



# Margaret Thatcher, a Revolution or a Source of Inspiration to British Feminist Political Leadership

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## Abstract:

Women's capacity in politics is a recurrent debatable issue, without and not yet a definitive way-out. This analytical work is using feminist and new historicist inspirations, associated to socio-political dimensions to move from Margaret Thatcher's leadership as a revolution or a source of inspiration, to scrutinize and correct British female leaders' roles, successes and challenges. Well known Thatcherist ideology, strategies, practices, their failures and successes, as well as female leaders' specific rights, duties and obligations, in the general context of British and the world's social and political governance, are the expected results from this study.

**Key words:** Women, female leadership, challenges, capacity in politics, ideology

## Résumé:

La capacité des femmes en politique est une question récurrente et discutable, sans une issue définitive pour le moment. Cette étude analytique se sert des approches féministes et néo-historicistes, associées à des dimensions socio-politiques pour partir du leadership de Margaret Thatcher comme révolution ou source d'inspiration afin d'examiner ou de re-préciser les rôles, les succès et les défis des leaders féminins, britanniques. L'idéologie, les stratégies et les pratiques Thatcheristes, de même que leurs échecs et réussites, bien connus, seront passés aux peignes fins, y compris leurs faiblesses et forces, ainsi que leurs droits et devoirs dans le contexte général de la gouvernance sociale et politique britannique et internationale, sont les résultats attendus de cette étude.

**Mots clés :** Femmes, leadership féminin, défis, capacité en politique, idéologie

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## I. Introduction

Women's roles in societies or politics have always been challenged by many social, political or literary trends and practices. The phenomenon worsens in Africa where women are seen as talkative, weaker sexes, less rigorous and unable to keep secrecy. In politics all over the world, this phenomenal reality is alarming when rare or very few women are social and political leaders or managers. Nevertheless, some exceptions are noticeable. Added to their roles of social organizers, some women become social and political leaders as mayors, ministers, chairwomen of committees, of NGOs, of other institutions and presidents of republic. British former Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher (Pickard, 182), is among those female leaders. She has even become an icon of the female leadership, owing to which she has gained her metaphorical image of "the Iron lady" (Ibid.). In spite of her fame among the multiple numbers of men, the enigma of insufficient representation of women in British, the world and African politics, is still to decrypt. At least, this British exception can become a source of inspiration or a model for the Beninese or the world's female leadership in competition with men's governance.

The target of my analysis is to revisit Margaret Thatcher's bio-bibliography, her professional, familial and socio-cultural life, as well as Thatcherite ideologies, institutions and practices, so as to show the successes and failures of thatcherism. This will help to re-orient women's struggle for true social and political sustainable emancipation and representation, beyond the classical and sometimes ineffective womanist or feminist activism. It has made me use new historicist and feminist critical approaches to offer new ways and strategies to British and international female political leadership, in terms of social and political governance, a bit broken down or weakened. Information from various documents, television and radio news or experiences have sustained this critical analysis which should, in the end, make have many talented and performant female

political leaders in British and international environments. Background information on British and international female leadership, feminist theoretical views and activism with Margaret Thatcher and others, including sociological, cultural and economic challenges for new perspectives of development, are the main parts of this critical work.

## **I-Feminism and Female Political Leadership**

### **1.1. Feminism, Womanism and Socio-Political Female Leadership**

Feminism is a range of political movements, ideologies, and social movements which share a common goal. To define, to establish, and to achieve political, economic, personal and social equality of sexes. This includes seeking to establish educational and professional opportunities for women which are equal to those for men (Hawkesworth, 25-27). Feminists think that men and women are equal and women deserve the same rights as men in society. But that rule and approaches are not totally respected. Women realized that they are treated inferior to men and do not benefit from the same privileges as men in social and political activities. To correct this old view, feminists created movements that dealt with three waves or stages with connected problems and issues including different perspectives. The first wave of feminist movement, observed in the 1800s and early 1900s (<http://www.opinionfront.com>, 2019), concentrated on women's suffrage, equal property rights, rights related to marriage and their right to vote. The second wave advocated for legal equality between men and women and the third wave of feminist movement continued in working for correcting the weaknesses of the second phase. Furthermore, not only did feminism deal with different stages but it also had different parts. Its parts are split into several types. Among others, there is firstly the liberal feminism which advocates for equality between the sexes through social and political reforms and legal means (Loc. Cit.). Some very important objectives of liberal feminism are abortion rights, equal pay for male and female employees, educational rights, voting rights, child care and health care.

The next type is radical feminism and it led to the development of many thoughts, ideas and actions. Radical feminism believes that it is the male-dominated hierarchy or patriarchy which is responsible for the oppressed status of women today. There is also cultural feminism and it thinks that the society needs a female essence or a female nature to be well balanced. For this type of feminism, a female nature is a necessity for men's psycho-sociological existence. Men's forces are then determined by women's existence in their environments. These feminists think that the female essence should be celebrated and infused with the male-dominated world to provide the right balance to the working society (Loc. Cit.).

Socialist and Marxist feminism are also the types of feminism which aim that the oppressed status of women can be attributed to the unequal treatment at both workplace and in the house. Ecofeminism is the combination of ecology and feminism, which dwells on the symbolic relationship between the oppression of women and the destruction of the environment. Black feminism believes that racism and gender discrimination are two sides of the same coin. It also stated that, if the liberation of Black women is successful, it would mean the liberation of all women, racial segregation as well as discrimination based on economic classes. Separatist feminism is then the concept of heterosexual relationships; no man can contribute positively to the feminist movement, and hence, it is just better to avoid relationships with men.

To really understand what feminism is, it is very important to get familiar with some of its context words such as womanism, maternity, masculinity, femininity, matriarchy and sexism. Womanism is then a social theory based on the history of women. It seeks to restore the balance between people and the social environment. Womanism and feminism are likely the same; for they both fight for women's rights. But, the main goal of womanism is to fight for women's ownership over writings. As for maternity (<https://www.womanism.com>, "Definition of womanism", 2021). George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, *A Study of Provincial Life* (1871-1872), her *Felix Holt, the Radical* (1866), her *Daniel Deronda* (1874-1876), are womanist and feminist writings satirizing anti-womanist and anti-feminist behaviors and pleading for the status of ownership for women writers and their rights and duties in societies, with both the help of women and men, and in a balanced complementarity. For George Eliot, women should be helped by men; hence femininity be reinforced by masculinity in a realistic and successful complementarity. Women's welfare should be facilitated by men's. Feminist and womanist struggle for women's rights and duties should be achieved by men and women to succeed. Thus, femininity and masculinity are natural and necessary to build a well-balanced society.

As a matter of fact, femininity refers to showing feminine features that may equate femininity with being a woman who embodies characteristics like being nurturing, sensitive, demure, or sweet (Windsor, 2015). It is opposed to masculinity that refers to the roles, behaviors, and attributes that are considered appropriate for boys and men in a given society. Masculinity is constructed and defined socially, historically and biologically, rather than being biologically driven (<http://www.ndi.org/files/pdf>. "The Meanings of Masculinities", 2022). It is then clear that men and women are not the same biologically and socially, and they cannot play exactly the same roles. They may complete each other biologically, socially and politically. Where females fail, males can complete. Where men don't show ability, women can help. Maternity and paternity are associated to them to

balance biological and social life in families and communities. Fathers protect and help families and communities where mothers don't have means and capacities. Mothers can also help where men don't show abilities. Philosophical and sociological considerations of patriarchy and matriarchy from some societies are inspired by the meanings and dimensions of femininity and masculinity. Matriarchy is a society in which women are in charge of organizing and ruling communities as heads of families with power, lineage, and inheritance passing, where possible, from mothers to daughters (Dassi and Adjaka, 2015). It is also a social system in which females hold the primary power positions in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property at the specific exclusion on males. Patriarchy is a system or government in which the father or eldest male is the head of the family and descent is reckoned through the male line. In this system, men hold social and political power and women are largely excluded from it (<http://www.dictionnaire.com/meaning-of-patriarchy>, 2022).

If women have to play the same roles as men in political leadership, women have to show connected abilities to the psychology, the philosophy and sociology of leadership in general and those of feminist leadership in particular. In this vein, Larry Stout, in *Time For a Change*, explains that leadership implies change and initiating changes that benefit not only the leader but also all his or her followers. Right conditions are required to initiate a change. Success in leading depends on leaders' human and social capital. Success in leadership happens when conditions and capital coincide. Failure in leadership is a result of changing conditions or misapplied capital. Leadership Capital is an expandable resource (p 38).

Considering all those aspects, it is clear that leadership does not mean only the fact of leading, but it must necessarily take into account how to organize changes more precisely in a positive way in societies. These changes must imply the whole society, including promoting one's neighbors' development in terms of human, psychological, social and sociological capitals development through good management, good governance and sustainable development. Larry Stout goes further and compares what happens in governance and leadership system to some movements in human anatomy: "If we continue with the human anatomy analogy to leadership conditions, we could compare the personal competencies of wisdom and courage to the nervous system of the body. Every action that the body takes is predicated by the nervous system, just as every action of a leader is formed by his or her wisdom and courage (Ibid.). To lead then requires two competences: wisdom and courage. Courage is needed to take challenges and wisdom to inspire right decisions for justice, peace and development, either the leader is a man or a woman. Thus, feminist leadership should show bravery and wisdom that is not necessarily innate in the nature of women. Feminism and Feminist leadership are then set in the core of a challenge for bravery and wisdom to reach men's level: "L' action du féminisme est centrée d'abord sur la femme qui doit apprendre à se voir et à voir le monde non plus à travers le regard déformant de l'homme mais à travers son propre miroir et ses expériences antérieures" (A. Xolali, 65). For this author, women ought to improve their capacity and their level of determination in order to become brave and useful people in society. They must learn how to compare themselves to other people's successes, not their failures without ignoring their own experiences. Feminism in leadership should consider human rights and duties as a whole, not in terms of opposing women to men, nor raising the debates of femininity versus masculinity, nor matriarchy versus patriarchy, for actual sustainable development, as reinforced by Dansou: Human rights are advantages or privileges given to human beings in a specific society within a particular period of time. It is the sum total of rights recognized by law and secured by the State. They are also known as civil liberty which consists of the rights and privileges that the State creates and protects for its subjects. These rights are categorized into right to life, right to work, right to personal safety and freedom, right to education; right to the freedom of speech, public meeting and publication; right of association, family rights, property right, right to the general advantages of social life; political rights and others (p,4).

The social and moral development of women must not be considered as inferior as the one of men. All of them are human beings. Aristotle also has his personal views on women and this influenced thinkers. He compared women to men and in his analysis, he believed that women are different to men because of some physical and moral features but they are all the same human beings. Aristotle in this way, demonstrated that men and women naturally differed both physically and mentally. He claimed that women are more mischievous, less simple, more impulsive, more compassionate, more easily moved to tears, more jealous, more querulous, more apt to scold, to strike, more prone to despondency and less hopeful, more false of speech, more deceptive, of more retentive memory and also more wakeful; more shrinking and more difficult to rouse to action than men (<http://www.aristotle's view on women>, 2022). By those words, Aristotle is showing weakness in women that they should challenge to confirm the force and success of feminist leadership, through bravery and wisdom. Feminist leadership should then become pragmatic, effective, efficient and successful beyond talkative manifestations. This should go beyond: "mon Coeur est en fête chaque fois qu'une femme émerge de l'ombre" (Ba, 108), to secure feminist leadership and governance.

Sometimes and in quest of freedom and peace, a lot of women prefer silence to struggle. And there are many countries that continue to treat women as lesser than human beings. For Amartya Sen, People's capacity to realize

their rights, and State's capacity to fulfill them, are of course dependent on their relative power. Inequality in the lives of poor and rich are alike. Power resembles a force field that permeates households, communities, and societies at large, shaping both the interactions and innermost thoughts of individuals and groups (Sen,28). Feminist leadership and governance also need a strong feeling of patriotism or the national pride that is expressed by devotion and sense of attachment to a homeland and alliance with other citizens who share the same feelings. This attachment can be a combination of many different feelings related to one's own homeland, including ethnic, cultural, political or historical aspects in an actual democratic society. This democratic society which should be organized and ruled for all, requires that citizens recognize their common interests and they fully and openly discuss their differing perspectives on issues to these common priorities. Patriotic commitments in a democratic society should be motivated by and reinforce the recognition of the variety of interests that citizens have in common. The British former Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, is the basic model of feminist and female leader from whom this analysis is finding out if this system of governance has been a failure or a success in the political history of the United Kingdom, of Benin Republic and of the world.

## **1.2. Margaret Thatcher and the Dimensions of British Female Leadership**

Margaret Thatcher, in full, Margaret Hilda Thatcher, Baroness Thatcher of Kesteven, was born in October 1, 1925, Grantham, Lincolnshire, England. She died April 8, 2013. In London. She is the daughter of Alfred Roberts, a grocer and local alderman (and later mayor of Grantham), and of Beatrice Ethel Stephenson. She grew up in Grantham, in the North of England. In 1943, she won a place at Oxford University, where she read Chemistry and Joined Conservative Association. In that University, the way she reacted, talked and thought was at that time comparable to the one of a female leader. So, since her childhood, people can read leading capacity in her. Her parents Alfred and Beatrice Roberts, ran a grocery and she lived over the shop, sometimes helping before the counter. There were no adequate means of communication when she was young, but she tried to study in such conditions. She went to state schools and despite the fact that she was very young, she had to walk several miles before there and back every day. At the end of the year 1951, she married a rich local businessman, Denis Thatcher. She began to read for the Bar and passed her law exams in 1953. That year, she also gave birth to twins. She then practiced tax law for the next five years. Therefore, she was a very determined woman because most of the time, when some girls are married or give birth to children, their visions are limited. (<https://www.biography.com> of Margaret Thatcher.com).

During the Twentieth Century, the Conservative Party spent more years in power than in opposition. Its longest serving Prime Minister during that time was Margaret Thatcher who was in office uninterruptedly from 1979 to 1990. She was forced to resign and replaced by John Major without general elections. But politics was her passion. In the 1950 general elections, she stood for election in the House of Commons. She lost then and lost again in 1951. She held Junior government office from 1961 to 1964. Then, she entered the Cabinet as Minister of Education and Science from 1970 to 1974. After the second World War, the Education Act was introduced to make sure all the children had the basic nutrition to keep healthy. Many families were living in a very austere times and rationing was still enforced. This act meant every child in Britain was guaranteed milk and at least one hot milk a day. When Thatcher was made Secretary of State for Education and Science, children up to the age of 11, in first and middle school, used to still get free milk at school. This was drunk from mini milk bottles, containing a third of a pint of a milk and drunk through straws. Margaret Thatcher cut this age to 7 years old, that is how she got the nickname 'The Milk Snatcher' as basically she is perceived to be taking milk out of the hands of children. (<https://www.MargaretThatcher.com>, the Milk Snatcher, November, 2022)

In 1975, the Conservative Party needed a new leader and it chose Margaret Thatcher. She became the UK's first woman Prime Minister in 1979, and she won two further general elections. She stayed in office for 11 years giving birth to the term 'Thatcherism', associated: monetarism, privatization, self-help and anti-trade unionism. Thatcherism is a term to describe Thatcher's political and economic means of running the British government. It was marked by small tasks, such as defense, and free market economy. To reach this goal, Thatcher made many changes, such as increasing interest rates, decreasing income taxes and government spending, and privatizing businesses. Thatcher herself would have described Thatcherism as running the country like a frugal housewife. On taking office, she attempted to make the country more competitive. As result, traditional manufacturing was hit hard, with unemployment topping 3 billion from 1982 to 1985. She became the most unpopular Prime Minister in British history. (Pickard, 186)

Taking into account, her sense of iron discipline, rigid conservative and ideological capitalistic commitment, she was also nicknamed, 'iron lady'. But iron-lady<sup>34</sup> was helped by the UK's victory in the Falklands War in 1982. It was a Soviet journalist who coined the iron lady for Margaret Thatcher, intended as an insult. By the time she left office for Russians, it became a term of affection, or at the very least, grudging respect. The introduction of the Poll Tax in the late 1980s led to huge public protest. This, plus her anti-Europe stance and strong disagreements with her Cabinet members who accused her of being over-authoritarian, led to her downfall. In 1990, Michael Hestletine led a leadership challenge and eventually, she was forced to make a



humiliating resignation. She then became a member of the House of Lords as a life peer. Margaret Thatcher was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 4 May 1979 to 28 November 1990, during the time which she led Conservative government. She served three terms. Her first term was from 1979 to 1983, the second term from 1983 to 1987 and the third ministry from 1987 to 1990. (Ibid.).

The personality of Margaret Thatcher has been determined by her family, social, political, scientific and economic environments. She belongs to a noble family. Her father, a former alderman, magistrate served in a political institution with the honor due to the manager and leader of his rank. Born in a family of grocer, she certainly learnt how to organize, manage and rule people and goods in discipline and order. Living with her father, a leader in the U K, she has surely learnt a lot from him. As a scientist, she got order and rigor in character. This has been reinforced by her reading and practising of law. It is to mean that no courage, discipline, order and wisdom in feminist and management for success are possible without the inspiration nor help of men. Leadership and management are thus a matter of team in which there are men and women, or at least the help or inspiration of men. No women's revolution is possible without the assistance of men. Women's success is helped by men and vice versa. Naturally, women's sex is the opposite of men. Men's masculinity is sometimes required to back up women femininity to prevent her from dangers in families or societies. A society of women only is impossible. A feminist or female leadership should not be considered in terms of women's fight against men. It should be seen as a concern of men to which are closely associated women, before it succeeds. All the traits shown by Margaret Thatcher should be seen as what her father wanted her to become, with the help of her mother, sustained by social, political, cultural, scientific, sociological and economic environments.

Born in a business family, she showed devotion to conservative and capitalistic ideology that she accepted and implemented, with many reforms for liberal and capitalistic philosophy versus consciously or unconsciously socialistic and philanthropic trends and policies, with the device of one should deserve what he or she gains to avoid becoming idle or modern beggars. Added to this female British Prime Minister and leader, there have been other female leaders as Members of Parliament, as ministers, political parties' leaders, mayors and former prime ministers.

Some British female leaders of parliamentary parties are: Naomi Long, Arlene Foster, Jean Lambert, Margaret Wright, Caroline Lucas, Sian Berry, Natalie Bennett, Carla Denyer, Margaret Beckett, Harriet Harman, The Baroness Brinton Swinson, Leanne Wood, Nicola Sturgeon, Margaret Buckley, Mary Lou McDonald, Margaret Ritchie. The following female leaders are from parties with representation in devolved parliaments: Kelly Andrews, Clare Bailey, Kate Costan, Maran Coyne; Eleanor Scott, Shiona Baird, Alison Johnstone, Martha Wardrop, Maggie Chapman, Lorna Slater. Some leaders are from the regional branches of parliamentary parties. They are: Angie Bray, Annabel Goldie, Ruth Davidson, Cathy Jamieson, Wendy Alexander, Johan Lamont, Kesia Dugdale, Jackie Baillie, Kirsty Williams, Jane Dodds. There are likewise female leaders from parties in local government. These are: Felicity Rice, Vanessa Hudson, Catherine Blaiklock, Susan Parker, Lorraine Moss, Marie Brady, Colette Walker, Marianne Overton; Helena Sanders, Loveday Carlyon, Loveday Jenkin, Rachael King, Dawn Purvis, Sally Cogley, Diane James, Pat Mountain, Sophie Walker, Mandu Reid ([https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_female\\_leaders\\_of\\_British\\_political\\_parties](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_female_leaders_of_British_political_parties), 2022).

Legal guarantees have been offered to appoint women in British cabinet: 'The Prime Minister could not appoint women to the cabinet until the Parliament (Qualification of Women) Act 1918 allowed women to stand to MP, and could not appoint peeresses to it until the Life Peerages Act 1958. .... Fifty-two women have been appointed positions in the Cabinet of the United Kingdom, with three female prime ministers' (<https://www.gov.uk/GOVERNMENT/ministers>, List of Female cabinet members of the United Kingdom, 2022). Some members of British cabinet are women such as: Margaret Bondfield, Ellen Wilkinson, Florence Horsburgh, Barbara Castle, Shirley Williams, Baroness Young, Virginia Bottomley, etc. Some opposition representatives called shadow ministers are: Rachel Reeves, David Lammy, Yvette Cooper, Steve Reed.' The proportion of women in the ministry has increased following the 2022 election, while the proportion of women in the shadow ministry has also increased in comparison to the previous coalition ministry. (<https://www.EML/Shutterstock.com>, Women in the ministry and shadow ministry, 2022).

Going through this structural organization of British feminist leadership and governance, remark is made that women are highly involved in British political system, from the leading of political parties to local, regional, central and national institutional or political bodies. Queen Victoria, Queen Elisabeth I and II have also been female monarchs. As heads of the government, added to Margaret Thatcher, the British first female prime minister (1979-1990), there are Theresa May (2016-2019) and Liz Truss (in 2022) From September to October when she resigned on her fiftieth day in office amid a government crisis making her the shortest serving prime minister in the history of United Kingdom (<https://www.LizTruss.com>, the British prime minister, 2022). Another remark is that no female leadership is implemented without men's assistance. All the female leading teams are composed of male leaders as at the top or as auxiliary forces to success. Thus, complementary between female and male leadership is necessary to balance social and political leadership for development. Sometimes, men are

needed to coach women for the success of governance. Men are needed to help some women go beyond emotions and fear to succeed. Taking into account three British women prime ministers among many men, the question is still to revisit the challenges of British female leadership inside the country and in international feminist leadership.

## **II-British Female Leadership inspiring or joining international Feminist leadership to face the challenges of Modernity and Contemporary World**

### **2.1. The Complexities and Demands of Female Leadership in Europe, America, Africa and other parts of the World:**

British feminist leadership or governance is setting on line with, or is inspiring or revolutionizing international female governance. Hilary Clinton, is one of the international female figure of leadership. She is an American politician, diplomat, she has been United States senator representing New York from 2001 to 2009. She has been the First Lady of the USA as the wife of President Bill Clinton from 1993 to 2001 She has been the US Secretary of State for President Barack from 2009 to 2013; She is a member of the American Democratic Party. She was the party nominee for President in the 2016 presidential election, becoming the first woman to win a presidential nomination by a major US political party. She won the popular vote but lost the electoral college vote, and election to Donald Trump. (<https://www.Hilary Clinton- W...en m.wikipedia.org,2022>).

This representation of American feminist leadership has been facilitated or built by men's leadership. The emergence of this female leader may not be possible without the help of President Bill Clinton, continued by President Barack Obama and all the other men and women working with her in the American Democratic Party, in the US Senate and in the US Secretorship of States; hence the necessity of complementarity between man and woman to make succeed feminist leadership. It is obvious that feminist leadership is not a matter of women only. It should include both women and men's actions and behaviors.

It is the same with the German Chancellor of Germany from 2005 to 2021. She was the first to hold the office as a woman and the second longest-serving chancellor in German history. She participated in the State's Youth's organization. She was a member of Youth's Pioneers and the free German Youth. In this context, Angela Merkel has acted in associations within which men and women work together to succeed in political governance. Her capacities and talents of a political female leader have been built or shaped by both women and men, not the female leaders of the system only.

In Africa, particularly in Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is a Liberian politician who served as the 24<sup>th</sup> president of Liberia from 2006 to 2018. She was the first elected female Head of State in Africa. After studies at Madison Business College and Harvard University, she returned to Liberia to work in William Tolbert's Government as a Deputy Minister of Finance from 1971 to 1974. Later, she worked again in the West for the World Bank in the Caribbean and in Latin America. In 1979, She received cabinet appointment as Minister of Finance serving to 1980. After Samuel Doe executed Tolbert in a coup d'état, she fled to the United States where she worked for Citibank and then for the Equator Bank. She returned to Liberia to contest a senatorial seat for Montserrado County in 1985. She was arrested then released. She lost 1997 presidential election to Charles Taylor. She fortunately won 2005 presidential election and took office on 16 January 2006. She was re-elected in 2011. She was the first woman in Africa elected as president of her country. ([https://en .m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ellen\\_Johnson\\_Sirleaf.Ellen Johnson Sirleaf,2022](https://en .m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ellen_Johnson_Sirleaf.Ellen Johnson Sirleaf,2022)).

Another African and Beninese female political leader is Rosine Vieyra Soglo. She was born on March 7, 1936 in Ouidah in an Afro-Brazilian family. In 1946, she moved to France to attend school. After graduation, she read law and became a barrister from 1965 to 1968. She was married to Nicephore Soglo, one of Beninese former Presidents from 1991 to 1996. She was the first Lady during that period and then became a leader of the Renaissance political party with her husband. She was then elected a member of the Beninese National Assembly for about 20 years before she died. (Tozo, 2004).

After Rosine Vieyra Soglo, Marie-Elise Gbèdo has also made her history among Beninese female political leaders. She was born on December 29, 1954 in Mankono, in Coted'Ivoire. She was educated in Benin at primary and secondary levels then went to France to continue her studies at Sobonne University. She got her Bachelor and Master of Law, and in 1983 she got a Master degree in Business Law. She also got a Certificate of lawyer. She joined the Paris Bar in 1985 and worked for several law firms. In 1987, she came back to Benin and in May, 1998, she was appointed Minister of Commerce, Crafts and Tourism in the Government of President Mathieu Kérékou and then, she was removed from that position in June 1993. In February 2001, she announced her candidacy for the March 2001 presidential election, becoming the first female presidential candidate in Benin Republic. But, it did not succeed. Running again for March 2006 presidential election, she took 11<sup>th</sup> place with 0,36% of the vote and failed once again. She repeated her candidacy for March 2011 presidential election and failed as well (<https://www.en. m.wikipedia.org/Marie Elise Gbedo's Life ,2022>). Surprisingly, most of the voters who fought against her candidacies were women. Just to mean that feminist

leadership ideology is not necessarily defended by women but it may rather become the concern of men than women's.

Thomas BoniYayi, one of candidates, won that election and appointed her Minister of Justice in 2012. Gbèdo served until 2013 and was replaced by another female political leader, Reckya Madougou was born on April 30, 1974. She got a certificate in trade engineering in a higher international school in Paris. In 2006, she set up her own council Cabinet, International Key Consulting. She entered the government of the President Yayi Boni in 2008 as Minister of Justice and held other positions. From 2008 to 2013, she served in Yayi Boni Government as a Minister till 2013 when she was removed. (Boko, 2001).

## **2.2. New Approaches, Suggestions and Perspectives for British, Beninese and other Forms of International Female Political Leadership for a Performing Governance and Sustainable Development**

To understand new approach or a political approach, let's further discover the meaning of an approach with J.C. Johari: 'An approach, in simple terms, may be defined as a way of looking at and then explaining a particular phenomenon. The perspective may be broad enough to cover a vast area like world as a whole in the study of politics, or it may very small embracing just an aspect of local, regional, or international politics.' (2013:20). To look at and explain means here to examine, to analyze or to criticize so as to find out means or ways to offer an ideal or better social and political unit or organization. Political reflections or analysis send to the combination of philosophical, physical, metaphysical, social, sociological, linguistic, cultural, moral, psychological, economic and political actions, facts and behaviors to re-orient, reorganize or make functional structural and institutional bodies of human societies. So, to better understand women in social actions or in politics, any personal or objective approach should take into account the psychological, physical, moral, philosophical, sociological, social linguistic, political and economic dimensions of women or any female beings and of feminism itself as well.

New approaches to suggest, in context, is putting a focus on nomatism and empirism with behaviorism. Norms or values and experiences or facts and behaviors, together are determinant to females' morality, behaviors and experiences in politics. It is what J.C. Johari still assimilates to Value-Laden study of politics through which it is further explained that, 'approaches to the study of politics may be broadly classified into two categories-normative and empirical. While the former is said to be value-laden, the latter is known to be value-neutral.' (Ibid., 21). Physically and physiologically, women's feminine nature itself is to be reinforced and made ready, brave and wise enough to meet the challenges of political governance and to assume the connected charges as men; hence even men's assistance for success. Political leadership or governance is a matter of a team. This team needs both feminine and masculine values, ideas, behaviors, experiences and orientations, to get well balanced morally, psychologically and sociologically. When before a choc, a danger or a disturbance, the feminine or the fragile nature of women makes them lost or fall apart, men of the team may give assistance, keep equilibrium and save bravely the Republic. Before a dead person, for example, most of women are highly motioned, lose control of their sense and make collapse their personality.

Sometimes, in the core of a situation of jealousy, women can lose control of their personality, weep endlessly, destroy everything around them, even kill their antagonists and then regret. That is the reason why, in societies, in politics, men should be where women are, and assist them for protection, guiding and reinforcing their sense for bravery and success. Female leadership should then be backed up by men; and whatever the feminist leadership, constitution, laws, acts and other legal decisions should help to better regulate feelings, actions and behaviors. Physiologically, natural phenomena show that, at certain times, women should not stay far from men, if not, they will be at risks. Naturally women are connected to men for their welfare. Both human beings complete each other, and they cannot naturally replace each other. To found a family, for example, women need to be connected to men attractively for success; and the lack of these feelings can bring each being to moral, psychological or social diseases. Sometimes, psychological, sociological and economic balance of women depends on men, and mainly for the success of feminist political leadership. Therefore, to make female political leadership succeed for sustainable development, complementarity between men and women in all domains is required, with a balanced combination of femininity and masculinity.

In terms of suggestions, female leadership and governance may include inspiration from philosophical or ethical approach. This means that the state of government in its relations with women should be considered as mixed with the search for goals, morals, truths or high principles supposed to be underlying all knowledge and reality. Historical approach can help shed light on the past of institutions, rules and procedures to make succeed feminist leadership. They can be sustained by institutional approach that puts a focus on the formal structure of political organization like legislature, executive and judiciary. With legal, sociological, psychological and economic approaches, women legal, psycho-sociological and economic dimensions are examined, understood and well oriented to the development and success of female governance, taking into account all its connections and interconnections with men's governance. Political methods, strategies, techniques, models, ideologies and paradigms are options and means female leaders can use to well implement principles of political governance in

general and those of feminist governance in particular. Women should bear men's bravery, wisdom and rationality, putting aside female troublesome emotions to assure a performing and successful feminist leadership. Female leadership is to be improved qualitatively and quantitatively, associating men's assistance. Women should work to improve the personality of female leaders. Women should unite to defend or promote their political and social rights and duties. The natural approach of complementarity between men and women should be reinforced socially and politically for the success of female political governance.

For the development of feminist or female leadership, the patriarchal sociology and psychology of certain areas should be revisited, be made favorable to the personal development of women and that of female sociopolitical leadership or governance. The concepts of matriarchy versus patriarchy should be considered, not in antagonistic way, but rather in that of complementarity, in terms of woman and man useful or helpful to each other for success and sustainable development. Masculinity and femininity will move from their opposite meanings to show compatibility and complementarity in meanings, actions, behaviors and mentalities. Womanhood should be reinforced by the manhood, vice versa.

Actually, women not becoming men, because biologically and physiologically impossible, can think, act and behave like men in social life or activities as well as in social leadership and political governance. Women can become brave and performing social and political leaders for their societies, locally, nationally, regionally and internationally. They can become brave and wise as men, controlling their emotions, feelings and passion to succeed in leadership and governance as men.

## II. Conclusion

Feminism, womanism, female leadership, are terms used to claim for or to promote women's rights, duties and personality. Women's welfare, is closely linked to men. In families, in societies and in politics women-men's balance is needed for success. No pure female nor feminist leadership exists without the contribution of men. Men's psychological and sociological balance depends on women, as women Psychosociological balance depends on men. Men can get sick in a womanless society as well as women can get trouble and sick in a manless society. A total absence of men in a society can lead to a disaster as well as the absence of women in a society can send men to an uneasiness. It may be the same for a pure feminist or female leadership as well for a pure masculine leadership or governance. Women cannot replace men in terms of masculinizing being, nor men can feminize themselves and lose their masculine identity. Female or feminist leadership requires men's assistance and influence to succeed.

All this should go beyond simple words to use social and political ideologies, institutions, constitutions, laws, procedures and other rules, adapted to contexts, to succeed governance for sustainable development. Leadership, management and governance are then matters of teams and systems. A team or a system coin with a structural and functional organizations in which many people, men and women, connected together, play, each of them, a specific varied role that converges to the same and common results. One should perceive feminism, womanism, female leadership as men and women's concerns for social justice, balance, peace and sustainable development. Female or feminist leadership can never succeed out of men. As one can understand in Felix Holt, the Radical by George Eliot, out of men, women can perish, but with men, they can live and exist, with their full womanist and feminist talents, competences and conditions (1866).

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