negated by 20% (8.6% disagree and 11.4% strongly disagree) of the respondents, while 25.7% were neutral. Davis (1993) also asserts that published television commercials and other forms of advertising reinforce inequality and gender-based stereotypes. Women are almost exclusively present in aids promoting cooking, cleaning, or childcare-related procedures (Davis 1993).

Similarly, 78.6% (34.3% strongly agree and 44.3% agree) of the respondents admitted that the power imbalance between men and women promotes sexism and discrimination in Buea, as opposed to 10% (8.6% disagree and 1.4% strongly disagree) of the respondents who refuted the statement, while 11.4% were neutral. Furthermore, 75.7% (28.6% strongly agree and 47.1% agree) of the respondents explained that the absence of laws or policies addressing gender discrimination in the workplace allows sexist bias to persist in Buea, as opposed to 7.2% (2.9% disagree and 4.3% strongly disagree) of the respondents who refuted the statement, while 17.1% were neutral. Similarly, 67.2% (22.9% strongly agree and 44.3% agree) agreed that when boys are encouraged from childhood to be assertive and girls to be

nurturing, it reinforces gender stereotypes, as opposed to 20% (15.7% disagree and 4.3% strongly disagree) of the respondents who negated the statement, while 12.9% were neutral.

More so, 52.8% (21.4% strongly agree and 31.4% agree) of the respondents explained that the interpretations of religious texts that promote the idea of women being subordinate to men promote gender discrimination in Buea, as opposed to 20% (2.9% disagree and 17.1% strongly disagree) of the respondents who refuted the statement, while 27.1% were neutral. Similarly, 70% (37.1% strongly agree and 32.9% agree) of the respondents affirmed that the fear of challenging traditional gender roles promotes gender discrimination in Buea, as opposed to 15.7% (7.1% disagree and 8.6% strongly disagree) of the respondents who negated the statement, while 14.3% were neutral. Additionally, 58.6% (18.6% strongly agree and 40% agree) of the research participants assert that individuals are promoting sexist beliefs or behaviors in Buea due to peer pressure, whereas 22.9% (18.6% disagree and 4.3% strongly disagree) of the respondents refuted the statement, while 18.6% were neutral. Similarly, 72.8% (27.1% strongly agree and 45.7% agree) of the respondents revealed that insufficient education on gender equality in schools orchestrates sexist bias in Buea, as opposed to 14.3% (11.4% disagree and 2.9% strongly disagree) of the respondents who refuted the statement, while 12.9% were neutral. Also, 38.6% (14.3% strongly agree and 24.3% agree) of the respondents asserted that the prevalence of fewer women in top leadership positions reinforces the idea that women are less capable or suited for leadership roles, as opposed to 47.1% (31.4% disagree and 15.7% strongly disagree) of the respondents who refuted the statement, while 14.3% of the respondents were neutral.

Hypothesis two: Cultural norms, socio-economic conditions and institutional practices are significant contributing factors to the perpetuation of sexist bias in Buea

Table 11: One Sample T-test

One-Sample Statistics		One-Sample Test (CI: 95%)	
N	70	Df	69
Mean	44.2	T	15.7
Std. Deviation	7.6	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
		Test Value	30
		Mean Difference	14.2

Source:Tanyi Christabel Eyong Fieldwork, 2024

A One-Sample T-test was conducted to establish whether cultural norms, socio-economic conditions and institutional practices are significant contributing factors to the perpetuation of sexist bias in Buea. The result of the test, t (df = 69) =15.7, *p*<0 .05 (P = 0.001), revealed that

cultural norms, socio-economic conditions and institutional practices are significant contributing factors to the perpetuation of sexist bias in Buea. The result of the test was statistically significant at a 0.05 level with a 95% confidence interval. Also, the mean of the sample (44.2) was significantly higher than the probable test mean of 30 (average agreement response). This result supports the descriptive analysis, where the majority of the research participants admitted that traditional gender roles, lack of information challenging gender stereotypes, cultural influence, media influence, power imbalance, absence of regulatory policies, parental influence, insufficient education, and peer pressure are contributing to the prevalence of sexist bias in Buea.

3.6 Qualitative findings on the causes of sexist bias in Buea

3.6.1 Religious Teachings

The findings suggest that religious dogmas are used to perpetuate gender inequalities in society. One of the research participants stated that while religious texts like the Bible can serve as positive guides for Christian work, they are often interpreted in ways that reinforce the subordination and suppression of women.

> *"We have religious dogma. As much as the bible is a good tool for Christian work, most of the time, we have used it to suppress and subordinate women because of the version that says women are helpers; women should be submissive and so on. That promotes gender inequalities within our society."* (Female, 29years, Reach Out Cameroon.21/03/2024, Borstal street Buea)

The findings highlight the role of religious teachings, particularly interpretations of texts like the Bible, in perpetuating gender inequality. Misinterpretations of religious teachings, such as portraying women as helpers or promoting submission, have been historically used to justify the marginalisation and subordination of women within society.

3.6.2 Cultural traditions

The findings reveal that cultural traditions are responsible for the prevalence of sexist biases in Buea municipality. The research participants explained that cultural traditions give priority to males over females. The interviewee revealed that inheritance laws favour males over females. In this case, the tradition of male inheritance reflects broader patriarchal structures where men hold primary power and privilege.

"I think the major cause of sexist bias might be cultural because. It is entrenched in the cultural beliefs of some villages in the Buea municipality. Men are the ones to inherit properties from their parents, although we might say that belief is changing, especially in urban areas where you can see some girls inheriting properties from their parents." (Male, 35years, project coordinator Demtou Humanitarian.21/03/2024, Borstal street)

"Certain individuals hold onto cultural beliefs that prioritise males over females. They firmly believe in traditional gender roles where girls are confined to domestic duties and are expected to become housewives. Due to the strong influence of their cultural backgrounds, they are unwilling to grant opportunities to women, perpetuating gender inequality."(Female, 36years, program coordinator NADEV NGO.07/03/2024, rue Hibmat Buea)

"One of the cultural beliefs is that men are supposed to supply and they are supposed to take care of their family and all of that." (Female, 53years, Mike Yanou Foundation. 12/03/2024, GRA Buea)

The research participant from NADEV also notes that "traditional beliefs vary among different communities. For instance, in the Bakweri tradition, there is a strong belief that a woman's role is primarily that of a housewife. According to this belief, it's sufficient for a woman to manage the household responsibilities, and there's little inclination to expose her to additional responsibilities outside of the home."

Equally, the Ndes Foundation asserts, "I believe the root cause lies in culture, the very culture in which parents are raised and subsequently pass down to their children. This cultural inheritance perpetuates certain values, some of which contribute to sexist biases. It's important to note that not all aspects of culture are inherently negative, but certain elements, both traditional and modern, harbour sexist biases and hinder fairness. These ingrained biases within cultural norms serve as the root cause of sexist attitudes and behaviours".

The result indicates that cultural traditions can dictate societal norms and practices. Batara, Ngo, See and Erasga (2018) explained that throughout history, women are seen as subordinates to their male counterparts. They were traditionally tasked with domestic and household roles. The tradition gives much power to men over women. Nevertheless, the acknowledgement that beliefs about inheritance are evolving, particularly in urban areas, suggests a shifting cultural landscape. As more girls inherit property from their parents, it challenges traditional gender norms and opens up new possibilities for gender equality.

3.6.3 Male Jealousy as a Cause of Sexist Bias

The findings suggest male jealousy is a significant contributor to sexist bias in communities like the Bakweri tradition. One of the research participants explained that there is a fear among some men that providing women with opportunities outside the home may lead to financial independence and a shift in power dynamics within the family, which contributes to their reluctance to support women in pursuing non-traditional roles.

> *"Also, the fact that our men are a little bit on the jealous side they think that by giving her a lot of exposure they might lose her. Maybe when you give her a lot of exposure she will have a job, she will become financially stable, and she will now be a stubborn wife to you."* (Female, 36years, program coordinator NADEV NGO.07/03/2024, rue Hibmat Buea)

The result shows that male insecurity and fear of losing control over women's lives contribute to the reluctance to support women in pursuing opportunities outside the home. Addressing male insecurity and fostering healthy communication and trust within relationships can help mitigate the fear of losing control over women's lives.

3.6.4 Power Imbalance between Male and Female

The finding emphasises that unequal power dynamics between genders are a root cause of sexist bias. When one gender holds more power and influence than the other, it can lead to discriminatory attitudes and behaviours that disadvantage the less powerful group. This imbalance of power perpetuates sexist biases and reinforces gender inequalities within society. *"Power imbalance causes sexist bias."* (Male, 33years, foundation manager Hadassah Foundation. 19/03/2024, Sanspit Buea)

Power imbalances can manifest in various forms, such as unequal representation in leadership positions, disparities in access to resources and opportunities, and societal norms that favour one gender over the other. These imbalances create fertile ground for sexist attitudes and behaviours to flourish, as those in positions of power may use their influence to perpetuate stereotypes and maintain the status quo.

3.6.5 Societal Bias

The findings indicate that societal bias favours the prevalence of sexist bias in Buea municipality. Societal bias refers to the collective attitudes, beliefs, and norms that

exist within a society, often reflecting and reinforcing existing power structures and inequalities.

> *"We have societal bias where the man is supposedly considered the leader and is supposed to be a leader, which is unopposed."*(Male, 35years, project coordinator Demtou Humanitarian. 21/03/2024, Borstal Buea)

> *"In our patriarchal society, we are raised to believe that men are the heads of the family, and thus, they should make all the decisions. Their word is final, and your input may or may not be valued. Growing up with such beliefs perpetuates sexism, fuelled by cultural norms that prioritise male authority and diminish the role of women."*(Female, 29years, assistant head of department ReachOut Cameroon.21/03/2024, Borstal street Buea)

This result shows that society can normalise sexist bias. When sexist attitudes and behaviours are widespread and accepted within a society, they become normalised. This normalisation makes it easier for individuals to perpetuate sexist beliefs and engage in sexist actions without facing significant social repercussions. For example, societal bias restricts women from taking leadership roles. It makes them subordinate to men.

3.6.6 Impact of the Anglophone Crisis

The findings show that the outburst of the Cameroon Anglophone Crisis in 2016 has contributed to the prevalence of sexist bias in Buea municipality. One of the research participants explained that the ongoing conflict exacerbates existing tensions and prejudices, leading to increased discrimination against boys and men. The volatile security situation provides a pretext for authorities to target individuals based on arbitrary criteria, including their gender.

> *"The Anglophone crisis is one of the reasons that we have a sexist bias against boys and men in Buea. Boys are assumed to, maybe, terrorists and fighting the state"* (Male, 36years, project coordinator Demtou Humanitarian.21/03/2024, Borstal street Buea)

The findings indicate that boys are often stereotyped as potential threats based on their gender alone. They are unfairly associated with activities such as terrorism, separatist movements, and social deviance like scamming. These stereotypes contribute to the biased treatment of boys by law enforcement personnel, who may view them as inherently suspicious or dangerous. This presumption of guilt reflects a deeply ingrained bias within the security apparatus, where individuals are judged based on preconceived notions rather than objective criteria. This can lead to wrongful detention, harassment, and violation of their rights.

3.6.7 Societal Expectations and Responsibilities

The findings reveal that societal expectations placed on women, particularly regarding their roles as caregivers and homemakers result in sexist bias. Women are often burdened with numerous responsibilities, such as managing families, and being mothers and wives, which can lead to the assumption that they are less capable or committed to professional pursuits. This bias stems from ingrained stereotypes and norms that undervalue women's capabilities and prioritize their domestic roles over their professional aspirations.

> *"I just mentioned that we have a lot of baggage that we carry along as women, we have families, we are mothers, we are wives, we have a lot on our plate, and some people would not want to give us the opportunity thinking that a woman cannot best deliver this thing."* (Female, 36years, program coordinator NADEV NGO, 07/03/2024, rue Hibmat Buea)

The findings suggest that societal expectations and traditional gender roles contribute significantly to sexist bias in various spheres, including employment opportunities and career advancement. Women often face discrimination and barriers in accessing certain roles or positions due to assumptions about their ability to balance work and family responsibilities. This bias limits women's access to opportunities and perpetuates gender inequality in the workforce. As a result, women are often overlooked for leadership positions or opportunities that require long-term commitment, based on assumptions rather than merit. In line with this finding, Wood and Eagly (2010, p459) observed that " in post-industrial societies, for example, men are more likely than women to be employed, especially in authority positions, and women are more likely than men to fill caretaking roles at home as well as in employment settings".

3.7 Quantitative findings on the consequences of Sexist Bias in Buea

Table 12: Consequences of Sexist Bias in Buea

Consequences of sexist bias	Strongly agree	Agree (75%)	Neutral (50%)	Disagree (25%)	Strongly disagree	Total
It limits career advancement for women because they are being overlooked	38.8% (27)	51.4% (36)	4.3% (3)	4.3% (3)	1.4% (1)	100% (70)
Sexist bias promotes gender pay gap in Buea	22.9% (16)	47.1% (33)	15.7% (11)	10% (7)	4.3% (3)	100% (70)
Constant exposure to gender-based discrimination affect one's mental health	41.4% (29)	34.3% (24)	20% (14)	4.3% (3)	0% (0)	100% (70)
It promotes workplace bias since women are not considered to be skilled like men	32.9% (23)	41.4% (29)	11.4% (8)	8.6% (6)	5.7% (4)	100% (70)
Girls are being bullied for not conforming to traditional feminine norms	21.4% (15)	22.9% (16)	34.3% (24)	15.7% (11)	5.7% (4)	100% (70)
Boys are being bullied for not adhering to masculine stereotypes	12.9% (9)	15.7% (11)	47.1% (33)	20% (14)	4.3% (3)	100% (70)
Sexist bias limits the number of girls in STEM fields	20% (14)	48.6% (34)	20% (14)	7.1% (5)	4.3% (3)	100% (70)
Sexist bias causes low self-esteem	41.4% (29)	42.9% (30)	15.7% (11)	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (70)

Source: Tanyi Christabel Eyong Fieldwork, 2024

The findings reveal that sexist bias has several negative implications. Based on the result, 90.2% (38.8% strongly agree and 51.4% agree) of the respondents affirmed that sexist bias limits career advancement for women because they are being overlooked as opposed to 5.7% (disagree and 1.4% strongly disagree) of the respondents who refuted the statement while 4.3% of the respondents were neutral. In line with this finding, Arthur et al (2008) assert that gender bias, prejudices and stereotypes are costly at an individual and population level: they may limit educational, recreational and ultimately employment opportunities for girls and boys, as well as health and well-being.

Similarly, 70% (22.9% strongly agree and 47.1% agree) of the respondents asserted that sexist bias promotes the gender pay gap in Buea as opposed to 14.3% (10% disagree and 4.3% strongly disagree) of the respondents who refuted the statement while 15.7% of the respondents were neutral. Also, 75.7% (41.4% strongly agree and 34.3% agree) of the respondents revealed that constant exposure to gender-based discrimination affects one's mental health as opposed to 4.3% (4.3% disagree and 0% strongly disagree) of the respondents who refuted the statement while 20% of the respondents were neutral. Similarly, 74.3% (32.9% strongly agree and 41.4% agree) of the respondents admitted that sexist bias promotes workplace bias since women are not considered to be skilled like men, as opposed to 14.3% (8.6% disagree and 5.7% strongly disagree) of the respondents, refuted the statement while 11.4% of the respondents were neutral.

Equally, 44.3% (21.3% strongly agree and 22.9% agree) of the respondents revealed that girls are being bullied for not conforming to traditional feminine norms as opposed to 21.4% (15.7% disagree and 5.7% strongly disagree) of the respondents who refuted the statement while 34.3% of the respondents were neutral. Similarly, 28.6% (12.9% strongly agree and 15.7% agree) of the respondents affirmed that boys are being bullied for not adhering to masculine stereotypes as opposed to 24.3% (20% disagree and 4.3% strongly disagree) of the respondents who refuted the statement while 47.1% of the respondents were neutral.

Additionally, 68.6% (20% strongly agree and 48.6% agree) of the respondents admitted that sexist bias limits the number of girls in STEM fields as opposed to 11.4% (7.1% disagree and 4.3% strongly disagree) of the respondents who refuted the statement while 20% of the respondents were neutral. Similarly, 84.3% (41.4% strongly agree and 42.9% agree) of the respondents stated that sexist bias causes low self-esteem while 15.7% of the respondents were neutral.

3.8 Qualitative findings on the consequences of sexist bias in Buea

3.8.1 Discrimination and Unfair Treatment

The findings reveal that sexist bias often leads to discrimination, where individuals are unfairly treated based on their gender. The Representative of the South West Regional Delegate of MINPROFF points out that bias can result in favouring one person over

another. This leads to unequal opportunities and outcomes. Unequal treatment undermines fairness and equality.

> *"If you are facing bias, it will translate to discrimination. Most times, it translates to discrimination because we are biased we are being unfair we end up favouring one person and disfavouring another person."* (Female, 45years, Representative of the SWR Delegate of MINPROFF. 27/02/2024, Soppo Buea)

The research findings suggest when individuals hold biased beliefs about the capabilities or roles of certain genders; they are likely to treat people unfairly based on their biases. This can manifest in various forms of discrimination, such as unequal opportunities, lower pay or lack of recognition for work based solely on gender. In line with these findings, Cortina (2008) reveals that bias triggers discrimination, inequality, mistreatment, and incivility or rudeness toward others.

Lim, Cortina, and Magley (2008) enunciate that discrimination within the workplace and other forms of mistreatment can perpetuate systemic barriers by increasing the exclusion of marginalised employees from certain positions and inequities between employees based on group membership. At the individual level, discrimination and mistreatment are related to negative employee outcomes such as lower job satisfaction, lower organizational commitment, and increased turnover intentions.

3.8.2 Limited Opportunities

The result discloses that sexist biases have the potency to restrict individuals' opportunities based on preconceived notions about their capabilities or suitability for certain roles or tasks. This limitation affects individuals' personal growth and advancement and also hampers organizational effectiveness by depriving them of diverse perspectives and talents.

> *"...if you already have it in mind that this thing cannot be done by a woman, and this one can only be done by a woman or a man it means that if a man comes looking for that thing you will not give him a chance to do the thing..."* Female, 45years, Representative of the SWR Delegate of MINPROFF. 27/02/24, Soppo Buea)

> *"Another challenge arises from limited experience and exposure. When you are given smaller responsibilities and fewer opportunities for promotion, you miss out on the chance to broaden your skills and gain valuable experience. Instead, you are often confined to tasks related to household activities, such as caregiving and nurturing. This perpetuates the stereotype that women's roles are primarily domestic.*

As a result, you end up stuck in routines with low wages, poor job satisfaction, limited exposure, and little opportunity for professional growth." (Female, 29years, assistant head of department Reach Out Cameroon. 21/03/2024, Borstal street Buea)

The findings indicate that sexist bias restricts opportunities for individuals based on their gender. This prevents them from fully realising their potential. This is because when certain tasks, roles or responsibilities are perceived as suitable only for a particular gender, individuals are unfairly excluded from participating or excelling in those areas. In line with this finding, Bush and Lee (2011) reveal that gender biases in the mindsets of managers can prevent women from advancing into leadership positions.

3.8.3 Lack of Equality and Equity in Treatment

The findings indicate that sexist bias undermines both equality and equity in treatment. Equality refers to the fair treatment of individuals regardless of gender while equity involves ensuring fairness by accounting for differences and providing resources or opportunities as needed. Sexist bias disrupts these principles as one gender gets favoured over another.

"Sexist bias does not ensure equality in treatment or equity in treatment. By equity, I am talking of fairness because if you already have it in mind that this thing cannot be done by a woman, and this one can only be done by a woman or a man it means that if a man comes looking for that thing you will not give him a chance to do the thing so you end up being bias." (Female, 45years, Representative of the SWR Delegate of MINPROFF.27/02/2024, Soppo Buea)

The result shows that sexist bias leads to a lack of equality and equity in treatment. It makes one gender receive favour over another. This promotes inequalities and hinders efforts to achieve gender equity. In line with this result, Bohnet (2016) reveals that workplace norms may hinder women's careers. For example, when senior leadership positions are held exclusively by men (which is indeed the typical phenomenon), it perpetuates the "think-manager-think male" perspective.

3.8.4 Job Dissatisfaction due to Gender Discrimination

The result shows that gender discrimination in the workplace leads to job dissatisfaction among individuals in Buea. Discrimination often results in individuals being assigned roles that do not align with their skills or preferences. This dissatisfaction arises from the presence of a "glass ceiling," a metaphorical barrier that prevents women and

other marginalised groups from reaching higher levels of career success due to systemic biases and discriminatory practices.

> *"The initial issue is job dissatisfaction stemming from discrimination. Sometimes, you're assigned roles that don't match your skills or desires due to discrimination. You end up doing a job you're not happy with because of barriers like the glass ceiling, which blocks your advancement opportunities based on your gender"* (Female, 29years, assistant head of department Reach Out Cameroon. 21/03/2024, Borstal street Buea)

The research findings demonstrate that gender discrimination impacts job satisfaction by restricting individuals to roles they may not prefer or feel suited for. When individuals are denied opportunities for advancement based on their gender, it creates a sense of frustration and disillusionment with their work. Job dissatisfaction not only affects individual well-being but also organizational productivity and morale. *"The job dissatisfaction leads to low productivity and efficiency in what you do*" (Female, 29years, assistant head of department Reach Out Cameroon. 21/03/2024, Borstal street Buea)

To address this issue, organisations must actively work to dismantle barriers to career progression, promote diversity and inclusion, and provide equal opportunities for all employees regardless of gender. By fostering an inclusive workplace culture, organisations can mitigate the negative effects of gender discrimination and create environments where all employees feel valued, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential.

Hypothesis three: Sexist Bias has a significant negative effect on victims in Buea municipality

Table 13: One Sample T-test on the consequences of sexist bias

One-Sample Statistics		One-Sample Test (CI: 95%)	
N	70	Df	69
Mean	30.5	T	17.7
Std. Deviation	4.9	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
		Test Value	20
		Mean Difference	10.5

Source: Tanyi Christabel Eyong Fieldwork, 2021

A One-Sample T-test was conducted to determine whether sexist bias has a significant negative effect on victims in Buea municipality. The result of the test, t (df = 69) =17.7, $p<0.05$ (P=0.001), revealed that sexist bias has a significant negative effect on victims in Buea. The result of the test was statistically significant at a 0.05 level with a 95% confidence interval. Also, the mean of the sample (30.5) was significantly higher than the probable test mean of 20 (average agreement response). This result supports the descriptive analysis, where the majority of the respondents admitted that sexist bias limits career advancement for women because they are being overlooked, promotes gender pay gap, promotes workplace bias, leads to mental health and promotes low self-esteem.

This chapter has shown us the various manifestations, causes and consequences of sexist bias in the Buea municipality with data gotten from NGOs actively involved in addressing sexist bias and the Ministry of Women Empowerment and the family Center Buea. It has equally shown us the demographic characteristics of sample which include gender, age, marital status, employment status and religion. In this chapter, we come across the quantitative and qualitative findings of the causes of sexist bias in Buea, the quantitative and qualitative manifestations of sexist bias in Buea and the quantitative and qualitative findings of the consequences of sexist bias in the Buea Municipality. The three hypothesis were tested using the One Sample T test. This leads us the next chapter which is chapter four, which presents to us the responses, successes and challenges faced by the NGOs and the Ministry in addressing sexist bias in the Buea municipality.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the measures taken by the ministry of women empowerment and the family centre and non-governmental organisations to address sexist bias in Buea. It shows us the quantitative and qualitative findings of the challenges faced by the ministry and NGOs in addressing sexist bias in the Buea municipality. It also explores the successes that have been achieved in the process of addressing sexist bias. The chapter ends with some recommended strategies provided by non-government organisations in addressing sexist bias.

4.2 Response Mechanism

The findings reveal that the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family (MINPROFF) and non-government organisations such as the Mike Yanou Foundation, NDES Foundation, NADEV, Reachers Foundation, Reach Out Cameroon, Demtou Foundation and Hadassah Foundation have adopted several mechanisms to address sexist bias in Buea. These mechanisms are examined in the form of themes.

4.2.1 Engagement in Sensitization Campaigns

The results reveal that the South West Regional Delegation of MINPROFF and some non-governmental organisations in Buea are creating awareness of the ills of sexist bias and educating women on their rights and responsibilities. The awareness is instrumental because it helps unveil the pervasive nature of sexist bias and its impact on women's lives.

> *"I believe raising awareness is essential for achieving equality. Regardless of whether you're a girl or a boy, everyone should have equal access to opportunities and privileges. Education plays a vital role in achieving this balance."* (Female, 53years, CEO Mike Yanou Foundation.12/03/2024, GRA Buea town)

> *"The most important strategy that we are using is sensitisation and encouraging change. We do sensitisation on gender-based violence. We also sensitise the population on the need for equal participation of both sexes in social life"* (Male, 35years, project coordinator Demtou Humanitarian. 21/03/2024, Borstal street).

"We have been engaged in sensitization and awareness raising for the need of gender justice or gender equality" (Female, 29years, assistant head of department Reach Out Cameroon. 21/03/2024, Borstal street Buea).

"A lot of sensitisation is going on. NGOs have been working a lot with communities to see that those traditions that did not favour our women should be let go of, but you can only do the sensitization" (Female, 36years, program coordinator NADEV NGO. 07/03/2024, rue Hibmat Buea).

"We have been involved in a series of sensitisation campaigns in every aspect as far as sexism is concerned. We go out to sensitize the public on sexist biases" (Male, 30years, program coordinator Reachers Foundation. 12/02/2024, Bokwai Buea) .

The representative of the South West Regional Delegate of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family (MINPROFF) considers sensitisation as their principal strategy for mitigating sexist bias in the region. She uses the Women Empowerment Centre to raise awareness of the rights and responsibilities of women.

"Our main focus is spreading awareness, a lot of it. We do this through our Women Empowerment Centre, offering various courses like human rights and civic education. These courses aim to educate women about their rights, helping them understand what they're entitled to. We are training on hotel management and catering, sewing, computer sciences, and hairdressing" (Female, 45years, Representatives of the SWR Delegate of MINPROFF.27/02/2024, Soppo Buea).

"We are preaching the fact that we need equal rights for the girl child and boy child. Equal opportunity for the girl child and boy child." (Female, 36years, program coordinator NADEV NGO. 07/03/2024, rue Hibmat Buea).

The findings reveal that there are some privileges that female employees are not aware of. Sensitisation campaigns enable the employees to be aware of such privileges. The Representative of the South West Regional Delegate of MINPROFF enunciates *"We tell them the rights they have as employees. For instance, a female employee has the right to maternity leave of fourteen weeks. Most times, you notice that most people are not even aware especially women in the private sector."*

The Ndes Foundation is also involved in sensitisation activities. The Assistant Director of Ndes Foundation asserts *"We conduct sensitisation campaigns to address gender biases normalised within families. Our approach extends to educating females on self-awareness and addressing vulnerabilities that make them susceptible to sexist biases. Additionally, we aim for inclusion even in discussions with parents, emphasizing the equal value of both genders."*

Awareness is raised using different approaches. The Representative of the South West Regional Delegate of MINPROFF reveals that they are utilising radio stations to raise awareness about sexist biases. Radio stations offer wide visibility to the sensitisation messages.

> *"We use various radio programmes. Like in Buea, we have what they call "Global voices" which is like a gender kind of corner where we talk about gender issues and social issues that affect women in particular"* (Female 45years, Representative of the SWR Delegate of MINPROFF. 27/02/2024, Soppo Buea).

The Hadassah Foundation uses both social media platforms and local languages in its sensitisation campaigns. They considered these approaches to be effective: *"Some strategies that have shown effectiveness include both online and onsite community sensitization efforts. In this current era dubbed the 'Android generation', many individuals are easily reachable online. However, there are still pockets of people, particularly older and more remote individuals, who may struggle with using social media platforms. To reach these groups, we employ community-based approaches, utilizing local languages that they are most comfortable with to ensure effective sensitisation."*

The raising of awareness about gender inequality and women's rights contributes to fostering a more equitable and inclusive society. It can also prompt individuals to reflect on their attitudes and behaviours as well as recognise bias in societal structures and institutions.

4.2.2 Capacity Building

The findings reveal that the South West Regional Delegation of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family and some non-government organisations in Buea are engaged in capacity building to equip women with the right knowledge and skills to overcome sexist bias in society.

> *"At the Women's Empowerment Centre, we focus on building the skills and capacity of women and girls. Our role is like a technical institute within the Ministry, emphasising practical training to prepare them for the job market. For example, in our catering department, trainees undergo a six-month training program followed by an internship at a hotel or catering service. We facilitate this process by negotiating their placement and providing orientation to prepare them for the experience."* (Female, 45years, Representative of the SWR Delegate of MINPROFF.27/02/2024, Soppo Buea).

Photo 2: Women empowerment Buea outline
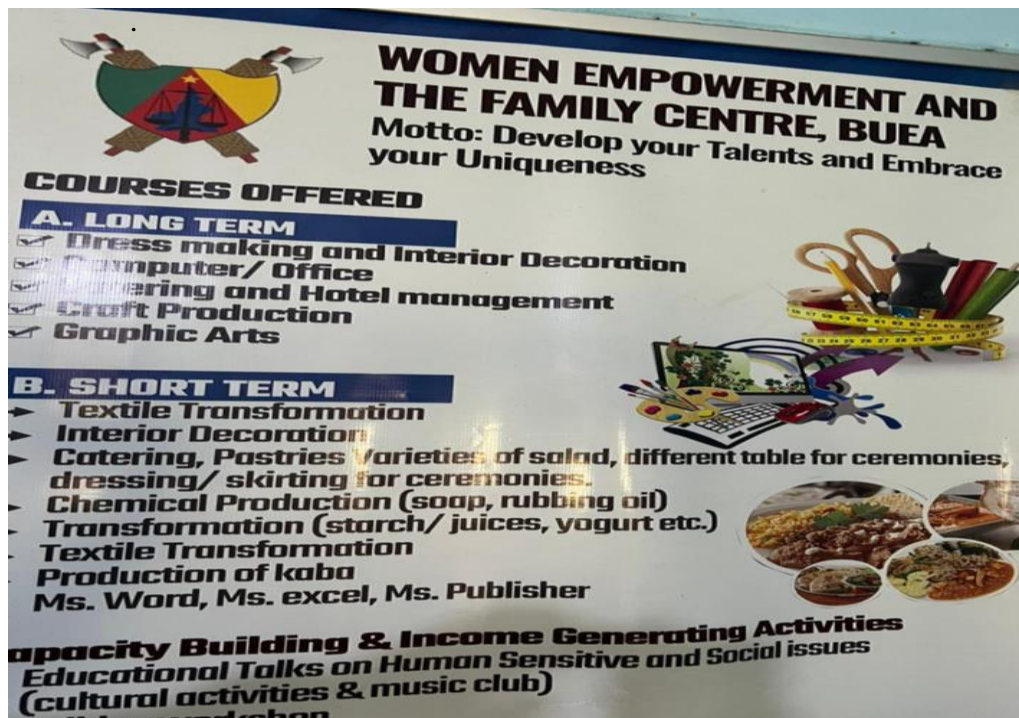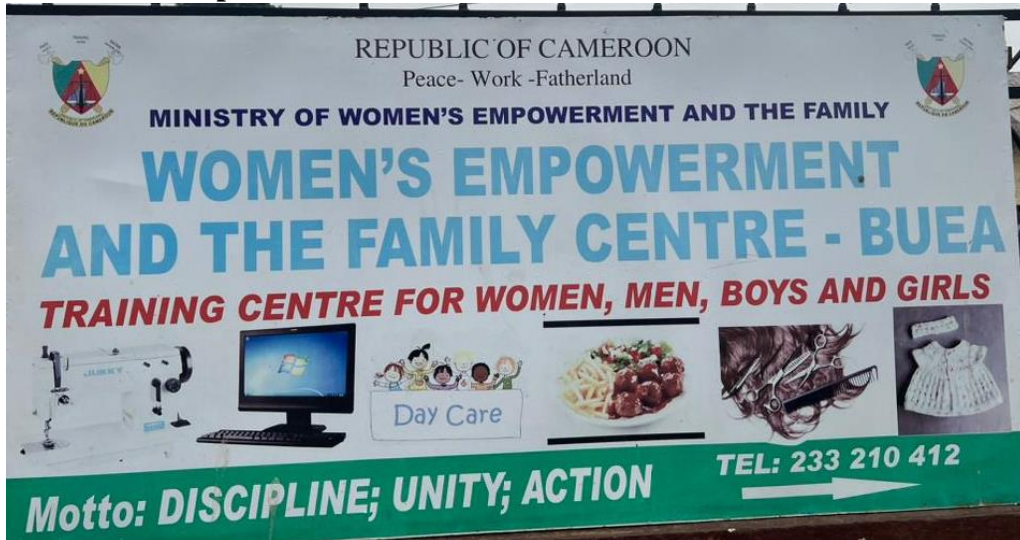
Women empowerment outline buea municipality. Source: Field picture taken by Tanyi Christabel Eyong, 2024

The photo above shows some of the outlined programs and courses provided by the MINPROFF Buea which are available for the Buea community.

The Ndes Foundation is equally involved in capacity building. They are building the capacity of orphaned girls in Information Technology. Ndes Foundation is equipping orphaned girls with technological skills as a way of addressing sexist bias in education.

> *"We have initiated an IT program specifically tailored for orphaned girls, which serves as a clear demonstration of our recognition of and commitment to combating sexism. We understand the historical discrimination females have faced in the field of IT, and empowering girls, particularly those in vulnerable situations without parental support, with skills in information and communication technology, is a significant step towards breaking down the barriers created by sexist stereotypes. This program not only equips them with valuable skills but also indirectly empowers them to overcome societal biases and achieve success in a male-dominated industry."*(Male, 34years, CEO representative Ndes Foundation. 07/03/2024, Malingo Buea).

The Assistant Director of the Ndes Foundation further asserts, *"Currently, our focus is narrow, as we are working closely with 11 orphaned girls. However, we aim to expand the capacity of this program in the future to include more and more girls…empowering women, who are often perceived as weaker and discriminated against, can be incredibly impactful in addressing sexist bias. However, we are not empowering women to compete against men, but rather to enhance their value as complementary forces."* ReachOut Cameroon is also involved in building the capacity of community members and stakeholders to address sexist bias in Buea. The community members and stakeholders are trained on the need to promote gender equality.

> *"So, we have been focusing on building capacity for community members and stakeholders to be able to understand women's roles and contest against gender inequalities within their communities. We are also educating them on the need to promote women's empowerment and emancipation within their communities"* (Female, 29ywears, assistant head of department Reach Out Cameroon. 21/03/2024, Borstal street Buea).

> *"Women are increasingly rising because we've internalized the belief that we're capable of achieving success. However, this self-confidence is only meaningful if we can deliver tangible results."* (Female, 36years, program coordinator NADEV NGO.07/03/2024, rue Hibmat Buea).

The research participant from Reach Out explains

> *"Our peace table project focuses on advancing women's peace and security by nurturing a culture of inclusivity. The project's primary goal is to empower women to actively engage in decision-making processes within their communities. This involves equipping them with the necessary knowledge to prevent gender-based violence and promote reproductive health and rights. Additionally, we ensure their inclusion in various community activities. So far, we have trained 300 women as peace hub members. These members conduct sensitisation and awareness programs in their communities. Furthermore, we provide referrals for cases of gender-based violence to our organisation, where individuals can access psychosocial support and other services."*(female, 29years, assistant head of department Reach Out Cameroon.21/03/224, Borstal street Buea).

"But for those who do not have the chance to come to the centre, we can come into your community and build your skills in these various areas. So, if there is anything you are interested in, you let us know and then you group yourself we will look for logistics and we come there to do the training so that's one of the ways that we are implementing our activities and the policies of the ministry. " (Female, 45years, Representative of the SWR Delegate of MINPROFF.27/02/2024, Soppo Buea).

The South West Regional Delegation of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family dispatches teams to various communities in Buea to train and empower women with various skills. This helps to overcome the challenge of mobility in accessing stakeholders in rural communities.

4.2.3 Support and Encouragement

The results reveal that the South West Regional Delegation of MINPROFF supports and encourages women and young girls to venture into male-dominated occupations. Before venturing into male-dominated occupations, the Delegation draws their attention to the importance of having the right knowledge and skills for the occupations. Without the right knowledge and skills, it becomes difficult for women to be employed in male-dominated occupations.

"If you want to be employed in a certain sector you must have the necessary skills that qualify you to get employment in that sector you must be able to take initiative" *(*Female, 45years, Representative of the SWR Delegate of MINPROFF. 27/02/2024, Soppo Buea*)* .

"We encourage the participation of women at every level of projects. Whenever we get into a community, when they are setting up committees or they are setting up dialogue structures, we make sure that women are represented fully"(Male, 35years, project coordinator Demtou Humanitarian. 21/03/2024, Borstal street).

"We are striving to ensure that opportunities are provided to women. Many organisations and establishments are also making efforts to give opportunities to girls and women, acknowledging the importance of gender equality" (Female, 36years, program coordinator NADEV NGO. 07/03/2024, rue Hibmat Buea).

The Programme Director of NADEV enunciates that, *"some of the women initially expressed doubts about their abilities, but we consistently encourage and push them to believe in themselves. This approach of empowerment through encouragement has been immensely successful, propelling both our beneficiaries and our partners to greater heights. Throughout our collaborations with various sub-partners, we make a conscious effort to highlight and prioritise the capabilities of women."* The findings revealed that the SWR Delegation of

MINPROFF and some non-governmental organisations are encouraging women to venture into male-dominated occupations with the right knowledge and skills needed to excel.

4.2.4 Intervention and Advocacy

The findings reveal that the South West Regional Delegation of MINPROFF advocates and intervenes in some situations to address discriminatory practices in Buea. The delegation intervenes directly in cases of bias and discrimination faced by women. The delegation provides support and advocacy to help women overcome obstacles such as convincing husbands to allow their wives to pursue employment opportunities.

> *"...We intervene to assist women to break biases. I can give an example. About three weeks ago, we had a young woman who came here. She had gone to Teacher's Training College and graduated and is working with the private sector. She applied for integration with the civil service and I think she was shortlisted then she had to go to Bamenda to take exams and her husband did not want her to go. So, they had issues and she wanted to travel and the husband threatened her with divorce if she travelled. She came and we called the husband. The husband came and we begged. We were just begging because at that point the interest was to get her to take the exams so we had to plead with the husband to allow her to take the exams..."* (Female, 45years, Representative of the SWR Delegate of MINPROFF. 27/02/2024, Soppo Buea).

The South West Delegation of MINPROFF also intervenes to educate employers on leave facilities. When women are unduly dismissed from work due to absenteeism caused by child care, the delegation educates the employer on the importance of leave facilities and the need to reinstate the employee.

> *"If a woman comes to us, faced with a situation of bias maybe being dismissed from work because you were not there because you had a child and all of that, we can always intervene to educate the employer that it is that woman's right for her to be giving maternity leave and all of that. But, you know those things hardly come up because of obvious reasons. We will not expect somebody who employs a girl as a bar attender to be generating money from somewhere to pay her when she is not working."* (Female, 45years, Representative of the SWR Delegate of MINPROFF. 27/02/2024, Soppo Buea).

The intervention of the South West Regional Delegation of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family in the cases described demonstrates their commitment to advocating for women's rights and intervening in situations where bias threatens to hinder women's opportunities.

4.2.5 Collaborative Efforts

The findings reveal that non-government organisations and government ministries are partnering to address sexist bias in Buea. This collaboration enables them to leverage resources, expertise, and networks to implement effective initiatives and programmes. By working together, stakeholders can amplify their impact and reach a broader audience.

"We jointly carry out programmes with a lot of ministries and NGOs if you take the story I have just told you, you can see how we collaborated because at least we gave that woman a backing that she could use to talk to the organisers of the public exams who were from the Ministry of Basic education.." (Female, 45years, Representative of the SWR Delegate of MINPROFF. 27/02/2024, Soppo Buea).

"We work hand in glove with the government since we operate within the jurisdiction of the government. So, before implementing any activity, we must get the authorisation from these authorities" (Female, 45years, program coordinator Demtou Humanitarian.21/03/2024, Borstal street Buea).

"We engage in initiatives concerning gender-based violence, where we refer cases to social welfare departments and other organizations collaborating with NGOs" (Female, 36years, program coordinator NADEV NGO. 07/03/2024, rue Hibmat Buea).

"At the NDES Foundation, we collaborate closely with the Ministry of Social Affairs and municipal councils, such as the Buea Council, in our activities." (Male, 34years, CEO representative Ndes Foundation. 07/03/2024, Malingo Buea)

The Assistant Head of the Department at ReachOut Cameroon explained that they have collaborated with other non-governmental organisations and government institutions to address sexist bias. She explains, *"We have collaborated with other organizations and government institutions that offer services for gender-based violence. Through these partnerships, we have successfully enhanced the capacities of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), enabling them to advocate for gender equality effectively. In all our programs and activities, we prioritise gender mainstreaming to ensure inclusivity for everyone."*

"Regarding the impact of our interventions in Fako Division, the initiatives we have mentioned have significantly improved the lives of individuals. For instance, our training programs have equipped women with the skills and knowledge needed to actively participate in decision-making processes within their communities. This empowerment has led to greater representation and voice for women in local governance and community affairs. Additionally, our efforts in preventing gender-based violence and promoting reproductive health have contributed to creating safer and healthier environments for women and girls. Through our referral services,

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survivors of gender-based violence have accessed much-needed psychosocial support and other essential services, facilitating their recovery and empowerment. Overall, our interventions have fostered positive changes in Fako Division, promoting gender equality and enhancing the well-being of individuals in the community." (Female, 29years, assistant head of department Reach Out Cameroon. 21/03/2024, Borstal street).

The Assistant Director of the Ndes Foundation also stated that *"organising mixed cultural and community dialogues have been particularly effective in addressing sexist bias. By bringing together various stakeholders, these dialogues facilitate open and honest discussions, allowing participants to share their stories, identify solutions, and commit to implementing them."* The collaboration between the Ministry, other government entities, and NGOs demonstrates the importance of collective action in addressing sexist bias. By pooling resources and expertise, stakeholders can develop comprehensive strategies and interventions that are more likely to succeed. Collaborative efforts also foster a sense of solidarity and shared responsibility in tackling gender inequality.

4.2.5 Policy Advocacy

The findings reveal that some non-government organisations in Buea are engaged in policy advocacy to address sexist bias in the community. They organise meetings to engage policymakers and government officials to prioritise gender equality and take action to address sexist bias and discrimination.

> *"In our work in the South West Region, advocacy is a key part of what we do. We regularly hold meetings where we discuss various aspects of our projects, like health and nutrition. These discussions always include talks about inclusivity and gender equality, ensuring that our projects benefit everyone in the community. Additionally, we advocate with government authorities to support us in our efforts towards these goals"* (Male, 35years, project coordinator Demtou Humanitarian. 21/03/2024, Borstal street Buea).

> *"Examining laws that fail to penalise actions that perpetuate gender disparities, we then suggest solutions. These suggestions are presented to parliaments via comprehensive reports and experiential findings, aiming to vividly portray the realities on the ground. Subsequently, we advocate for measures and propose recommendations geared towards fostering gender equality within our communities"* (Female, 29years, assistant head of department Reach Out Cameroon. 21/03/2024, Borstal street Buea).

> *"It's essential to establish forums and meetings where stakeholders from all sectors can come together to discuss sexist bias and share strategies for addressing it."* (Male, 34years, CEO representative Ndes Foundation.07/03/2024, Malingo Buea).

The result showed that some non-governmental organisations in Buea are engaged in policy advocacy to address sexist bias. They do this by engaging policymakers and government officials to prioritise gender equality and take action to address sexist bias and discrimination. This can include lobbying for legislative reforms, advocating for budget allocations for gender equality programs and initiatives, and holding governments accountable for their commitments to gender equality and women's rights.

4.2.6 Empowerment through Exemplary Role Modelling

NADEV Organisation uses exemplary role modelling as a strategy to address sexist bias. NADEV employs the approach of showcasing successful women within their organisation as role models to inspire and empower other women and girls. By demonstrating that women can balance various roles such as work, marriage, and motherhood successfully, NADEV challenges traditional gender stereotypes and encourages communities to reconsider limiting beliefs about women's capabilities.

> *"I am a woman and I am working, married, and a mother. Life is ongoing for me well. Why not give some opportunities to your girl child? Being an exemplary person, I think they say experience is the best teacher."* (Female, 36years, program coordinator NADEV NGO. 07/03/2024, rue Hibmat Buea).

The strategy of using exemplary role modelling effectively challenges stereotypes and biases by providing tangible examples of women who defy traditional gender roles and succeed in various aspects of life. By highlighting the achievements and capabilities of women within their organization, NADEV inspires communities to rethink their attitudes towards women's roles and capabilities. It also empowers other women and girls to pursue their aspirations and challenges societal norms that limit women's opportunities. This approach fosters a shift in mindset towards gender equality and encourages communities to support and empower women and girls

4.3 Successes in Addressing Sexist Bias in Buea

4.3.1 Positive Outcomes in Skill Development and Leadership

The findings reveal that female representation in leadership positions and participation in skill development programmes are yielding positive outcomes. The Assistant Director of the Ndes Foundation asserts that the Vice President of the Ndes Foundation is a

woman. The result reveals that she has achieved numerous successes. Her leadership role challenges stereotypes about women's capabilities.

> *"I want to tell you that the president of Ndes Foundation is not here and therefore the Vice President is in command. She is a woman and is working so well. At Ndes Foundation, we would not want to believe that the woman is a weaker sex because we are seeing how the vice president is stepping in to fill into the shoes when the president is not around and she is doing commendable work''* (Male, 34years, CEO representative Ndes Foundation. 07/02/2024, Malingo Buea).

The Assistant Director of the Ndes Foundation reveals that the organisation is empowering women in skill development programmes such as Arts and Technology. The programmes have contributed to both the personal and professional growth of female beneficiaries.

> *"Our IT works here with the females is proving to be very successful... we are seeing remarkable changes on the ground... some of them can produce... graphics... using a scratch program... it is already proving to have an impact on them…None of them comes late to class... you see the commitment they have... it's already changing things."* (Male, 34years, CEO representative Ndes Foundation. 07/03/2024, Malingo Buea).

The findings suggest that empowering women through representation and skill development is an effective strategy for combatting sexist bias and promoting gender equality. By providing opportunities for women to excel and contribute, organisations can create a more inclusive and equitable society. The success stories highlighted in the data demonstrate the positive impact of such measures and reinforce the importance of continuing efforts to empower women and girls.

4.3.2 Mental Healing

The findings revealed that some victims of sexist bias in Buea communities have benefitted from mental healing due to the interventions of non-governmental organisations. Organisations, such as the Hadassah Foundation, have not only addressed the tangible aspects of discrimination but also the psychological well-being of individuals affected by sexist practices. One of the interviewees highlights real-life examples where women, who have faced various forms of discrimination, including depression and physical abuse, have benefitted from counselling sessions which have improved their mental health.

> *"We have encountered cases where women have been struggling with depression or have faced various forms of rights violations. Through our counselling sessions, many of these women have shared how beneficial it has been for them. Some had*

experienced physical abuse and were still carrying the weight of bitterness from past traumas. It's not just about handing out money; mental healing is crucial too." (Male, 33years, foundation manager Hadassah Foundation. 19/03/2024 Sandpit Buea).

This finding reveals the multifaceted nature of sexist bias and the need for comprehensive solutions. It emphasises that providing financial assistance alone is insufficient; addressing the psychological impact of discrimination is equally important. By acknowledging the importance of mental healing, interventions can better support individuals affected by sexist bias and contribute to long-term empowerment and resilience.

4.3.3 Success of Collective Support Networks

Non-government organisations in Buea have achieved some success based on collective support networks. The findings revealed how partnerships between organisations can lead to tangible improvements in the lives of individuals affected by gender-based discrimination. The Manager of Hadassah Foundation recounted instances where individuals referred to other organisations for assistance experienced significant relief, despite not having all their expectations met. A specific example was provided. It involves the case of a distressed pregnant woman from Bali who received support from UNFPA through the referral system.

"There was a pregnant woman from Bali who was distressed and had no support from her partner. Through our referral system, she received help from UNFPA, covering her medical expenses and providing essential supplies. This made a significant difference in her life, improving her health and outlook on the future." (Male, 33yeras, foundation manager Hadassah Foundation. 19/03/2024, Sandpit).

This finding underlines the effectiveness of collaboration between organizations in addressing the complex challenges associated with sexist bias. While not all expectations may be met, the provision of essential support services through referrals can have a meaningful impact on individuals' lives. In the case described, the pregnant woman benefited from medical assistance and essential supplies, which significantly improved her health and overall well-being.

4.3.4 Increased Awareness of Sexist Bias

The findings revealed that sensitisation campaigns about sexist bias have increased awareness about its vices in society. The Programme Coordinator of the Reachers Foundation

emphasizes the positive outcomes of sensitization campaigns. He indicated that individuals are becoming more aware of their behaviours and biases. This awareness enables them to recognise instances of unconscious bias and discrimination, thereby fostering a more inclusive and equitable environment.

> *"Many of them are now aware of what they have been going through... the next project that we are going to have is unconscious bias...to educate the people about some certain things that they do unwillingly thinking that is right but is a bias..."* (Male, 30years, program coordinator Reachers Foundation.12/03/2024, Bokwai Buea).

The findings suggest that by increasing awareness of the vices of sexist biases through sensitization campaigns, individuals become more cognisant of their actions and their potential impact on others. This heightened awareness contributes to the recognition and reduction of sexist bias and discrimination in society.

4.3.5 Increased Enrolment of Female Children in Schools

The findings revealed that there is an increase in the enrolment of females in schools. Historically, biases and discrimination have hindered girls' access to education, relegating them to marginalised roles within society. However, recent trends indicate a noticeable improvement in addressing these biases, leading to increased enrolment of female children in schools.

> *"I must acknowledge a significant improvement regarding biases related to access to education. Currently, many parents are making efforts, albeit not reaching complete equality, to provide their children with educational opportunities. Despite this, there's noticeable progress in mitigating biases that previously hindered girls' education. More girls now have access to schooling. Moreover, amidst crises, while some boys drop out and engage in other activities, girls largely continue attending school, potentially leading to a future where we see more educated girls and women."* (Male, 30years, program coordinator Reachers Foundation. 12/03/2024, Bokwai Buea).

The data suggests a positive trend towards gender equality in education, with more parents prioritising education for their daughters. While acknowledging that complete equality has not yet been achieved, the observed improvements signify significant progress in overcoming biases that previously limited girls' access to education. This shift is particularly noteworthy amidst societal crises, as girls are increasingly seen attending school while boys may be affected by dropout rates due to various challenges.

4.4 Quantitative findings on the Challenges in addressing sexist bias in Buea

Table 14: Challenges in addressing sexist bias in Buea

Challenges in mitigating sexist bias	Strongly agree	Agree (75%)	Neutral (50%)	Disagree (25%)	Strongly disagree	Total
The existence of cultural traditions which reinforce traditional gender roles	41.4% (29)	41.4% (29)	8.6% (6)	8.6% (6)	0% (0)	100% (70)
Resistance to change sexist norms due to a fear of the unknown	24.3% (17)	47.1% (33)	24.3% (17)	2.9% (2)	1.4% (1)	100% (70)
Lack of awareness of the negative implication of sexist bias in society	34.3% (24)	45.7% (32)	11.4% (8)	7.1% (5)	1.4% (1)	100% (70)
Resistance from individuals who feel threatened by efforts to address sexism	22.9% (16)	52.9% (37)	18.6% (13)	1.4% (1)	4.3% (3)	100% (70)
Inadequate legal frameworks to address new and evolving forms of sexism	32.9% (23)	41.4% (29)	18.6% (13)	4.3% (3)	2.9% (2)	100% (70)
Underreporting of sexist bias incident due to fear of retaliation and stigma	41.4% (29)	31.4% (22)	15.7% (11)	7.1% (5)	4.3% (3)	100% (70)
Continued portrayal of gender stereotypes in media reinforces traditional gender norms and expectations	14.3% (10)	48.6% (34)	21.4% (15)	5.7% (4)	10% (7)	100% (70)
Lack of awareness due to limited inclusion of comprehensive gender education in school curricula	28.6% (20)	35.7% (25)	15.7% (11)	11.4% (8)	8.6% (6)	100% (70)
Insufficient political will to prioritise and allocate resources for combating sexism.	25.7% (18)	45.7% (32)	24.3% (17)	2.9% (2)	1.4% (1)	100% (70)

Source: Tanyi Christabel Eyong Fieldwork, 2024

The findings identified the challenges hindering the struggles to address sexist bias in Buea. Based on the findings, 82.4% (41.4% strongly agree and 41.4% agree) of the research participants revealed that the existence of cultures that reinforce traditional gender roles hinder the efforts to address sexism in Buea as opposed to 8.6% (8.6% disagree and 0%

strongly disagree) of the respondents who refuted the statement while 8.6% of the respondents were neutral. Similarly, 71.4% (24.3% strongly agree and 47.1% agree) of the respondents revealed that resistance to change sexist norms due to fear of the unknown hinders the efforts to address sexist bias in the region as opposed to 4.3% (2.9% disagree and 1.4% strongly disagree) of the respondents who refuted the statement while 24.3% of the respondents were neutral.

Also, 80% (34.3% strongly agree and 45.7% agree) of the respondents revealed that the lack of awareness of the negative implication of sexist bias in society hinders its eradication, as opposed to 8.5% (7.1% disagree and 1.4% strongly disagree) of the respondents who refuted the statement while 11.4% of the respondents were neutral. Similarly, 75.8% (22.9% strongly agree and 52.9% agree) of the respondents revealed that resistance from individuals who feel threatened by efforts to address sexism hinder the eradication of the practice in Buea as opposed to 5.7% (1.4% disagree and 4.3% strongly disagree) of the respondents who negated the statement while 18.6% of the respondents were neutral.

Equally, 74.3% (32.9% strongly agree and 41.4% agree) of the respondents admitted that inadequate legal frameworks to address new and evolving forms of sexism hinder its eradication as opposed to 7.2% (4.3% disagree and 2.9% strongly disagree) of the respondents who refuted the statement while 18.6% of the respondents were neutral. Similarly, 72.8% (41.4% strongly agree and 31.4% agree) of the respondents admitted that the underreporting of sexist bias incidents due to fear of retaliation and stigma hinder its eradication in Buea as opposed to 11.4% (7.1% disagree and 4.3% strongly disagree) of the respondents who refuted the statement while 15.7% of the respondents are neutral.

Furthermore, 62.9% (14.3% strongly agree and 48.6% agree) of the students acknowledged that continued portrayal of gender stereotypes in media reinforces traditional gender norms and expectations as opposed to 15.7% (5.7% disagree and 10% strongly disagree) of the respondents who refuted the statement meanwhile 21.4% of the respondents were neutral. Similarly, 64.3% (28.6% strongly agree and 35.7% agree) of the respondents admitted that the lack of awareness due to limited inclusion of comprehensive gender education in school curricula makes it difficult to eradicate sexist bias in Buea as opposed to 20% (11.4% disagree and 8.6% strongly disagree) of the respondents who refuted the statement while 15.7% of the respondents were neutral.

Additionally, 71.4% (25.7% strongly agree and 45.7% agree) of the respondents revealed that insufficient political will to prioritise and allocate resources for combating sexism makes it difficult to eradicate it as opposed to 4.3% (2.9% disagree and 1.4% strongly disagree) of the respondents who refuted the statement while 24.3% of the respondents were neutral.

4.5 Qualitative findings on the challenges in addressing sexist bias in Buea

4.5.1 Limited resources

The findings disclose that inadequate resources limit the efforts to address sexist bias in Buea. The Representative of the South West Regional Delegate of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family admitted that the Ministry faces challenges due to limited resources, particularly in providing financial support to women facing biased employment practices. This limitation hampers efforts to empower women economically, hindering their ability to access certain sectors of formal employment.

> *"We have limited resources...let us take a woman that is faced with bias in employment who cannot get formal employment in certain sectors because her status that woman may need funds to get herself empowered in that sector and we don't have that to give so that's a challenge."* (Female, 45years, Representative of the SWR Delegate of MINPROFF.27/02/2024, Soppo Buea).

> *"This phenomenon is not yielding the desired outcomes primarily because of limited resources. For instance, if you plan to organize a seminar to educate against sexist practices, the availability of resources determines how many people you can reach. This limitation hinders the ability of organizations and individuals who are willing to combat this issue from effectively engaging in the cause."* (Male, 34years, CEO representative Ndes Foundation. 07/03/2024, Malingo Buea).

> *"We could attribute it to poverty, or more specifically, the lack of funding. Even if an NGO has a robust project, without sufficient funding, it becomes challenging to execute and reach those who need assistance. This lack of resources acts as a hindrance to effectively reaching out to people and addressing the issue at hand."* (Male, 33years, foundation manager Hadassah Foundation. 19/03/2024, Sandpit Buea).

The challenge of limited resources underlines the importance of sustainable funding and resource allocation in addressing sexist bias. Without adequate financial support, the Ministry may struggle to implement effective programs and initiatives that empower women economically and address biased employment practices

4.5.2 Resistance to Gender Equality

The result disclosed that resistance and lack of receptiveness from society pose significant obstacles to the efforts of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family and some non-government organisations to address sexist bias. The Representative of the SWR Delegate of MINPROFF explained that deep-seated cultural norms and misconceptions about gender roles contribute to this resistance, making it challenging to promote equality and address bias effectively.

> *"Sometimes, when you are preaching it is like you are going to break people's homes. There is a general misconception about this idea of equality... it makes it challenging now because when you go to society and you are trying to pass a certain information, the idea is that men instead of being open indeed to receive what you want to sensitize them on, they become defensive..."* (Female, 45years, Representative of the SWR Delegate of MINPROFF. 27/02/2024, Soppo Buea).

> *"When attempting to alter cultural norms, it is akin to challenging. Be prepared for resistance, as there will likely be pushback and opposing reactions. This is especially true when dealing with deeply ingrained aspects of culture."* (Male, 34years, CEO representative Ndes Foundation. 07/03/2024, Malingo Buea).

The findings also reveal that some non-governmental organisations also experience the challenge of resistance. They asserted that some men are not cooperative in addressing sexist bias because of personal beliefs.

> *"There are some personal beliefs that hinder the efforts against sexist bias. Some men think they are not supposed to be opposed or they are not supposed to take opinions from the opposite gender. So, this is the social belief"* (Male, 35years, project coordinator Demtou Humanitarian. 21/03/2024, Borstal street Buea).

Overcoming resistance and changing societal attitudes towards gender equality requires a multifaceted approach. Addressing misconceptions and fostering dialogue is essential in gaining public acceptance and support for efforts to combat sexist bias. The Ministry must employ effective communication strategies to engage with communities and challenge entrenched biases.

4.5.3 Cultural Challenges

The findings suggest that cultural beliefs and practices present significant barriers to raising awareness and promoting gender equality. The results showed that ingrained biases

hinder the efforts of non-governmental organisations in Buea to educate the public about sexist bias and challenge discriminatory practices.

> *"Cultural or traditional beliefs hinder the efforts against sexist bias. It is entrenched in society. Because of this, there is nothing a man or woman can do to address sexist bias. The individual is at the mercy of the society because that is how the society is structured"* (Male, 35years, project coordinator Demtou Humanitarian. 21/03/2024,Borstal street Buea).

> *"In our patriarchal society, we are raised to believe that men are the heads of the family, and thus, they should make all the decisions. Their word is final, and your input may or may not be valued. Growing up with such beliefs perpetuates sexism, fuelled by cultural norms that prioritize male authority and diminish the role of women"* (Female, 29years, assistant head of department Reach Out Cameroon. 21/03/2024, Borstal street Buea).

The result suggests that cultural beliefs create a formidable barrier to combating sexist bias, leaving individuals feeling powerless against societal norms. The beliefs shape individuals' perceptions, behaviours, and opportunities, thereby contributing to systemic gender inequalities. As a result, there is a need for profound cultural and societal transformation to address sexist bias effectively.

4.5.4 Fear of Unknown

The result reveals that deeply ingrained cultural beliefs, particularly those related to superstition and witchcraft, instil fear in individuals who seek to advocate for gender equality. This fear stems from the unknown and the consequences perceived to result from challenging traditional norms and cultural beliefs. It serves as a significant barrier to individuals, including human rights advocates, who may otherwise work towards achieving gender justice and equality.

> *"Fear of the unknown is a significant challenge in addressing sexist bias. Some people believe in phenomena like witchcraft, which adds to the fear. For instance, even if someone is a human rights advocate championing gender equality, cultural beliefs may instil fear about the consequences of challenging societal norms. This fear can be limiting"* (Female, 29years, assistant head of department Reach Out Cameroon. 21/03/2024, Borstal street Buea).

The results demonstrates that fear, particularly fear of the unknown and fear of cultural repercussions, inhibits individuals from challenging sexist bias and advocating for gender equality. Cultural beliefs in witchcraft or supernatural consequences for challenging traditional norms create a climate of fear and intimidation. This fear serves as a powerful

deterrent, limiting individuals' willingness to speak out against injustices and perpetuating the status quo of sexist bias and inequality.

4.6 Quantitative findings on recommended strategies to address sexist bias in Buea

Table 15: Quantitative findings on recommended strategies to address sexist bias in Buea

Recommendations	Very likely	Likely (75%)	Neutral (50%)	Unlikely (25%)	Very unlikely	Total
Implementation of educational programmes that challenge gender stereotypes and promote understanding of equality	50% (35)	37.1% (26)	11.4% (8)	1.4% (1)	0% (0)	100% (70)
Enacting and enforcing laws that prohibit gender-based discrimination	57.1% (40)	24.3% (17)	12.9% (9)	1.4% (1)	4.3% (3)	100% (70)
Implementing policies in workplaces that address the gender pay gap	41.4% (29)	35.7% (25)	15.7% (11)	2.9% (2)	4.3% (3)	100% (70)
Promotion of media literacy programmes that help individuals critically analyse and challenge gender stereotypes	40% (28)	42.9% (30)	11.4% (8)	2.9% (2)	2.9% (2)	100% (70)
Encouraging diverse representation in leadership positions and decision-making bodies	47.1% (33)	32.9% (23)	18.6% (13)	1.4% (1)	0% (0)	100% (70)
Providing mentorship programs, scholarships, and resources that empower girls and women to pursue education and career paths like STEM fields	41.4% (29)	38.6% (27)	12.9% (9)	4.3% (3)	2.9% (2)	100% (70)
Facilitating community discussions and workshops on gender equality to engage people in conversations that challenge stereotypes	47.1% (33)	37.1% (26)	10% (7)	2.9% (2)	2.9% (2)	100% (70)
Establishing safe spaces where individuals can report incidents of sexism without fear of retaliation	44.3% (31)	35.7% (25)	11.4% (8)	2.9% (2)	5.7% (4)	100% (70)
Establishing support services for survivors of gender-based violence and assistance to break free from harmful situations	40% (28)	34.3% (24)	22.9% (16)	1.4% (1)	1.4% (1)	100% (70)
Promotion of share caregiving responsibilities to allow both parents to take time off work after the birth or adoption of a child	38.6% (27)	25.7% (18)	28.6% (20)	4.3% (3)	2.9% (2)	100% (70)
Encouraging men to actively participate in and advocate for gender equality initiatives	50% (17)	24.3% (17)	17.1% (12)	2.9% (2)	5.7% (4)	100% (70)

Source: Tanyi Christabel Eyong Fieldwork, 2024

The findings reveal several recommendations to mitigate the prevalence of sexist bias in Buea. Based on the result, 87.1% (50% Very likely and 37.1% Likely) of the respondents admitted that the implementation of educational programmes that challenge gender stereotypes and promote understanding of equality will contribute to mitigating the prevalence of sexist bias in Buea as opposed to 1.4% (1.4% Unlikely and 0% Very unlikely) of the respondents who refuted the statement meanwhile 11.4% of the respondents were neutral. Similarly, 81.4% (57.1% Very likely and 24.3% Likely) of the respondents believe that enacting and enforcing laws that prohibit gender-based discrimination will contribute to reducing the prevalence of sexist bias in Buea as opposed to 5.7% (1.4% Unlikely and 4.3% Very unlikely) of the respondents who refuted the statement while 12.9% of the respondents were neutral.

Equally, 77.1% (41.4% Very likely and 35.7% Likely) of the respondents asserted that implementing policies in workplaces that address the gender pay gap will contribute to mitigating sexist bias as opposed to 7.2% (2.9% Unlikely and 4.3% Very unlikely) of the respondents who refuted the statement while 15.7% of the respondents were neutral. Similarly, 82.9% (40% Very likely and 42.9% Likely) of the respondents state that the promotion of media literacy programs that help individuals critically analyse and challenge gender stereotypes portrayed in the media will contribute to mitigating sexist bias as opposed to 5.8% (2.9% Unlikely and 2.9% Very unlikely) of the respondents who refuted the statement while 11.4% were neutral.

Furthermore, 80% (47.1% Very likely and 32.9% Likely) of the respondents stated that encouraging diverse representation in leadership positions and decision-making bodies helps to mitigate sexist bias as opposed to 1.4% (1.4% Unlikely and 0% Very unlikely) of the respondents who refuted the statement while 18.6% of the respondents were neutral. Similarly, 80% (41.4% Very likely and 38.6% Likely) of the respondents asserted that providing mentorship programs, scholarships, and resources that empower girls and women to pursue education and career paths traditionally underrepresented by their gender will contribute to mitigating sexist bias as opposed to 7.2% (4.3% Unlikely and 2.9% Very unlikely) of the respondents refuted the statement while 12.9% of the respondents were neutral.

Additionally, 84.2% (47.1% Very likely and 37.1% Likely) of the respondents revealed that facilitating community discussions and workshops on gender equality to engage

people in conversations that challenge stereotypes will contribute to mitigating sexist bias as opposed to 5.8% (2.9% Unlikely and 2.9% Very unlikely) of the respondents who refuted the statement while 10% of the respondents were neutral. Similarly, 80% (44.3% Very likely and 35.7% Likely) of the respondents attested that establishing safe spaces where individuals can report incidents of sexism without fear of retaliation will contribute to mitigating sexist bias as opposed to 8.6% (2.9% Unlikely and 5.7% Very unlikely) of the respondents who refuted the statement while 11.4% were neutral.

Equally, 74.3% (40% Very likely and 34.3% Likely) of the respondents affirmed that establishing support services for survivors of gender-based violence and assistance to break free from harmful situations will contribute to mitigating sexist bias as opposed to 2.8% (1.4% Unlikely and 1.4% Very likely) of the respondents who refuted the statement while 22.9% of the respondents were neutral. Similarly, 64.3% (38.6% Very likely and 25.7% Likely) of the respondents asserted that the promotion of shared caregiving responsibilities like implementing inclusive parental leave policies that allow both parents to take time off work after the birth or adoption of a child will contribute to mitigating sexist bias as opposed to 7.2% (4.3% Unlikely and 2.9% Very unlikely) of the respondents who refuted the statement while 28.6% of the respondents were neutral. In addition, 74.3% (50% Very likely and 24.3% Likely) of the respondents disclosed that encouraging men to actively participate in and advocate for gender equality initiatives will contribute to mitigating sexist bias in Buea as opposed to 8.6% (2.9% Unlikely and 5.7% Very unlikely) of the respondents who refuted the statement while 17.1% of the respondents were neutral.

4.7 Qualitative findings on recommended strategies to address sexist bias in Buea

4.7.1 Adoption of Affirmative Actions

The findings suggest that the adoption of affirmative actions is essential to eradicating sexist biases in Buea. It seeks to promote equality in society. The Representative of the South West Regional Delegation of MINPROFF reveals that affirmative actions will drastically intensify the success rate in the efforts against sexist bias in the country. She recommends that the government should take drastic intervention measures.

> *"If the government decides today that they are instituting affirmative actions in all aspects, it is going to reduce a lot of gender bias. Let me take the educational sector most teachers are men how many women are principals in schools and in various big schools? The government can institute affirmative actions like 50% of all principals*

must be female, 50% of ministers must be female, 50% of directors of parastatals have to be women, 50% of commissioners have to be females but they can at least start with 10%" (Female, 45years, Representative of the SWR Delegate of MINPROFF. 27/02/2024, Soppo Buea).

The findings indicate the adoption of various affirmative adoptions will contribute to the efforts against sexist biases in Buea. In line with is, the research participant from Demtou Humanitarian explained that positive discrimination enables them to ensure gender parity in society.

"Sometimes, positive discrimination is necessary to make sure that the sex which is less represented becomes more represented…During the publication of job offers, we always write in bold letters that women are encouraged to apply. I think that is one of the aspects of positive discrimination. We try to strike that for balance for gender equality" (Male, 35years, project coordinator Demtou Humanitarian. 21/03/2024, Borstal street Buea).

"NADEV has been focusing on empowering women for over 26 years, embodying the principle that 'charity begins at home.' In our organization, we prioritize giving opportunities to women, with 90% of our staff being female. Across all our endeavours, we consciously provide more opportunities for women. In the communities we serve, our efforts predominantly involve working with women. Our community leaders are mostly women, and our beneficiaries are women." (Female, 36years, program coordinator NADEV NGO. 07/03/2024, rue Hibmat Buea)

Ndes Foundation also ensures gender parity in their activities. The research participant notes, "*The executive ensures inclusivity by implementing quotas for gender representation, aiming to prevent bias towards one gender. This is evident in our staff composition and project beneficiaries, where we consistently integrate gender considerations. For instance, we track the number of females and males benefiting from each project, with some initiatives specifically targeting vulnerable girls who face significant gender bias due to parental absence. We empower them by providing timely relief, such as distributing sanitary products, and educating them on essential needs that uphold their dignity as women.*" The result shows that affirmative actions contribute to enhancing equality and increasing women's representation in male-dominated occupations like governance and security. It helps to close the gender gap existing in certain occupations.

4.7.2 Increase in Budgetary Allocation

The findings reveal that boosting the government's budget for the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family would enhance their efforts to combat sexist bias in

Cameroon. The Representative of the South West Regional Delegate for MINPROFF highlighted that their current budget is insufficient considering the scope of their responsibilities.

> *"The government should make enough resources available for the ministry because the truth is that the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family has one of the least budget and the truth is that , that is not fair"* (Female, 45years, Representative of the SWR Delegate of MINPROFF. 27/02/2024, Soppo Buea).

The Ndes Foundation adds that non-governmental organisations should establish connections with funders. The connection will enable them raise the necessary financial resources to carryout activities aimed at addressing sexist bias in communities. The organisation notes, *"While their willingness to work is evident, securing funding remains a major obstacle. It's crucial for them to establish connections with various funders who are keen on supporting such initiatives. This will enable them to obtain the necessary resources to carry out their work effectively."* The research findings indicate that an increase in government's budgetary allocation of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family will stimulate efforts meant to address sexist bias in the nation.

4.7.3 Adoption of Gender-Inclusive Policies

The findings reveal the importance of incorporating gender considerations into policymaking processes as a strategy to combat sexist bias in society. The Representative of the South West Regional Delegate of MINPROFF emphasises that by integrating gender aspects into governmental actions and policies, significant strides can be made in reducing bias.

> *"The government should factor in the gender aspect in everything they are doing. This is going to help a lot in reducing bias"* (Female, 45years, Representative of the SWR Delegate of MINPROFF. 27/02/2024, Soppo Buea).

The Representative of the South West Regional Delegate of MINPROFF highlights the inherent bias that can arise from policies that do not explicitly consider gender dynamics. She illustrates this point with the example of agricultural policies. When government initiatives focus solely on sectors traditionally dominated by men, such as cocoa farming, women are indirectly excluded. This exclusion perpetuates bias and reinforces gender inequalities within the agricultural sector.

"...If they are concentrating on sectors that are mostly done by men that is another bias in the agricultural sector. If the government has a policy to improve agriculture and the target is just the cocoa sector, the government have not said women you are kept aside but indirectly women are out of it" (Female, 45years, Representative of the SWR Delegate of MINPROFF. 27/02/2024, Soppo Buea).

The finding suggests that the government can actively address sexist bias and promote gender equality by incorporating gender perspectives into policy formulation. Gender-responsive policymaking ensures that the needs, experiences, and contributions of both men and women are considered and valued, leading to more inclusive and equitable outcomes across all sectors of society. This approach is essential for dismantling entrenched biases and fostering a more just and egalitarian society for all individuals, regardless of gender.

4.7.4 Enhanced Collaboration for Gender Equality Advocacy

The findings suggest an enhancement in the collaboration between non-governmental organisations and government agencies to collectively address sexist bias in Buea. One of the research participants emphasised the importance of creating platforms for regular meetings, information sharing, and joint policy development to effectively combat gender inequalities.

"I believe it is crucial to establish regular forums where NGOs and government agencies can meet, ensuring access and facilitating the sharing of experiences. Currently, there seems to be a disconnection between governmental and local agencies, leading to a lack of information exchange. NGOs often operate separately, while government officials tend to engage only when they need something specific. This lack of accessibility hampers effective collaboration. Therefore, I advocate for enhanced accessibility and regular meetings, monthly meetings, to foster collaboration. It's essential to share information and jointly develop policies addressing sexist bias issues. By doing so, we can ensure these policies reach a global audience and effectively combat sexist biases. Collaboration is key as we strive towards achieving equal rights and equality for all." (Female, 53years, CEO Mike Yanou Foundation. 12/02/2024, GRA Buea).

The research findings identified the fragmentation and lack of communication between non-governmental organisations and government agencies, such as the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family, in Buea in addressing sexist bias. It notes that this lack of communication can be overcome by creating platforms for regular meetings and fostering information sharing between government agencies and NGOs. The coming together of these advocates is essential for developing and implementing policies that will effectively tackle

sexist bias in the municipality. This guarantees the creation of a more equitable society where everyone, regardless of gender, has equal rights and opportunities.

4.7.5 Early Education and Sensitization

The findings showed that the proactive approach of early education and sensitization efforts can contribute to addressing sexist bias in Buea. One of the interviewees emphasises the importance of starting at a young age to instil gender equality values, particularly within families and communities. The focus is on challenging traditional beliefs that prioritize boys over girls, often resulting in unequal opportunities and treatment.

> *"Another thing that we will want to start with is to involve in early education and sensitisation. We want to see that at equal treatment is given to boys and girls at a very tender age. Individual families will want to empower the boy child more thinking that the girl child is a source of money. We want to address this sexist bias at a young age"* (Female, 36years, program coordinator NADEV NGO.07/03/2024, rue Hibmat Buea).

> *"I believe that creating awareness is crucial, and sensitization campaigns are essential for combating sexist bias."* (Male, 34years, CEO representative Ndes Foundation. 07/03/2024, Malingo Buea).

The findings highlight the significance of early intervention and education in addressing sexist bias. By targeting children at a young age, particularly within the family unit, there's an opportunity to challenge ingrained gender stereotypes and promote equality from the outset. Also, the implementation of sensitization messages and advocacy efforts across various settings including workplaces, schools, and communities, aims to reduce gender-based restrictions and ensure equal rights and opportunities for all individuals.

4.7.6 Grassroots Engagement

The findings revealed that grassroots engagement is essential in addressing sexist bias. One of the research participants emphasised the importance of involving local communities and individuals with relevant skills and expertise in efforts to combat gender inequality. By empowering everyday people to actively participate in shaping and implementing initiatives, organizations can foster sustainable change from the ground up.

> *"Community involvement is crucial. By community, I mean the everyday people who need to become aware of the issue and actively participate in shaping plans, contributing ideas, and ensuring the sustainability of the outcomes. Their active*

participation and dedication are vital for ensuring the longevity of these efforts. Furthermore, it is essential to engage the necessary manpower on the ground to effectively implement these efforts. This involves collaborating with individuals who possess the skills and expertise required to drive the initiatives forward." (Male, 34years, CEO representative Ndes Foundation. 07/03/2024, Malingo Buea)

The finding showed that grassroots engagement is essential for driving sustainable change in addressing sexist bias. By involving individuals with relevant skills and expertise in the planning and implementation of initiatives, organizations can ensure that efforts are tailored to the specific needs and context of local communities. Furthermore, community involvement fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility, empowering individuals to actively contribute to shaping and sustaining these initiatives.

This chapter concludes with us seeing the various response mechanisms adopted by the NGOs and the Ministry of women empowerment and the Family to address sexist bias in Buea. We equaly see   the successes in addressing sexist bias in Buea. We also come across the quantitative and qualitative findings on the challenges in addressing sexist bias in Buea, with the quantitative and qualitative findings on recommended strategies to address sexist bias in Buea. This leads us to the conclusion of our work.

This research, "Understanding Sexist Bias in Buea municipality: Types, Causes and Effects," is anchored on the prevalence of sexist bias in Buea. The absence of contemporary evidence on the manifestation, causes, consequences, response mechanisms, successes, and challenges of addressing sexist bias in the municipality stimulated the researcher to carry out this research. Generally, Cameroon is a patriarchal society. Women and girls are considered to be inferior to men and boys in the nation. The Gender Standby Capacity Project reports that half of the female population in Cameroon lives below the poverty line, whereas only a quarter of men do. This inequality is equally reflected in the ownership of assets: only 3% of Cameroonian women own a house. In terms of education, boys generally have greater access, which subsequently leads to enhanced prospects of economic and social independence.

Sexist bias is predominant in Buea. It has also been recognized as a serious threat at the national and international levels. The predominant nature of sexist bias has attracted local and international interventions to address it. For instance, The Global Fund for Women (2019) articulates that women's rights are the fundamental human rights that were enshrined by the United Nations for every human on the planet nearly 70 years ago. These rights include the right to live free from violence, slavery, and discrimination; to be educated; to own property; to vote; and to earn a fair and equal wage. In 2011, MINPROFF revealed that women in Cameroon make up 50.5% of the estimated population of Cameroon. However, despite this numerical advantage, women's rights are not given the attention they deserve. Today, women are among the most disadvantaged and subjugated people. As girls, children, or wives, women, according to Ngassa (1999, p.24) are generally regarded as a source of wealth and subject to male domination and exploitation from which they (men) derive material benefit and convenience. That is, women act as housekeepers, cooks, water and wood fetchers, child bearers and nurturers, care providers for sick and old people, providers of extra labor in men's cash crop farms and subsistence food crops for the family, extra income from bride price and, when they are employed, additional income for the family.

The use of Buea as the geographical case study was essential to the researcher. This is because of the absence of empirical evidence to demonstrate the causes, manifestations,

and consequences of sexist bias in the locality. This made it difficult for the research community to understand how sexist bias manifests in Buea. The researcher focused on providing empirical data on sexist bias in Buea.

Three research questions were formulated to answer the specific objectives of this research with one main research questions and two secondary research questions. In the same manner, three research hypotheses were developed with one main research hypotheses and two secondary hypotheses. The hypotheses aligned with the research questions and objectives of this study.

Three objectives were formulated for this research, with one main objective and two secondary objectives. The main objective of this research was to investigate the prevalence and manifestation of sexist bias in various domains, such as education, employment, and social interaction within Buea. This general objective encapsulates the research problem and summarizes the purpose of the research. It makes it easier for readers to have a comprehensive understanding of the purpose of the research. The second objective was to identify the underlying factors contributing to the perpetuation of sexist bias in the Buea municipality, such as cultural norms, socio-economic conditions and institutional practices. The third objective was to examine the social and psychological effects of sexist bias on individuals within the Buea municipality.

The study used three theories: The Gender Socialization by Elham Hoominfar, the Social Dominance Theory and Power Comparison by Robin Bergh, Gregory K. Davis, Sa-Kiera T. J. Hudson, and Jim Sidanius 2020 and the Social Representation theory by Serge Moscovici. These theories were essential to this research. They provided in-depth information used to understand the research problems. For instance, the Gender Socialization Theory is a process whereby individuals develop, refine and learn to do gender through internalizing gender norms and roles as they interact with key agents of socialization, such as their family, social networks and other social institutions. This shows that an individual's socialization network influences his or her attitude or behavior towards another. When individuals find themselves among those who promote sexism in a community, those individuals are more likely to promote sexism as well. Contrary, when an individual finds himself or herself among those who detest the prevalence of sexism in a community, that individual is more likely to contribute to addressing sexism in the community. The Social Dominance Theory posits that sexist bias is rooted in power dynamics and the desire for one group to maintain dominance

over another. It suggests that sexism is a means of exerting control and preserving social, economic, and political advantages for the dominant group. The theory of social representation suggests that our understanding of social phenomena including gender-based stereotypes and prejudices is shaped by the collective representations and shared knowledge within the Buea municipality. These theories enable the researcher to have in-depth information on the research problem.

To obtain scientific results for the research objectives and questions, the study utilized a mixed approach. The approach was made up of qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative approach focused on obtaining in-depth information from the representative of the South West Regional Delegate for the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family and non-governmental organizations such as Mike Yanou Foundation, Ndes Foundation, NADEV, Reachers Foundation, Demtou Foundation and Hadassah Foundation. The quantitative approach enabled the research to gather quantifiable responses on the manifestation, types, causes, and consequences of sexism in Buea. The data was obtained through the survey method and expressed in statistical form using frequencies and percentages. The outcome of the quantitative approach can be generalized to the entire population. The combination of these approaches helps overcome the weaknesses of each other.

Questionnaires and semi-structured interview guides constituted the research instruments. The questionnaires targeted employees from diverse institutions, including non-governmental organizations, Buea Regional Hospital, Seventh Day Adventist Hospital, the South West Regional Delegation of MINPROFF, Bilingual Grammar School, and Government Technical High School. Two different semi-structured interview guides were developed. The first was meant for directors and representatives of non-governmental organizations in Buea, and the second was for the Representative of the South West Regional Delegate of Women's Empowerment and the Family.

The qualitative data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 27. The software was efficient in categorizing, arranging, and presenting data in an orderly manner. The outcome of the analysis was presented in tables made up of frequencies and percentages. The qualitative data were analyzed in the form of themes. The data were transcribed word verbatim and read severally. The researcher identified the relevant themes

from the transcript that could provide feedback on the research objectives. The outcome of the analysis is presented in the form of themes supported by excerpts from the interviewees.

The quantitative data were used to test the hypotheses. The first hypothesis stated that there is a significant presence of sexist bias in Buea with observable manifestations in education, employment, and social interactions (as seen in chapter 2). The result of a One-Sample T-test, which was conducted to determine whether there is a significant presence of sexist bias in Buea, revealed that the statement is true. This confirmed the hypothesis. Descriptively, the majority of the respondents attested that sexist bias is prevalent in Buea.

The second hypothesis asserted that cultural norms, socio-economic conditions and institutional practices are significant contributing factors to the perpetuation of sexist bias in Buea. A One-Sample T-Test approved the hypothesis. The result of the One-Sample T-Test reveals that cultural norms, socioeconomic conditions and institutional practices significantly contribute to the perpetuation of sexist bias in Buea (as seen in chapter 3). The result of the test aligned with the descriptive result. It showed that the majority of the respondents affirmed that traditional gender roles, lack of information challenging gender stereotypes, cultural influence, media influence, power imbalance, absence of regulatory policies, parental influence, insufficient education and peer pressure are underlying factors contributing to the prevalence of sexist bias in Buea.

The third hypothesis articulated that sexist bias has a significant negative effect on victims in Buea. This hypothesis was confirmed through a One-Sample T-Test. The test revealed that bias has a significant negative effect on victims in Buea (see chapter three). The result of the test supported the descriptive finding, where the majority of the respondents admitted that sexist bias limits career advancement for women because they are being overlooked, promotes gender pay gap, promotes workplace bias, leads to mental health and promotes low self-esteem. Five research questions were formulated to answer the specific objectives of this research. In the same manner, five research hypotheses were developed. The hypotheses aligned with the research questions and objectives of this study.

This dissertation was structured into four chapters. The first part of this dissertation presented the context and justification of the study, the research problem, research objectives, questions, hypotheses, theories, and methodology. This part also encapsulated the meaning of sexist bias, national and international conventions addressing sexist bias, and non-

governmental organizations in Buea that have tailored their activities to address sexist bias and promote an inclusive and equitable society.

Chapter One is titled "Understanding sexist bias and its dynamics". This chapter presented an overview of sexist bias. This included its definition and types. The chapter unveils that the phenomenon of sexist bias is as old as human history. It has existed from time immemorial. Early feminists such as Christine de Pizan in the 15th century in France, Mary Wollstonecraft in the 17th century in Britain, and Simone de Beauvoir, only to name a few, denounced the arbitrariness and the illegitimacy of the hierarchical organization of gender differences in the society. Pauline M. Leet's speech "*Women and the Undergraduate"* in the United States in 1965 made the term enter lay people's vocabulary and become a subject of debate.

The second chapter dwelled on the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of the research. In this chapter, the researcher examined the theory of Gender Organization by the American Sociologist, Joan Acker. It also examines the concept of gender equality, sexism as a form of inequality and discrimination, inequality and discrimination from a power perspective and different dimensions of power.

The third chapter presents the manifestation, causes and consequences of sexist bias in Buea. The data were obtained from the questionnaires administered to employees of non-governmental organizations, Buea Regional Hospital, Seventh Day Adventist Hospital, the South West Regional Delegation of MINPROFF, Bilingual Grammar School, and Government Technical High School. The qualitative data also provided in-depth information to understand the manifestation, causes and consequences of sexist bias in Buea. The result showed that sexist bias is prevalent in Buea and females mostly suffer from sexist bias more than males. Also, the findings indicate that sexist bias is manifesting in various sectors in Buea. These sectors include public transportation, culture and inheritance, physical violence, stereotyping and prejudice in security practices, occupation roles, imbalance in resource allocation, participation in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) fields and decision-making.

The result also disclosed that religious teachings, custom and tradition, male jealousy, societal bias, the power imbalance between males and females, societal expectations and responsibilities and the effects of the Anglophone crisis are the prevalent factors contributing

to the existence of sexist bias in Buea. The prevalence of sexism in the community has led to several consequences such as discrimination and unfair treatment, limited opportunities, absence of equity and equality in treatment and job dissatisfaction.

In the fourth chapter, the findings indicated that the South West Delegation of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family and some non-government organizations have taken various measures to address sexist bias in Buea. They are engaging in sensitization campaigns to create awareness of sexist bias. The awareness campaigns make individuals aware of sexist bias, its forms, and its consequences. This makes the population adopt alternative measures to promote an equitable society. Mass media outlets, such as radio and social media platforms, are also employed for sensitization campaigns. Also, the non-government organizations, including the Regional Delegation of MINPROFF, are engaged in capacity building. The capacity-building sessions equip women with contemporary skills in areas like Information and Communication Technology, and Graphic design. Women are also offered long-term and short-term courses at the Women Empowerment Center in Buea. Long-term courses include dressmaking and interior decoration, computer/office, catering and hotel management, craft production, and graphics arts. Short-term courses focus on areas like textile transformation, interior decoration, catering, pastries and varieties of salad, different tables for ceremonies, dressing, skirting for ceremonies, chemical production (soap, rubbing oil), transformation (starch, juices, yoghurt, etc.), production of "*Kaba*", and Microsoft Packages such as Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, and Microsoft Publisher. The result also revealed that other forms of response mechanisms include support and engagement, intervention and advocacy, policy advocacy, and exemplary role modeling.

Still, in the fourth chapter, the findings revealed that the response mechanisms of the South West Regional Delegation of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family (MINPROFF) and non-governmental organizations are yielding positive fruits. For instance, the findings revealed that some victims of sexist bias in Buea communities have benefited from mental healing due to the interventions of non-governmental organizations. Organizations, such as the Hadassah Foundation, have not only addressed the tangible aspects of discrimination but also the psychological well-being of individuals affected by sexist practices. Also, the result shows that female representation in leadership positions and participation in skill development programmes are yielding positive outcomes. The Assistant Director of Ndes Foundation asserts that the Vice President of Ndes Foundation is a

woman and she has achieved numerous successes. Her leadership role challenges stereotypes about women's capabilities. Equally, the findings revealed that sensitization campaigns about sexist bias have increased awareness about its vices in society.

Despite the successes recorded in addressing sexist bias, the South Delegation of MINPROFF and non-governmental organizations are facing various challenges. The findings disclose that inadequate resources limit efforts to address sexist bias in Buea. The Representative of the South West Regional Delegate of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family admitted that the Ministry faces challenges due to limited resources, particularly in providing financial support to women facing biased employment practices. This limitation hampers efforts to empower women economically, hindering their ability to access certain sectors of formal employment. Also, challenges such as resistance to gender equality, fear of the unknown, and cultural challenges impede efforts to address sexist bias in Buea.

The findings suggest that the adoption of affirmative action is essential to eradicating sexist biases in Buea. It also revealed that an increase in budgetary allocation and the adoption of gender-inclusive policies will contribute to addressing sexist bias in the nation. For instance, gender-responsive policymaking ensures that the needs, experiences, and contributions of both men and women are considered and valued, leading to more inclusive and equitable outcomes across all sectors of society. This approach is essential for dismantling entrenched biases and fostering a more just and egalitarian society for all individuals, regardless of gender. Grassroots engagement, early education, and sensitizations as well as strong collaborations among non-governmental organizations, government ministries, and community members, are essential for addressing bias in the nation. These findings answered the fundamental objectives of this research.

The researcher encountered some challenges in the course of data collection. One of the challenges is the inability to situate the office premises of some non-governmental organizations in Buea. Some of the non-governmental organizations had moved to permanent sites. Some of the sites were in the interior of Buea. This made it difficult for the researcher to locate them. The researcher made some inquiries to be able to locate them. Equally, some Executive Directors were reluctant to provide the researcher with information. The researcher wrote several emails to them and even visited the physical structure of the organizations but they were not willing to participate in the research. Also, it was challenging

to administer the questionnaires at the Buea Regional Hospital. The employees barely had time to attend to the researcher. Nevertheless, some employees at the hospital were able to fill out the questionnaires. Some questionnaires were also misplaced. Some respondents collected questionnaires and failed to return them. The challenges prolonged the data collection process. The researcher was resilient and committed to gathering authentic data. These characteristics made it possible for the researcher to overcome negative setbacks in the course of the data collection.

This research has both scientific and social implications. Scientifically, the research provides authentic information to understand the manifestation, causes, consequences and response mechanisms in addressing sexist bias in Buea. This contributes to filling the knowledge gap. Also, the research community can use this research to support contemporary arguments surrounding sexist bias in Cameroon. Socially, this research recognizes the role of social networks, such as positive peer relations, in addressing sexist bias in communities. Summarily, this research provides scientific data to different stakeholders, such as government ministries, non-governmental organizations, and international agencies that focus on addressing sexist bias in different communities.

The findings of this research are rich and authentic. However, the scope of the research was limited to communities in Buea municipality. This generalizes results to other towns outside of Buea. Hence, future research should expand on the scope of this research. It should include other towns and regions. This will enable the research community to understand the manifestation of sexist bias in other communities in Cameroon.

Also, future research should include victims of sexist biases. The witnesses will provide first-hand information on how they suffered from discrimination due to their gender.

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ANNEX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE GUIDE

UNDERSTANDING SEXIST BIAS IN THE BUEA MUNICIPALITY: TYPES, CAUSES AND EFFECTS

I am Tanyi Christabel Eyong, a final-year master's student at the University of Yaounde I. This questionnaire aims to explore the various types, causes, and consequences of sexist bias in the Buea municipality. Sexist bias occurs when people treat others unfairly or make assumptions based on their gender, whether they are boys or girls. This bias can lead to the belief that one gender is superior to the other or that certain activities or jobs are only suitable for one gender. The study seeks to contribute to the promotion of an inclusive society free from unfair treatment and stigmatization. Your participation in this research is strictly for academic purposes, and your responses will be kept confidential.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Gender: 1. Male {   }   2. Female   {   }
2. Age: 1. Less than 20yrs {   }   2. 21 to 30yrs {   } 3. 31 to 40yrs {   } 4. 41yrs plus {   }
3. Marital status: 1. Single {   }   2. Married {   }   3. Divorced {   }   4. Widow(er) {   }
4. Employment status: 1. Employed {   } 2. Unemployed {   }
5. Religion: 1. Christian {   }   2. Muslim   {   } 3. African traditionalist {   }
6. Which gender mostly suffers from sexist bias? 1. 1. Male {   }   2. Female   {   }

Section B: Types of Sexist Bias
This section examines the types of sexist biases existing in the municipality of Buea

7. To what extent will you agree or disagree that sexist bias is prevalent in Buea?

Strongly agree (100%)	Agree (75%)	Neutral (50%)	Disagree (25%)	Strongly disagree (%)

8. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following manifestations of sexist bias are prevalent in Buea?

Manifestations of sexist bias	Strongly agree (100%)	Agree (75%)	Neutral (50%)	Disagree (25%)	Strongly disagree (0%)
1. Assuming that all women are emotional while all men are assertive and rational.					
2. Expecting women to primarily take care of household chores					
3. Assuming that men should be the primary breadwinners of families					
4. Paying men and women differently for the same job, even if they have the same qualifications and experience					
5. The existence of fewer women in top executive positions despite their qualifications					
6. Criticising women for assertiveness while praising men for the same behaviour					
7. Judging mothers more harshly than fathers for parenting choices					
8. The use of gendered language that perpetuates stereotypes, such as saying "you act like a man" or "You throw like a girl."					
9. The encouragement of boys towards STEM subjects and girls towards humanities					
10. Judging individuals based on their physical appearance					
11. Prevalence of micro-aggressions comments like "You must be good at cooking because you're a girl,"					
12. Considering all girls to be physically weak and men stronger					

Section C: Causes of Sexism

This explores the causes of sexism in the municipality of Buea

9. To what extent will you agree or disagree that the following are responsible for the prevalence of sexism in Buea?

Causes of sexist bias	Strongly agree (100%)	Agree (75%)	Neutral (50%)	Disagree (25%)	Strongly disagree (0%)
1. Traditional gender roles promote believe that some jobs are more suitable for women or men					
2. People hold sexist views due to a lack of exposure to information challenging gender stereotypes or promoting equality.					
3. Cultural practices that enforce rigid gender roles, like expecting women to prioritise family over career promotes sexism bias					
4. Portraying women primarily as objects of desire in advertisements reinforces the idea that their value is tied to physical appearance.					
5. Power imbalance between men and women promotes sexism and discrimination					
6. The absence of laws or policies addressing gender discrimination in the workplace allows sexist bias to persist.					
7. When boys are encouraged from childhood to be assertive and girls to be nurturing reinforces gender stereotypes					
8. Interpretations of religious texts that promote the idea of women being subordinate to men promote gender discrimination					
9. The fear of challenging traditional gender roles promotes gender discrimination					
10. Individuals are promoting sexist beliefs or behaviours due to peer pressure					
11. Insufficient education on gender equality in schools orchestrates sexist bias					
12. Few women in top leadership positions reinforce the idea that women are less capable or suited for leadership roles					

Section D: Consequences of Sexist Bias

This section examines the consequences of sexist bias

10. To what extent will you agree or disagree that sexism has led to the following consequences in Buea?

Consequences of sexist bias	Strongly agree (100%)	Agree (75%)	Neutral (50%)	Disagree (25%)	Strongly disagree (0%)
1. It limits career advancement for women because they are being overlooked					
2. It promotes gender pay gap					
3. Constant exposure to gender-based discrimination affect one's mental health					
4. It promotes workplace bias since women are not considered to be skilled like men					
5. Girls are being bullied for not conforming to traditional feminine norms					
6. Boys are being bullied for not adhering to masculine stereotypes					
7. It limits the number of girls in STEM fields					
8. Sexist bias causes low self-esteem					

11. To what extent do you think the following challenges hinder the fight against sexist bias in Buea?

Challenges in mitigating sexist bias	Strongly agree (100%)	Agree (75%)	Neutral (50%)	Disagree (25%)	Strongly disagree (0%)
1. The existence of cultural traditions which reinforce traditional gender roles					
2. Resistance to change sexist norms due to a fear of the unknown					
3. Lack of awareness of the negative implication of sexist bias in society					

4. Resistance from individuals who feel threatened by efforts to address sexism					
5. Inadequate legal frameworks to address new and evolving forms of sexism					
6. Underreporting of sexist bias incident due to fear of retaliation and stigma					
7. Continued portrayal of gender stereotypes in media reinforces traditional gender norms and expectations					
8. Lack of awareness due to limited inclusion of comprehensive gender education in school curricula					
9. Insufficient political will to prioritise and allocate resources for combating sexism.					

10. Do you think the following recommendations are likely to reduce the prevalence of sexist bias in Buea?

Recommendations	Very likely (100%)	Likely (75%)	Neutral (50%)	Unlikely (25%)	Very unlikely (0%)
1. Implementation of educational programmes that challenge gender stereotypes and promote understanding of equality					
2. Enacting and enforcing laws that prohibit gender-based discrimination					
3. Implementing policies in workplaces that address the gender pay gap					
4. Promotion of media literacy programmes that help individuals critically analyse and challenge gender stereotypes portrayed in the media.					
5. Encouraging diverse representation in leadership positions and decision-making bodies					
6. Providing mentorship programs, scholarships, and resources that empower girls and women to pursue education and career paths traditionally underrepresented by their gender.					

7. Facilitating community discussions and workshops on gender equality to engage people in conversations that challenge stereotypes					153
8. Establishing safe spaces where individuals can report incidents of sexism without fear of retaliation					
9. Establishing support services for survivors of gender-based violence and assistance to break free from harmful situations					
10. Promotion of share caregiving responsibilities like implementing inclusive parental leave policies that allow both parents to take time off work after the birth or adoption of a child					
11. Encouraging men to actively participate in and advocate for gender equality initiatives					

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your valuable input will contribute to a better understanding of sexist bias in Buea

ANNEX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND THE FAMILY CENTER BUEA. INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AFFAIRS

1. How does the Ministry of Women Affairs define sexist bias, and what impact does it have on women's lives?

2. In your assessment, what are the key areas or sectors where sexist bias is most prevalent and has the most significant impact?

3. What initiatives or programs has the Ministry implemented to address and combat sexist bias in buea ?

4. How does the Ministry collaborate with other government agencies, civil society organizations, and international partners to address sexist bias?

5. What challenges or obstacles does the Ministry face in its efforts to combat sexist bias, and how are these challenges being addressed?

6. How does the Ministry ensure that its policies and programs are inclusive and address the needs and experiences of diverse groups of women, including those from marginalized communities?

7. How does the Ministry engage with the private sector to promote gender equality and eliminate sexist bias in workplaces in buea ?

8. What steps is the Ministry taking to raise awareness among the general public about sexist bias and promote a culture of gender equality in buea ?

9. Does the academic research help the ministry? If yes how?

ANNEX 3: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR NGO'S SPECIALIZING IN GENDER EQUALITY SEXIST BIAS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BUEA : TYPES, CAUSES AND EFFECTS

Questions

1. What do you understand by define sexist bias?

2. What types of sexist bias do you typically encounter in your work within Fako Division?

3. From your experience, what specific challenges do individuals face regarding sexist bias in Buea?

4. What are the root causes of sexism in the municipality of Buea?

5. How can cultural and traditional beliefs hinder the fight against sexist bias?

6. What other challenges hinder the fight against sexist bias?

7. What strategies have proven effective in addressing these challenges?

8. How can NGOs collaborate with government agencies, such as the Social Affairs Department and local Social Centers, to collectively address sexist bias in Buea municipality?

9. 9. In your experience, what role can NGOs play in influencing policy changes or advocating for legal measures to combat sexist at the regional level?

10. What successful intervention strategies have your organization implemented to combat sexist bias?

11. How have the interventions positively impacted the lives of individuals in Buea?

ANNEX 4: NAMES OF ORGANIZATIONS AND PERSONS, POSITIONS AND CONTACTS OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Names of organization	Names of persons interviewed	Positions of persons interviewed	Contacts of persons interviewed
Ministry of women's empowerment	Mrs Patience Sama	Representative of MINPROFF Buea	
NDES foundation	Njie Clement	CEO representative	675171867
NADEV foundation	Mme Njeanyi Doreen Asong	Program coordinator	674878319
REACHERS foundation	Adenda Allain	Program coordinator	678678686
MIKE Yanou foundation	Madam Yanou Nicole	Executive director of Mike Yanou foundation	670250757
HADASSAH foundation	Kinyam Fominyen	Foundation manager GBV expert	671364133
REACHOUT foundation	Nkongho Christine	Assistant head of department	672562442
DEMTOU humanitarian	Kana Elisee Raymond Ngo	Project coordinator Chef de bureau	

In the questionnaire, people didn't give their consent to write their names as well as to write their name in my work. They agreed on the basis that I won't write their information. Some persons gave reasons of the insecurity and instability in the Region.

ANNEX 5: ATTESTATION DE RECHERCHE

RÉPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN	REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Paix – Travail – Patrie	Peace – Work – Fatherland
*****	*****
UNIVERSITÉ DE YAOUNDÉ I	THE UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE I
*****	*****
FACULTÉ DES ARTS, LETTRES ET SCIENCES HUMAINES	FACULTY OF ARTS, LETTERS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
*****	*****
DÉPARTEMENT DE SOCIOLOGIE	DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
*****	*****

BP : 755 Yaoundé
Siège : Bâtiment Annexe FALSH-UYI, à côté AUF
E-mail : depart.socio20@gmail.com

ATTESTATION DE RECHERCHE

Je soussigné, Professeur **LEKA ESSOMBA Armand**, Chef de Département de Sociologie de l'Université de Yaoundé I, atteste que Madame **TANYI Christabel EYONG**, Matricule **180336** est inscrite en Master II, option Population et développement. Elle effectue, sous la direction du **Professeur NNA NTIMBAN Albert**, un travail de recherche sur le thème : « **Sexist bias and gender-based violence in Fako division (south-west Cameroon) : analysis of the socio-economic foundations and effects** ».

Dans le cadre de cette recherche, il aura besoin de toute information non confidentielle, susceptible de l'aider à bien conduire sa recherche.

En foi de quoi, la présente attestation lui est délivrée pour servir et valoir ce que de droit.

Fait à Yaoundé, le _2 3 DEC 2022_

Le Chef de Département

Armand LEKA ESSOMBA
Maître de Conférence

ANNEX 6: AUTHORISATION TO CARRY OUT ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN FAKO DIVISION

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix – Travail – Patrie

REGION DU SUD-OUEST

DEPARTEMENT DU FAKO

PREFECTURE DE LIMBE

No.71../G.37/C/46/VOL.I.../1AP

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace – Work – Fatherland

SOUTH WEST REGION

FAKO DIVISION

DIVISIONAL OFFICE, LIMBE

Limbe, the 03 MAR 2023

The Senior Divisional Officer, Fako

TO:

**Mme. TANYI CHRISTABEL EYONG,
University of Yaounde 1**

Subject: **AUTHORISATION TO CARRY OUT ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN FAKO DIVISION**

Following your application dated 28th February 2023, soliciting for an authorization in relation to the above subject matter,

I hereby convey my approval for you to carryout research on "**SEXIST BIAS IN FAKO DIVISION; TYPES, CAUSES AND EFFECTS**" for a period of one (01) month beginning from the **6th of March to 6th April 2023.**

However, you shall always contact the Divisional Officers of the area for close follow-up of your activities.

Copy:
- GSWR/Buea
- DO'S/concern
- FDS/Fako
- File/Chrono

FOR THE SENIOR DIVISIONAL OFFICER
FOR FAKO AND BY DELEGATION
THE FIRST ASSISTANT S. D. O

Wirkom Maryline Yefon
ADMINISTRATEUR CIVIL

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