Department for Good Governance – University of Makeni

Research Report

An investigation into the voting behaviour and socio-economic profiles of constituents across the Northern Province, Sierra Leone.

MARCH 2013

Department for Good Governance

Abstract

The objective of the research conducted for the purpose of this report was to collect data that gave an overview of the socio-economic profiles of constituents across the Northern Province which could be assessed to analyse voting behaviour and identify key action points for future programme work and research. There is very little data currently available in Sierra Leone, especially research that focusses on political participation and governance related issues. Exit poll surveys and structured interviews were conducted on the day of the 2012 General Election designed to target voters and non-voters with a focus on women. Women are still politically under-represented despite a visible increase in women's political participation at the national level. This research report maps general issues raised by the data collected and offers recommendations for future points of action.

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MEN	WOMEN
Gender:	**Gender:**
Men 34%	Women 66%

Age:		**Age:**	
18 – 25	23%	18 – 25	28%
26 – 35	30%	26 – 35	29%
36 – 45	23%	36 – 45	20%
46 – 55	11%	46 – 55	11%
56+	13%	56+	12%

Education:		**Education:**	
Primary	21%	Primary	24%
Secondary	35%	Secondary	28%
Tertiary	20%	Tertiary	12%

Income (le):		**Income (le):**	
No Salary	55%	No Salary	58%
1 – 100,000	4%	1 – 100,000	2%
101,000 – 200,000	3%	101,000 – 200,000	2%
201,000 – 300,000	5%	201,000 – 300,000	3%
301,000 – 400,000	3%	301,000 – 400,000	2%
401,000 – 500,000	2%	401,000 – 500,000	2%
501,000 – 800,000	6%	501,000 – 800,000	2%
801,000 – 1,100,000	1%	801,000 – 1,100,000	6%
1,101,000 +	2%	1,101,000 +	2%

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Interview Respondents Profile

Demographic profile of voters/non-voters

MEN		**WOMEN**	
Gender:		**Gender:**	
Men	26%	Women	74%

MEN		**WOMEN**	
Age:		**Age:**	
18 – 25	27%	18 – 25	34%
26 – 35	31%	26 – 35	31%
36 – 45	23%	36 – 45	18%
46 – 55	10%	46 – 55	7%
56+	6%	56+	7%

Education:		**Education:**	
Primary	9%	Primary	14%
Secondary	37%	Secondary	30%
Tertiary	18%	Tertiary	9%

Income (le):		**Income (le):**	
No Salary	39%	No Salary	54%
1 – 100,000	7%	1 – 100,000	8%
101,000 – 200,000	4%	101,000 – 200,000	4%
201,000 – 300,000	4%	201,000 – 300,000	3%
301,000 – 400,000	7%	301,000 – 400,000	2%
401,000 – 500,000	5%	401,000 – 500,000	2%
501,000 – 800,000	6%	501,000 – 800,000	2%
801,000 – 1,100,000	4%	801,000 – 1,100,000	4%
1,101,000 +	1%	1,101,000 +	5%

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Introduction

There is currently little verified data available in Sierra Leone investigating governance issues due to the lack of research conducted to date. In order for programme work and capacity building projects to have the maximum impact on their target populations, it is imperative that research is conducted into governance issues with a focus on marginalised groups, notably women. Research not only allows stakeholders to formulate and/or refine capacity building programmes with clear objectives and outcomes but also exposes current policy imperatives. In order to reduce the gender gap and increase access to basic services which are significant issues in Sierra Leone, extensive research must first be carried out.

In Sierra Leone there are numerous factors that influence the political presence and participation of women in decision making processes. Currently, women are not equally represented in decision-making processes ranging from local to national and formal to informal governance structures. Women's issues are rarely taken into consideration partially due to their lack of representation, their lack of skill sets and cultural attitudes, which ultimately lead to the marginalisation of women.

Gender equality is considered one of the fundamental rights of all humans. Government laws and governance structures in Sierra Leone are not gender neutral in terms of being less progressive on women's rights, like in many developing countries across the world. To facilitate growth, empowerment and change it is crucial that gender related issues are addressed in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goal 3 - Gender Equality. Traditional cultural practices and values in Sierra Leone significantly deprive and repress women. Law, policy and structures that govern people tend to reflect male priorities and perspectives. There is a need to take a multifaceted approach in order to correct current gender inequality.

The 2012 general election presented a good opportunity to design and execute a research project with the aim of obtaining data across the Northern Province that would provide a snap shot of casual relationships between socio-economicand demographic factors in the region that influence voting behaviour and gender attitudes.

Initially, four participatory focus group discussions were held, randomly sampled amongst the target population in order to draw out identify key issues. Reoccurring themes and questions were then built into the adopted research methods used to collect the data, surveys and structured interviews. The aforementioned research methods were adopted taking into consideration the sample size of the research project, timeframe, resources and the type of data required. Exit poll surveys were considered the most preferential research method in order to obtain large samples from the target population. Due to high voter turnout rates many respondents were drawn out to the polling stations which allowed the data collectors to stay in fixed position and intercept respondents after voting. In one day of collecting data a large number of surveys could be conducted relatively quickly and guarantee a higher response rate when compared to other research methods as well as an adequate control of external variables. By conducting face to face surveys the data collectors were able to have a higher degree of control over the data collection process and

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environment. Surveys allow responses to be gathered in a standardised way making the data more objective. Exit poll surveys and structured interviews were simultaneously conducted throughout the target population on Election Day.

The largely quantitative survey was deliberately partnered with qualitative structured interviews to ensure more detailed data was guaranteed. Originally the exit poll surveys were to target voters and structured interviews to target non-voters. However, due to the high voter turnout of 82% in the 2012 general election (which is reflected in the data collected), only a small proportion of interview respondents were non-voters.

The main objective of conducting research on the 2012 General Election Day across the Northern Province was to collect and analyse data that could produce accredited research papers exploring the relationships between the various socio, economic and political variables and their impact on voting behaviour. The research conducted would then have the purpose of influencing policy-makers and relevant stakeholders in increasing the participation of marginalised groups and place pressure on political leaders to become more accountable to marginalised citizens.

The data collection instruments employed in this study were careful selected to achieve the objectives set. An observational study was chosen to provide real detailed information about people's opinions on a variety of governance related issues. The study was designed to provide a platform for future research. Several topic areas have been raised and identified, which require further research and attention. Each district was divided into sections and urban/rural locations, exit poll stations were identified through random sampling. This process was repeated for those conducting structured interviews but discarding the location of exit polls.

Methodology

Participants

Identified participants included this study were all citizens across the Northern Province from 18 years +. Data collectors and interviewers were all told to give preference to female respondents. 1316 women and 702 men participated in the exit poll survey. 569 women and 195 men participated in structured interviews. All respondents were informed about the study and were asked for their consent to participate before proceeding. Verbal consent was considered appropriate for this study due to the large illiteracy rate in Sierra Leone.

Materials

Voice recorders were used by all interviewers to document all interviews. Due to enforced security procedures and protocols all researchers wore identity tags and received prior approval to conduct research on Election Day.

Design and Procedure

The research design of this study was an observational study and correlational as it looked at assessing any casual relationships between the various socio-economic and demographic variables and opinions expressed. In order to identify and design appropriate research methods to use in this study, six initial focus group discussions were conducted with a small sample of the target population consisting of fifteen participants. Both the surveys and structured interviews were formulated to reflect the key themes and questions raised. Fifty researchers were interviewed for positions as field researchers and data collectors. All researchers were given a three day training workshop conducted by a local consultant to equip them with the basic knowledge and skills required to conduct research and accurately collect data. Female research applicants were targeted and given preference because the research was designed to target women. Male researchers were given additional gender sensitisation training and all researchers were taught on the ethics of research and appropriately reading respondent's body language. All researchers were then given the opportunity to pilot both data collection instruments employed.

Several issues were raised. Some questions were too culturally sensitive and respondents were reluctant to answer. Other questions did not translate properly and were therefore taken out of context or had a different meaning to its original intention. All researchers were asked to agree on the meaning of each question and the translation to ensure consistency and reduce the risk of misinterpretation in the field. Three urban and three rural locations were randomly mapped for every district across the five districts situated in the Northern

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Province and exit poll stations were sampled within the mapped locations determining where the data collectors would be situated using official National Electoral Commission (NEC) sourced maps. Two urban and two rural locations were randomly mapped for every district across the Northern Province for those conducting structured interviews[1]. Unfortunately, travel restrictions enforced two days before the elections had serious implications for the researchers and locations already selected. To ensure that all those registered to vote were able to cast their vote and still participate in the study, some researchers were reallocated to Makeni and its surroundings, which produced a cluster of data from Bombali locations.

All researchers designated to remote locations were deployed the night before the election in order to be given adequate time to travel and to be able to report to their location promptly at 9.00am. All researchers were required to stay at their locations from 9am – 5.00pm and were periodically supervised by the core governance team who performed spot checks on all locations throughout the course of the day. All researchers were given a briefing and debriefing session to hand out/return resources, ask questions and highlight any problems they encountered. The researchers were scored on their level of performance and placed into a database for future research.

Coding sheets were prepared for inputting all data collected. For all qualitative data, the first 100 responses from each district were categorised to reflect reoccurring responses and themes so they could be analysed in a quantitative way. After inputting all data, several analyses were run on SPSS statistical software programme namely looking at Sex, Sex/Age, Sex/Salary and Sex/Education. These variables, it was felt, would offer the most interesting and relevant socio-economic and demographic information.

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[1] Accessible urban and rural locations that could be accessed easily on Election Day were identified using NEC official polling station maps. Once all accessible exit polls for data collectors and interview locations for researchers were established a ten mile radius was drawn and a location was randomly selected from within. This process was repeated six times per district for survey polling stations and four times per district for interview locations.

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Results

Survey Data

Sex:

The average age of female voters is lower than men. All age categories show similar turnout rates, however there is a notable difference in the 18-25 age categories, accounting for 23% of all men surveyed and 27% of all women. A high percentage of men and women stated they were married. However, more men were single and a substantial proportion of women were widowed (15% when compared to 2% of men). The occupation of the majority of female respondents was traders and farmers for men. Students accounted for 19% of men and women.
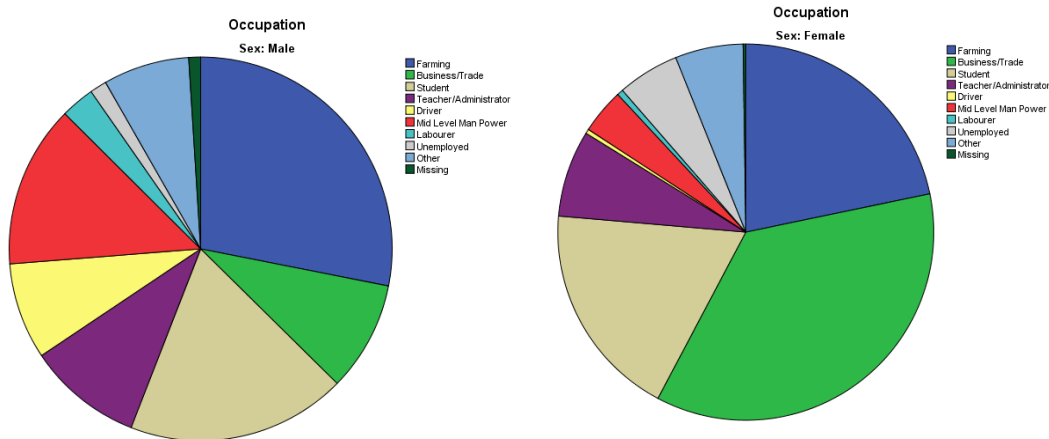
Men live with more people and have a greater number of dependents overall, 15% of men have 12 or more dependents whereas only 7% of women have 12 or more dependents. There is a 1-3% variance for all other dependents categories. The data showed a noticeable difference between the percentages of men and women attending secondary and tertiary education. 7% more men attend/completed secondary and 8% tertiary, yet 3% more women have a primary education level. 55% of men and 58% of women stated they had no formal salary. For those who have no salary, women claimed to have more access to an

additional/dispensable income when compared to their male counterparts. 33% of men and 29% of women receive no salary or additional income.

Men have a more visible voting record, 7% more men voted in the 1996 general election. However, in the 2001 and 2007 general elections this gap reduces substantially with only a 2% difference. 60% of male and female respondents supported the dominant political party in their region. 5% more women vote for a political party and not an individual leader when compared to men. Further to this a greater number of men indicated they voted on the basis of development. However, both men and women agreed their reason for changing political parties was lack of performance and the right to change affiliations. Men felt campaigns were an important part of political elections. 6% more women felt they were not represented by their political party. Over 75% of men and women have always belonged to the same political party. Development and right to join were key reasons for both sexes feeling they belonged to the political party.

More women are affected by intimidation as a reason for not getting involved in politics than men, although both are equally burdened by gossiping when voting. 15% of female respondents and 16% of male respondents believe women are not as capable in a political capacity. The registrations and voting process was more limiting for women traders and travellers.

Women are less active in community based politics. Only 38% of women participate in community politics, yet 53% of all male respondents acknowledged their involvement in community based politics.

Sex/Age:

There are noteworthy differences in relationship between men and women in all age categories. Most noteworthy are in age category 18-25 with 29% of women and 17% of men married. There is also a stark difference in the 56+ age category where widowed women make up 52% yet men only 8% in the same category.

Table 1 – Relationship distribution table (see appendix one)

When analysing age, sex and occupation there is only a 4% difference between men and women aged 18-25 who are students. The difference in the percentage of farmers and traders is visible between men and women in each age category. 15 % of women over the age of 56 are unemployed yet only 6% of men are unemployed in the same age category. Men have more household members than women, evident in every age category except 18-25 year olds were 10% more women live with 12+ occupants. The most common material of houses is mud irrespective of age of gender.

Throughout all age brackets there is a visible difference in access to education between men and women. Women have less access to secondary and tertiary education. Only 5-9 % of women in age categories 18-25, 46-55 and 56+ have attended tertiary education, substantially lower than their male counterparts who make up 16-21%. Men in age brackets 26-35 and 36-45 make up 21-26% of those in tertiary education and women 14-18%, higher than all other age groups.

6% more men aged 18-25 have no salary. In all other age brackets more women have comparatively less or no income when compared to men. Looking at the additional income of those with no salary several interesting points were raised. Women have greater low levels of income in the le 1-100,000 bracket when compared to men across the majority of age categories. 12% more men aged 35-45 receive no income, however a larger percentage of men aged 56+ have an income greater than Le 500,001(18%) when compared to women (8%). Men of all ages have significantly more dependents than women.

The percentage of men and women who have voted before is similar across all age brackets. However, more women between the ages of 26-35 and 56+ have voted before when compared to their male counterparts. Men between the ages of 26-35 and 36-45 have voted before in more elections than women from the same age bracket. There is no significant difference in any other age category between men and women.

70-80% of all respondents found the registration and voting processes easy. When exploring reasons to belong to a party, most men and women aged between18-46 selected the right to join and development. However, 27% of women and men 46+ selected 'other' reasons for belonging to a political party. When asked whether respondents have always belonged to their affiliated political party, more men than women had always belonged to the same political party, with the exception of those aged 36-45 where 12% more women had always belonged to the same political party.

Men and women both vote for the dominant party. This percentage increases with the age categories. However it must be noted those ages 18-25 only 53% of women vote for the dominant party and only 46% of men. The reasons for picking a chosen party are similar for both sexes and all age categories, however it is worth noting that 7-10% women from ages 26-56+ support their chosen political party to serve their own interests, which is not evident in male respondents.

Both genders in all age categories support the political party more than the individual party leader with an average ratio of 60%:40%. Campaigns have a greater impact on men than women in all age brackets except 18-25 year olds where 44% of women and only 38% of men agree that campaigns have an impact on the way they vote. Both sexes across all age groups feel represented by their choice of political party. On average between 13-15% of men and women in each age category do not believe that women are as capable as men. The age bracket 46-55 stands out as 22% of women and 18% of men believe that women are not as capable as men.

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Sex/Salary:

28% of men and 30% of women aged 18-25 are the majority groups in the no salary categories. For both sexes 26-35 year olds is the dominant age category for all other salary brackets. More men are married in each salary bracket when compared to women and more women are widowed. The percentage of those married for men and women decreases as salaries increase, with the exception of no salary category. On average men share a house with 12+ occupants in spite of salary. The number of occupants in households shared by women increases with salary from 4-7 to 8-11, with the exception of no salary bracket where 43% of women share with 12+ occupants.

For men and women, greater income leads to an increased quality of house material used for construction. However, it is worth noting that concrete houses only become the majority for men earning Le 501,000 + whereas for women its Le 201,000 +. Women on average across all salary brackets have 4-7 dependents. Men's dependents however increase with salary from 4-7 to 12+. The percentage of men and women who have not voted before increases with income. On average 80% of men and women find both the registration and voting process easy. However, it should be noted that those earning Le 501,000 and above have greater difficulty with both processes.

The majority of men and women earning up to 501,000 -800,000 state development as their reason for belonging to the political party of their choice. The dominant reason (30% respondents) for men belonging to a party who earn 801,000+ is other. 25% of women earning Le 801,000 – 1,100,000 stated patriotism and 68% stated other for women earning Le 1,101,000+. On average 75% of men and women have always belong to their chosen political party. 10-18% fewer women earning Le 301,000 – 500,000 did not always belong when compared to their male counterparts in the same salary brackets. Over 50% of all respondents in all salary categories voted for the dominant party on the basis of development. This could be considered contentious as the data suggests respondents voted on the basis of visible development and not party manifestos, policy promises or objectives (also known as pocketbook voting). There is a stronger relationship between men in all salary groups voting for a political party not political leader.

On average 50-60% of men and women do not think campaigns have an impact on their vote. 52% of men earning Le 301,000 – 400,000 and 64% women earning Le 401,000 – 500,000 stated campaigning was important as well as men and women earning Le 1,101,000+. Up to 12% of women earning Le 0 – 500,000 feel less represented when compared to their male counterparts. Women do not participate in local political structures/community politics to the same level as men, which is especially evident amongst those earning between Le 0 – 500,000. The mean of men who feel they are free to vote is 94% which is greater than the mean of women at 90%. However, there is a stark difference in women earning between Le 301,000 – 500,000, where only 76-77% feel free to vote.

Gossiping impacts both men and women who feel they are not free to vote however, a notable percentage of women also stated they were affected by intimidation. On average, 5% more men in each salary category believe that women are not as capable, when compared to their female counterparts. However, 2% more women than men earning le 1-100,000 stated women were not as capable as men. Access and ownership to/of media increases with salaries.

Sex/Education:

All age education categories show slightly different demographics between men. 38% of men and 44% of women aged 26-35 have tertiary level education. In primary level education, men aged 36-45 make up 34%, yet women aged 26-35 make up 35% of the same category. 23% of men aged 26-35 are the largest group in secondary education, however for women the average age is lower with 18-25 year olds making up 61%. 70% of men and women with a primary level of education are married. There are 7% more single women with a secondary education than men. 9% more men with a tertiary education are married. Out of those with a primary level education famers make up 43% of men and traders 54% of women. Those with a secondary level education, students constitute for 37% of men and 50% of women. Finally, teachers make up the dominant occupation (38-42%) of men and women with a tertiary education. The number of occupants in a household is similar for men and women regardless of their level of education.

The majority of men and women stated that lived in households with 12+ occupants, except for women with a tertiary education, where the dominant group making up 41% is 4-7 occupants. 60-61% of men and women with primary and secondary levels of education do not have a salary. 30% of men and 37% of women with a tertiary education level also do not a salary. Out of all those with no salary, only 31% women with a primary education have a dispensable additional income of le 1-100,000. For women, the number of dependents decreases with increased education. There are more men and women with primary and tertiary education who have not voted before compared to those with a secondary level education.

Men and women with primary and secondary level educations predominately belong to a party because of development. Both men and women with tertiary level education sight other reasons for belonging to their chosen political party. A lower percentage of women have always belonged to a political party, when compared to men. Both men and women with secondary level education have a lower percentage of always belonging when compared to those with primary and tertiary education. Women stated they are less likely to vote for the dominant political party. A strong percentage of women and men with primary level education vote for their political party not individual leaders. This percentage falls as respondents education levels increase. Campaigns have a greater impact on men and women with only primary level education. Generally women feel less represented than men. Men with primary levels of education feel 22% more represented compared to women in the same education bracket. Although women participate less in community/local politics when

compared to men, there is a higher activity rate for both men and women with a tertiary level of education. Less women with a primary level of education believe that women are as capable as men, when compared to men in the same education bracket. In all other categories 4-7% more women stated that women were as capable as men. Access to media outlets increases with education.

Interview Data

Sex:

79% of men and 74% of women interviewed had voted before and 85% had registered to vote. When asked why those who had registered but not voted, 4% of men stated distance as the reason for not voting and 8% of women were out of town. 17% of women interviewed and 19% of men decided not to vote. The principal occupation for men was farming constituting for 29% of respondents and traders for women making up 36%. 39% of men and 54% of women receive no salary. Out of this population 30% of men do not have any other income whereas 33% of women earn Le 1-100,000 a month. Out of those interviewed, 60% of men could read and only 48% of women. Only 48% of women were given the option of education, 11% less than their male counter parts. The majority of men and women had a secondary education making up 37% of men and 30% of women. 61% of women and 57% of men, selected 'other' when asked what encourages them to vote. 57% of men and 55% of women said they were interested in politics. 45% of men and 54% of women stated that elections are the time to vote. When asked about their knowledge of politicians 45% of men and 35% of women stated other. 80% of respondents believed that their vote counted.

When asked whether they felt government or traditional laws had a greater role/impact, 73% of men and 66% of women selected government laws. When asked which laws have a greater impact on women's issues 58% of men and 65% of women identified traditional laws as having the greater impact. 52% of men and 51% of women believed that women are less likely to participate in decision making processes. When asked why, 16% of women and 12% of men stated the main reason for not participating was male domination. 84% of women and 77% of men felt that women were as capable as men.

Sex/Age:

52% of men and 58% of women ages between 18-25 had not voted before. 58% of men aged 56+ had also stated they had not voted before compared to 96% of women who had voted before. 80-90% of men and women across all age categories had registered to vote. Men aged between 18-35 said distance was the main reason for registering but not casting a vote. 10% of men aged between 46-55 were out of town and therefore unable to vote. 8-14% of women aged between 26-55 also stated they were out of town and unable to vote. 44-61% of men and women up to the age of 55 predominately live in mud houses.

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Students make up 46% of men and 33% of women aged 18-25. The main occupation for men aged 26-55+ and women aged 46-56+ was farming. The majority of men and women in every age category receive no salary. Out of those who receive no salary, only men aged 18-25 have a majority receiving an income of Le 1-100,000 a month. The majority of women in every age category receive a monthly income of Le 1-100,000.

93% of women and 72% aged 18-25 believe their vote counts. Yet when those aged 55+ were asked the same question, their responses contrasted with 92% of men and 78% of women aged 55+ believe their vote counts. 70-76% of men across each age category place a greater importance on government laws. Although 78% of women aged 18-25 agree government laws have a greater impact, this percentage gradually decreases by each age category, with only 53% of women aged 56+ agreeing. Women aged 18-36 place 7-16% more importance on the impact of traditional laws on women's issues when compared to their male counter parts. However, men aged 46-56+ believe traditional laws have an impact on women's issues 6-15% more than their female counterparts in the same age categories. Women and men in all age categories believe that women are less likely to participate in decision making processes. It must be noted that 48% of men aged 36-45 do not think woman are less likely to participate whereas 63% of women in the same age category do. Men and women in all age categories believe the main reason for this is male domination. When compared to men, 7-17% more women aged between 18-55 believe women are as capable as men. Out of those ages 56+ 80% of women and 92% of men believe woman are as capable. On average 80% of men and women aged 18-45 and 56+ stated they were voting. Only 62% of men aged 46-55 said they were planning to vote/had voted.

Sex/Salary:

There are substantial differences in rates of men and women who have voted before. 10% more men earning no salary have voted before compared to women. 36% more men earning Le 801,000 – 1,000,000 have voted before. The mean of men who have voted before is 87% for men and 80% for women. For those who were not registered, the dominant reason for women in all salary brackets were them being out of town. Men stated, other, distance and out of town as the main reasons for not registering. 9% of women earning Le 501-800 and Le 1,100,000+ stated the reason for not voting was their candidate not receiving the party symbol. 14% of men earning Le 801,000-1,100,000 said distance was the reason for not voting. House material advances for men as their salary increases from mud (those earning up to Le 200,000), zinc (those earning Le 201,000 – 400,000) to concrete and brick. House material for women only changes for those earning Le 401,000 and above. The dominant occupation for women earning between Le 0 – 300,000 is trader and teachers for those earning Le 301,000- 800,000. The occupation of men develops with salaries. The dominant group of men earning Le 0 – 100,000 is farmers. Students make up 43% of those earning Le 201,000-300,000. The average number of dependents for all respondents interviewed was 4-7.

When asked, 'can you read?' more men than women stated they were literate. Four salary categories worth mentioning are those earning no salary, as only 45% of women and 46% of

men said they could read. There is a 17% difference between men and women who can read earning Le 1– 100,000 and a 43% difference between men and women earning Le 101,000 - 300,000. More men than women in every salary bracket were given the option of education. The majority of women earning Le 0 – 500,000 have a secondary education. The majority of those earning Le 501,000+ have a tertiary level of education. Only the majority of men earning Le 501,000 – 800,000 have a tertiary level of education, the majority of men in all other salary brackets have a secondary level of education. The majority of all respondents sighted 'other' reasons for what encourages them to vote. Women earning Le 0 – 100,000 were more interested in politics when compared to their male counterparts. However, the opposite trend is visible for those earning Le 101,000+. When asked their understanding of politicians, men and women in most salary categories stated other or leaders. The majority of men and women earning Le 501,000 – 800,000 stated that politicians were untrustworthy. Men generally believed their vote counted more than women with one exception of those earning Le 401,000 – 500,000 where 31% more women believed their vote counted.
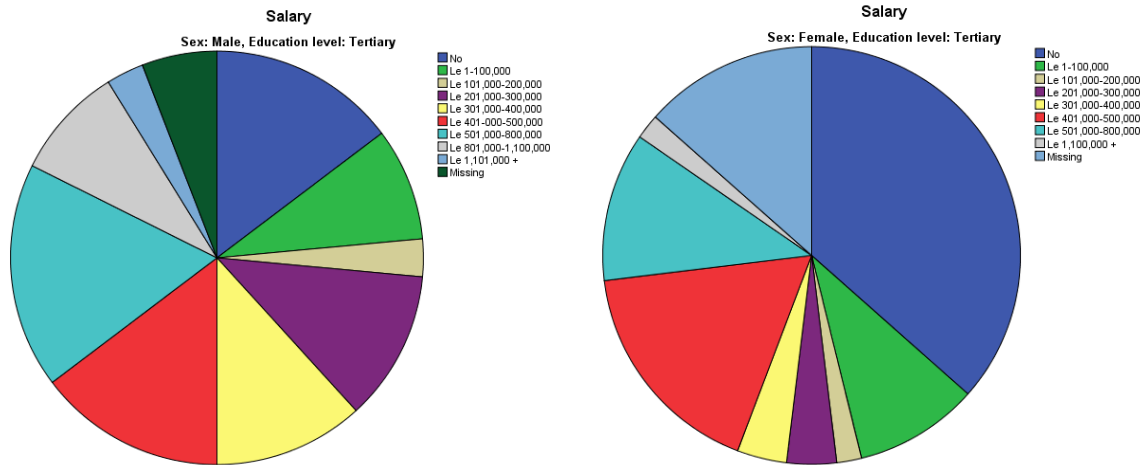
Men in all salary brackets stated that government laws were more important than traditional laws, more so than their female counterparts. However, 72% of women earning Le1-100,000 believe that government laws are more important than traditional, 10% more than men earning the same salary. A higher percentage of women than men believe women are affected by traditional laws. Counter to this, men earning Le 301-000 – 400,000 and Le 501,000 – 800,000 believe traditional laws have a greater impact than women in the same salary bracket. A higher percentage of women from all salary brackets believe women are less likely to participate in decision making processes. When asked reasons why, the majority of women earning Le 0 – 100,000 stated 'other' and those earning Le101,000 + stated male domination. Men offered different explanations from lack of education, intimidation and male domination. Overall more women believe women are as capable as men. The only salary category where more men than women agree women are as capable as men is those earning Le 201,000 – 300,000.

Sex/Education:

84% of women interviewed with a primary level of education have voted before, 13% more than men. Yet 13-21% more men with a secondary and tertiary education have voted before when compared to women in the same education categories. 14% more men with a primary education registered to vote and 7% with a secondary education when compared to women in the same education categories. Out of those with a tertiary education, 85% of men and 90% of women had registered to vote. The main reason for both men and women across all levels of education for not registering to vote was being 'out of town'. 6% of men and women with a tertiary education level did not vote because of distance. The majority of men at all education levels and women with a primary and secondary education live in mud houses. 39% of women with a tertiary education live in concrete houses. The main occupation of men with a primary education is farming (47%) and traders (49%) for women. Students make up 31% of men and 33% of women with a secondary education and teachers account for 44% of men and 39% of women with a tertiary education level.

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Salary
Sex: Male, Education level: Tertiary

Salary
Sex: Female, Education level: Tertiary

Legend (Male):
- No
- Le 1-100,000
- Le 101,000-200,000
- Le 201,000-300,000
- Le 301,000-400,000
- Le 401-000-500,000
- Le 501,000-800,000
- Le 801,000-1,100,000
- Le 1,101,000 +
- Missing

Legend (Female):
- No
- Le 1-100,000
- Le 101,000-200,000
- Le 201,000-300,000
- Le 301,000-400,000
- Le 401-000-500,000
- Le 501,000-800,000
- Le 1,100,000 +
- Missing

Women with no salary account for 10-19% more than men with primary and secondary education levels. 18% of men with a tertiary education earn Le 501,000 – 800,000 yet 37% of women at the same education level receive no salary. Women with a secondary and tertiary education have on average, fewer dependants than their male counter parts (women average 1-3 and men 4-7).

When asked, 'can you read?' women have a lower literacy rate than men. However, 63% of women with a primary education stated they could read, higher than men (59%) in the same category. 77% of men and women with a primary education were given the option of education. 5-8% more men with a secondary and tertiary level of education were given the option of education when compared to women in the same education groups. 56-65% of men and women stated 'other' when asked what encourages them to vote. More men stated they were interested in politics than women. This margin increases amongst those with a tertiary level of education, 56% of women 71% of men said they were interested in politics. More men with a primary and secondary education believe their vote counts when compared to women. However, 6% more women with a tertiary education believe their vote counts. 1-14% more men across all education levels believe government laws are more important than traditional. When asked which types of laws affect women's issues more, the majority of men and women stated traditional (although women made up (6-9%) more than men with a primary and secondary education). Only 49% of women with a secondary education believe women are less likely to participate compared to 65% in the same education bracket. Yet, 11% more women with a tertiary level of education stated yes, less likely to participate. There is no major difference between men and women who were asked whether women were as capable as me except those with a secondary education as 75% of men and 87% of women had stated yes.

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Discussion

Several observations can be made from the data collected. Women were deliberately targeted when conducting the surveys and interviews on Election Day, which must be taken into consideration when analysing and drawing conclusions from the data. Respondents aged between 18-25 years old were the category with the highest voter turnout. This is corroborated by data collected and analysed in the National Electoral Commission Annual Report (2012). Female respondents had a lower average age than men. This could signal the increased political activity of women who are developing a visible political consciousness when compared to women in different age groups. The data reflected that men have greater financial obligations due to having larger families, dependents and multiple wives. Young women, notably those aged between 18-25 years are still encouraged to marry early in life, a pressure that men in the same age group do not face to the same degree, which is why the data shows a noteworthy percentage of men aged 18-25 single and women married. Women who marry at a young age tend to marry older men which, explains the high rate of widowed women. However, an interesting observation from the data is that higher proportion of women are remaining widowed, single or decide to cohabitate rather than remarry (this is especially evident amongst high earning women). Traditionally the majority of women would remarry after becoming widowed but two inferences can be drawn from the data collected. Firstly, men may be reluctant to marry a widowed woman as they would be obligated to inherit all financial needs and dependents. Secondly, women could be developing different social attitudes which safeguards and best serves their interests, which changes society's assumptions and outlooks of single women, despite making women aged 56+ more economically vulnerable than their male counterparts.

Men and women aged between 18-25 years accounted for the same percentage of students. As expected, the majority of female respondents had a primary level of education, however an educational ceiling, created by a patriarchal culture that relegates women to the house duties and denies the importance of their education, still exists preventing women from advancing to a secondary and especially tertiary level of education. This data was echoed by interview respondents as a greater number of men had the option to education and men overall had a higher literacy rate. Men and women still occupy traditional occupations with the majority of male respondents being farmers and women traders. There is a clear disparity between men and women earning Le 301,000+ which could suggest that women have less opportunity and access to high paid employment positions. What should be noted it that women have more access to additional incomes. Further research would need to be conducted to establish the sources of income as well as the redistribution on those incomes within the family.

The data shows men having a stronger and more visible past voting record when compared to women. It appears that political participation for women has increased over the past 17 years, which could be attributed to the impact of development and increased political awareness amongst women. Interestingly, the older the respondent the less likely they are to have voted before. This data would need to be substantiated by further research. Responses given by those in the top salary brackets and those aged 56+ cannot be generalised as they are both minority groups. Further data would need to be collected to verify responses as well

as to analyse whether an increase in female representation in government affects the participation of women.

As expected, the majority of respondents voted for the dominant political party, although it must be stated that this was a comparatively marginal majority. When discussing reasons for voting, the political party was seen to be more important to voters than the party leader however the average 60:40 ratio would suggest that individual political leaders are an important consideration when constituents cast their votes. Furthermore, many respondents said they voted on the basis of development and which political party best served their own interests. With further research it would be possible to suggest that voting because of tribal affiliations and the influence of peers is in decline. Political campaigns are considered to be more important to men than women and have a greater impact on younger voters. One explanation for this is that men are more likely to be campaigned and therefore get more out of the process. A larger proportion of women felt they were not represented by their chosen political party. This could reflect male dominated political parties and party policy that focusses on addressing issues that have a greater impact on men. Intimidation and gossiping were identified as the two major problems respondents faced (especially women) which lead their vote to not being free. Most respondents found the registration and voting processes easy. The proportion of those who found the registration and voting processes more challenging increased with income, which could be attributed to the reluctance of high earners to sit in and wait in queues. Voter turnout of 80-81% shown in data collected reflects national statistics.

The majority of men and women believe that women are as capable as men in a decision making and political capacity (except primary educated women, the only category to believe women as less capable than their male counterparts). Lack of confidence, political knowledge, understanding of basic rights and entitlements and cultural attitudes could be responsible for this. There is a slight change in attitude expressed by men aged 46-56+ on their opinions of the capabilities of women in terms of political participation as a larger proportion believe women are not as capable. This data is interesting as men aged 46-56+ would be the majority of those it take up positions of political authority and high profile jobs. It is this group of men who need to be targeted in sensitisation programmes as they appear to have the greatest influence on hindering women's development.

There is a distinctive lack of female political leaders that have the opportunity to effectively advance the needs and rights of their constituents, only 14% of candidates elected in 2012 were female. Although a notable proportion of women participate in community based political structures, men still outnumber women. It is therefore important to conduct further research investigating what specific barriers discourage women from participating in decision making processes. One explanation offered from the data collected is that the majority of respondents felt traditional laws still have a significant impact on advancement of women. Specially regarding local government is also important to conduct further research to understand the actual effect that female politicians have in decision-making. This is especially important given the great role that customary laws play, which give men most of the power in the private and political spheres.

Conclusions

Several socio-economic profiles that can be built from the data collected, which could be used to predict voting behaviour.

Despite an impressive voter turnout in the 2012 general election, there are still several political realities that must be addressed by political leaders and representatives to make them more accountable to their constituents. Women are visible becoming more politically active in terms of national political engagement (especially amongst younger generations). Yet women are still politically under-represented in terms of female political representation that reflects Sierra Leone's demographic composition which has implications for safeguarding, addressing and advancing issues that affect women. Women are less active in community based governance structures which have a greater impact on the rights, entitlements of development of women than government laws and political structures.

Provisions need to be made to actively bring women to table so they are able to voice concerns and issues that directly affect them. This information can that be used during the process of policy formulation so the rights and interests of women are addressed. Mechanisms should be established to encourage and facilitate better dialogue between women and duty bearers and the data collected must be used as a springboard to undertake further research.

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Recommendations

- Strengthen and formulate structures to actively encourage women to participate in political processes.

- Further research investigating the barriers that prevent women from participating in decision making processes.

- Formulate programmes to support women leaders to effectively advance the needs and rights of their constituents, particularly the needs and rights of women.

- Support women, especially poor and marginalised women, by giving them the knowledge, resources and skills required to adequately defend their rights and gain greater access to services and resources.

- Engage and train traditional leaders, religious figureheads and other stakeholders throughout the Northern Province to best serve marginalised citizens and facilitate gender relations, dialogue and reform.

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<u>Exit Poll Survey</u>

The primary objective of this survey is to attain detailed data on the attitudinal and demographic characteristics of voters. The data will be used to investigate any causal relationships. Once identified, the research can be used to change election/campaign practices and advise non-government organisations on how best they can increase the accountability of politicians to their constituents and increase voter participation (especially within vulnerable groups). Participation is voluntary and all data is anonymous.

Circle answers in all questions where options are provided.
1. Age : _____

2. Sex : Male   Female

3. Relationship Status : Married   Single   Widowed Divorced Cohabitating
   Other _____

4. Occupation : _____

5. How many people live in your house? _____

6. What material is your house built from?

   Mud   Wood   Brick   Concrete Zinc Grass Other_____ (Visually assess and answer question)

7. If you work, what is your monthly salary? _____

   If not, how much money do you have each month to use?_____

8. Number of Dependents (number of people financially dependent on you)

   _____

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9. What is the highest level of education you've completed?

Primary School   Secondary school   Tertiary Education

10. Have you ever voted before? YES   NO

When? _____

11. How did you find the voting registration process in this election? _____

Very Easy   Very Difficult

1_____10

12. How did you find the voting process in this election? _____

Very Easy   Very Difficult

1_____10

13. What makes you feel you belong to a party?

_____

_____

14. Have you always belonged to this party?   YES   NO

If NO, why?

_____

_____

15. Do you vote for the dominant party in your region? YES   NO

If YES, why?

_____

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_____

16. Do you vote for a party or individual person?

    Party   Individual person

17. Do you vote based on the campaigns of the major political parties?   YES   NO

18. Do you feel represented by your chosen political party?   YES   NO
    (If no affiliation N/A)

19. Do you participate in local/community politics?   YES   NO

20. Do you feel free to vote for whoever you chose?   YES   NO

    If NO, why? _____

    _____

21. Do you find it easy to vote in terms of access and security?   YES   NO

    If NO, why?

    _____

    _____

22. Can women be as capable as men in politics?   YES   NO
    If NO, Why? _____

23. Do you use the following media?

    TV   Newspaper   Radio   Internet

24. Do you have the following in your household?

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TV   Newspaper   Radio   Internet

25. Who is your favourite media personality?

_____

26. Do you know his party affiliation?

_____

27. Have media personalities changed how you vote?   YES   NO

Thank you for taking part in this survey conducted under the supervision and authorisation of the Governance Department at the University of Makeni.

Location: Survey number:

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Structure Interview Questions – Voters/Non Voters

Greet participant and tell them information about the research you are conducting on behalf of UNIMAK…

The primary objective of this survey is to attain detailed data on the attitudinal and demographic characteristics of voters. The data will be used to investigate any causal relationships. Once identified, the research can be used to change election/campaign practices and advise non-government organisations on how best they can increase the accountability of politicians to their constituents and increase voter participation (especially within vulnerable groups). Participation is voluntary and all data is anonymous.

Circle answers in all questions where options are provided.

1.   Are you voting today?

YES   NO   (If NO proceed to next question)

2.   Age : _____

3.   Sex :   Male   Female

4.   Relationship Status : Married   Single   Widowed Divorced Cohabitating
      Other _____

5.   Have you ever voted?   YES   NO

6.   Are you registered to vote this year?   YES   NO

      If NO, why? (Money, time, illness, distance, intimidation, loss of I.D card
       ……)_____

      If YES, why have you not voted in this election?
      _____

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7. What material is your house built from? (Visually assess and answer question)

   Mud   Wood   Brick   Concrete   Zinc   Grass   Other_____

8. What work you do? : _____

9. If you work, what is your monthly salary? _____

   If not, how much money do you have each month to use?

   _____

10. Number of Dependents (number of people financially dependent on you)

    _____

11. Can you read or write?   YES   NO (If YES proceed to next question)

12. Did you get chance to go to school? YES   NO (If YES proceed to next question)

13. What is the highest level of education you've completed?

    Primary School   Secondary school   Tertiary Education

14. What encourages you to go and vote?
    _____
    _____

15. Are you interested in Politics?   YES   NO

16. What do you know about elections?
    _____
    _____

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17. What do you know about politicians?
_____
_____

18. Do you think your vote counts?   YES   NO

    If NO, why?_____

19. Traditional laws and government laws, which do you prefer?
_____
_____

20. Do you think women's issues are more affected by traditional practices or national laws?
_____
_____
_____

21. Do you think women are less likely to participate in decision making process?   YES   NO   If YES, Why?
_____
_____

22. Can women be as capable as men in politics?   YES   NO

    If NO, why? _____

Thank you for taking part in this interview conducted under the supervision and authorisation of the Governance Department at the University of Makeni.

Location: Interview Number:

Department for Good Governance

Appendix One

Table one: Relationship distribution table

Sex	Age			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
			Relationship				
	1	Valid	1	28	17.3	17.3	17.3
			2	125	77.2	77.2	94.4
			3	1	.6	.6	95.1
			5	8	4.9	4.9	100.0
			Total	162	100.0	100.0	
	2	Valid	1	136	65.4	65.7	65.7
			2	54	26.0	26.1	91.8
			3	1	.5	.5	92.3
			4	5	2.4	2.4	94.7
			5	11	5.3	5.3	100.0
			Total	207	99.5	100.0	
		Missing	System	1	.5		
		Total		208	100.0		
	3	Valid	1	142	87.7	87.7	87.7
			2	9	5.6	5.6	93.2
			3	2	1.2	1.2	94.4
			4	4	2.5	2.5	96.9
			5	5	3.1	3.1	100.0
			Total	162	100.0	100.0	
	4	Valid	1	71	92.2	92.2	92.2
			2	1	1.3	1.3	93.5
			3	2	2.6	2.6	96.1
			4	2	2.6	2.6	98.7
			5	1	1.3	1.3	100.0
			Total	77	100.0	100.0	
	5	Valid	1	75	83.3	83.3	83.3
			2	3	3.3	3.3	86.7
			3	8	8.9	8.9	95.6
			4	4	4.4	4.4	100.0
			Total	90	100.0	100.0	
		Valid	3	1	100.0	100.0	100.0
2	1	Valid	1	107	29.6	30.2	30.2

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			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
		2	222	61.3	62.7	92.9
		3	10	2.8	2.8	95.8
		4	2	.6	.6	96.3
		5	12	3.3	3.4	99.7
		6	1	.3	.3	100.0
		Total	354	97.8	100.0	
	Missing	System	8	2.2		
	Total		362	100.0		
2	Valid	1	269	71.4	71.5	71.5
		2	57	15.1	15.2	86.7
		3	18	4.8	4.8	91.5
		4	8	2.1	2.1	93.6
		5	24	6.4	6.4	100.0
		Total	376	99.7	100.0	
	Missing	System	1	.3		
	Total		377	100.0		
3	Valid	1	191	72.6	73.2	73.2
		2	15	5.7	5.7	78.9
		3	35	13.3	13.4	92.3
		4	15	5.7	5.7	98.1
		5	5	1.9	1.9	100.0
		Total	261	99.2	100.0	
	Missing	System	2	.8		
	Total		263	100.0		
4	Valid	1	86	59.7	59.7	59.7
		2	5	3.5	3.5	63.2
		3	40	27.8	27.8	91.0
		4	11	7.6	7.6	98.6
		5	2	1.4	1.4	100.0
		Total	144	100.0	100.0	
5	Valid	1	72	42.6	42.6	42.6
		2	2	1.2	1.2	43.8
		3	88	52.1	52.1	95.9
		4	7	4.1	4.1	100.0
		Total	169	100.0	100.0	