

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

**THE ROLE & INFLUENCE OF NATURAL RESOURCES IN CIVIL WARS IN AFRICA:
EXAMPLES FROM THE LIBERIAN AND SIERRA LEONEAN CIVIL WARS**

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this thesis is to test and analyze the proposition of whether and to what extent natural resource interests have been fundamental in either causing, fuelling or prolonging civil wars in Africa.

The study focuses on examples from the Liberian (1989-96 and 1999-2003) and Sierra Leonean civil (1991-2002) to better understand the workings of armed rebellion and the role of natural resources. These two conflict situations were chosen because of their international/transnational contexts and because of the large number of actors involved in either their management or resolution- (UN, ECOWAS, NGOs, and other International Non-Governmental Organizations). More importantly both nations are resource rich. This study examines closely the relationship between the management of natural resources (with focus on lootable natural resources) and armed conflicts and makes policy recommendations aimed at reducing the risk of resource-related violent conflicts.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE	7
Background and context	7
Purpose of study	10
Research Questions	11
Focus Countries for Study	12
Liberia	12
Sierra Leone	14
Relevance of Study	15
Methodology	16
Structure of study	17
Challenges to Study	19
CHAPTER TWO	20
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND	20
Introduction	20
Defining “Civil War”	21
Civil War Typologies	26
Causative and Sustaining Factors of Civil Wars	27
Deprived Actor Arguments	29
Rational Actor Arguments	31
Resource Mobilization Arguments	33
State-centric Arguments	35
Natural Resources and Violent Conflict	37
Classification of Natural Resources	39
Connection Between Natural Resources and Civil Wars	41
1. Environmental Factors as a source of Conflict (Environmental depreciation/ Scarcity)	42
2. Economics of Conflict (Loot-seeking behaviour as cause of violent conflicts)	43
3. State-centric arguments	47
Conclusion	52
CHAPTER THREE	55

Political History and Context of Liberia and Sierra Leone.....	55
Liberia	56
Conclusion	62
Sierra Leone	63
Conclusion	70
CHAPTER FOUR.....	72
ANALYSIS OF THE LIBERIAN AND SIERRA LEONEAN CIVIL WARS.....	72
State-centric factors.....	72
Personal Gain/Economic Consideration	80
Conclusion	90
CHAPTER FIVE	93
CONCLUDING NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	93
INTRODUCTION	93
Empirical Findings	95
Theoretical Implications.....	98
Policy Implications/Recommendations	100
Conclusion	108
Avenues for future research	110
Bibliography.....	113

ABBREVIATIONS

UN.....	United Nations
UNOMIL.....	United Nations Observer Team in Liberia
NATO.....	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
ECOWAS.....	Economic Community of West African States
ECOMOG.....	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
HIPC.....	Highly Indebted Poor Country
UCDP.....	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
PRIO.....	Peace Research Institute of Oslo
COW.....	Correlates of War
RPF.....	Rwandan Patriotic Front
RUF.....	Revolutionary United Front
NPFL.....	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
INPFL.....	Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia
LPC.....	Liberia Peace Council
LURD.....	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
SLPP.....	Sierra Leone People's Party
NPRC.....	National Provisional Ruling Council
UNIOSIL.....	United Nations Integrated Office for Sierra Leone
SADC.....	South African Development Community
IGAD.....	Intergovernmental Authority on Development

CHAPTER ONE

Background and context

The origins of many intra-state conflicts in the developing world have been linked to lootable natural resource interests, involving either domestic groups with vested interests, or external actors. Several scholars have observed strong correlations between natural resources and violent conflict.¹ Natural resources such as land, diamonds, timber, and precious minerals have been at the center of deadly conflicts across the African continent and have been linked to the causes, prolongation, and resolution of violent conflicts² in countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Angola, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. All of these countries have been plagued with violent and bloody conflicts over the past five decades that have been connected, in one way or another, to the presence of natural resources. Why are these civil conflicts highly likely in areas with abundant deposits of mineral and other types of resources? Evidence suggests that there is a negative relationship between natural resource abundance and economic growth, and by extension, peace.³

A wide literature has emerged to explain the endemic nature of violent conflicts in resource rich regions and states. The abundance of natural resources is connected to the cause of armed conflicts in many African states. Described in popular parlance as the ‘resource curse,’ the contention is that the abundance of natural resources considerably curbs economic development and increases the risk and occurrence of violent conflict; a counterintuitive finding. Thus, far from being a blessing for resource-rich countries in fostering economic progress, natural resources bring about the opposite effect (resource-curse). Resource-rich countries in Africa especially, tend to have less economic growth and are worse-off in terms

¹ (Abiodun), *Natural Resources and Conflict in Africa: The Tragedy of Endowment*, University of Rochester

² (Abiodun), *Natural Resources and Conflict in Africa: The Tragedy of Endowment*, University of Rochester Press, 2007

³ (Abiodun, 2007)

of economic development, compared to countries with fewer natural resources.⁴ Several reasons have been identified including government mismanagement of resources, and weak, ineffectual, unstable or corrupt institutions (which allow incompetent governing elites to perpetuate their time in power).⁵ The natural resource curse argument is rooted in the causative mechanisms underlying the ‘paradoxical development characteristics of resource abundance,’⁶ which explains conflict and underdevelopment by drawing correlations between resource abundance and its prevailing negative outcomes, providing both the justification and evidence for this argument.⁷

The resource abundance-violent conflict connection can also be explained by greed on the part of rebels, which serves as motivation for armed revolt. This explanation is more in line with mainstream economic theory. Lootable natural resources present rebels with a funding for their activities.⁸ The presence of natural resources serves as incentive for conflict precisely because economic gains can be made from these natural resources. According to De Soysa, the notion that a “honey pot”⁹ of benefits exists from the availability of natural resources leads to violent rent seeking behavior in the form of armed conflict inspired by greed.¹⁰ The role of a honey pot can be interpreted in two forms. In its milder form, fighting may be sustained by parties to a conflict relying on revenue streams that derive from the control of certain natural resources. In its stronger form, the honey pot may trigger, not simply sustain, violence.

⁴ (Auty, Sustaining Development in Mineral Economies: The Resource Curse Thesis 1993)

⁵ (Auty and De Soysa, Energy, Wealth and Governance in the Caucasus and Central Asia; Lessons not Learned 2006)

⁶ (Kachikwu, 2004)

⁷ (Obi, 2010)

⁸ (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004)

⁹ A honey pot in this regard refers to something precious that is worth fighting for.

¹⁰ (De Soysa, 2000)

Thus, the presence of natural resources can be the ultimate incentive explaining the motives of certain actors for their engagement in violent conflict.¹¹ In this regard, rebel groups may base their justification for starting an insurgency on the notion of bad governance, corruption, increasing economic hardship, growing civil strife and, possibly, the victimization of some part of the population. The revolt is then seen as a protest movement, driven to the extreme by violence as a result of the conditions the people in the country face.¹²

It must be clarified that “absolute and ultimate” links are not predictable. This thesis does not attempt to suggest that the connection between natural resources and violent conflict is an outcome of clearly determinable and predictable cause and effect. Rather, natural resources are central elements *among other contingent factors* that bring about violent conflict. Thus, the thesis examines how the management and control of natural resources have come into play in violent conflicts.

This study contends that there are no direct correlations between natural resource endowment and violent conflicts, but rather, that the connection lies with the structures, processes and actors associated with the control and management of these resources. Where there are no credible natural resource management structures and practices enforced and managed by the central government, issues surrounding natural resources become an issue of violent contention because a management vacuum exists.

Thus, efficient and effective natural resource governance practices and institutions will be crucial in dealing with all natural resource conflicts, especially if Liberia and Sierra Leone are to remain peaceful nations. Key issues such as the politics of revenue allocation,

¹¹ (Obi, 2010)

¹² (Abiodun), *Natural Resources and Conflict in Africa: The Tragedy of Endowment*, University of Rochester Press, 2007

the process of distribution of benefits from the natural resource sector, the role and provisions of national constitutions with regards to the management of natural resources are therefore crucial to peace. Others include international efforts, such as the *Kimberley Certification Process* (which focuses on diamonds) and the *Extractive Industries Transparency Initiatives* (which focuses on a variety of resources from oil to minerals) - both designed to curb illegal exploitation of natural resources by illicit means.

Purpose of study

The aim of this thesis is to test the propositions whether and to what extent natural resources interests have been fundamental in starting, fuelling or prolonging internal and inter-state conflicts in Africa. To this end, the study examines closely the relationship between the management of natural resources and armed conflicts.

The study focuses on examples from the Liberian and Sierra Leonean civil wars to better understand the workings of armed rebellion and the role of natural resources. These two conflicts were chosen due to their occurrence in contexts one can describe to be international and transnational. The impact of both civil wars has been felt well beyond their domestic borders and immediate sub-region. Also, large numbers of actors involved either in the management or resolution of these conflicts were also international (United Nations (UN), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and International Non-Governmental Organizations).

More importantly, both nations were resource rich at the start of the civil wars. Indeed, the civil wars brought natural resources to the fore of politics in both countries. It appears (at least on the surface) that both civil wars were a manifestation of disagreements over government management of natural resources. For instance, in Liberia, after years of gross economic mismanagement by the Americo-Liberian oligarchy that dominated the politics of Liberia for over a century, Samuel Doe's government (after ousting the Americo-

Liberian oligarchy) continued with the mismanagement of the country's natural resource wealth. Doe's mismanagement resulted in drastically reducing natural resource exports.¹³ Major multi-national corporations in the mineral exploration industry, including the Bong Mining Company and the Liberian American Mining Company, closed operations and left the country in the late 1980s due to government corruption and inefficiency.¹⁴ Similarly, diamonds accounted for over 70 percent of Sierra Leone's foreign exchange earnings in the 1970s, but by the 1980s, corruption, government inefficiency and smuggling significantly reduced the country's revenue from natural resources. These issues became crucial in pushing both countries into chaos, as citizen disenchantment with their governments was widespread.¹⁵

Research Questions

The thesis seeks to answer the following questions, which serve as guidance to the study more generally.

1. To what extent are violent conflicts linked to the management and pursuit of benefits from natural resources?
2. To what extent are the Liberian and Sierra Leonean civil wars connected to or influenced by natural resource considerations?
3. If indeed natural resources are linked to the causes, prolongation and resolution of conflicts, what can be done to mitigate such conflicts? How should natural resources be managed in African states so as to curb violent conflicts?

¹³ (Abiodun, 2007)

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Ibid

Focus Countries for Study

To investigate issues relating to natural resource considerations in violent conflicts, a thorough analysis of the political and economic history of Liberia and Sierra Leone until the start of the civil wars was made. This is important because understanding the histories of both countries, especially with regard to governance and the management of natural resources, is central to the discussions in this study. The analysis reveals an intricate web of grievances and counter-grievances against natural resource governance and management practices (or lack thereof) within both states. Thus, the study draws heavily on the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone in trying to understand this connection. Below is a short history/outlook on the focus countries.

Liberia

Founded in 1847 by freed slaves from the United States and the Caribbean, Liberia was Africa's first independent black republic. It is located along the Atlantic Coast of West Africa, between Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea.¹⁶ A low-income country, Liberia is heavily reliant on foreign assistance for revenue. The country is rich in natural resources such as timber, diamond, iron, oil palm, cocoa, and coffee. In 2010, the UN Security Council lifted sanctions (embargo is more goods into a country) on timber and diamonds exports after several years, opening new sources of revenue for the country. The country has just reached its 'Heavily Indebted Poor Countries' (HIPC) initiative completion point, with nearly \$5 billion of its international debt permanently cancelled.¹⁷ A civil war that lasted for almost decade and government mismanagement over the years contributed to the destruction of much of Liberia's economy and society.

¹⁶ (www.undp.org n.d.)

¹⁷ Ibid

Liberia's civil war between 1989 and 2003 left almost a hundred and fifty thousand civilians dead, and many more affected by the extreme violence that ravaged the country.¹⁸ The Liberian conflict was in two phases. The first phase of the war began in 1989 with a rebellion against Samuel Doe's government led by Charles Taylor. Taylor waged a long and brutal campaign for power, and the country split into numerous military groups and factions, mostly along ethnic lines. This led to Doe's execution by Johnson, a former ally of Taylor. An election victory for Charles Taylor in 1997 ended the first phase of the war.

Following Taylor's election, the international community supported a disarmament program and peacekeeping forces withdrew. Leaders from former rebel groups were given important government posts in return for disbanding their rebel factions. However, two years into his government, the tensions between ethnic groups and Taylor's continuation of old practices of corruption, authoritarianism, exploitation of ethnic divisions, and a high level of poverty in Liberia, brought about renewed conflict in 1999.¹⁹

This erupted into a full-blown civil war until 2003. Peace building and reconstruction have been daunting challenges for a country that was divided and impoverished even before the war. The conflict has been damaging to the country, destroying almost all structures and institutions of the state, the economy, and everyday life.

¹⁸ (www.undp.org n.d.)

¹⁹ (Vinck, 2011)

Sierra Leone

Bordered by Guinea and Liberia, Sierra Leone was founded in 1789 as a British colony for freed slaves, and achieved its independence from Britain in 1961. The country consists of several different ethnic groups. These include the Temne, the Mende, Limba, Kono, the Krio (who are the descendants of freed slaves from Jamaica who settled in the Freetown area between 1787 and 1850), the Mandingo, and the Loko. Other groups mainly include foreigners such as Europeans, Lebanese, Pakistanis, Indians and some immigrants from Liberia and other West African countries.²⁰

Sierra Leone fell into a state of chaos in March 1990 when the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) took up arms against the state's government headed by Joseph Momoh. The conflict lasted for over a decade and succeeded in pushing the country deeper to the brink of collapse. In 1999, 2.6 million Sierra Leoneans (more than half of the country's estimated population of 4.7 million) were either internally displaced or had been forced out of Sierra Leone to neighbouring states as refugees. The war claimed over 100,000 lives and hundreds were maimed or were rendered amputees.²¹

Many scholars have considered the Sierra Leonean civil war as a spill over from the Liberian civil war because Charles Taylor was thought to have been the external sponsor of the RUF, the main rebel group in the war. The reality, however, is that the internal political and economic workings of Sierra Leone predisposed the country to the violence that the RUF started in 1991. By early 2002, Sierra Leone made history as the first country to see the largest deployment of UN peacekeeping forces into its territory. The country continues to recover slowly from the scars of the long civil war. With its current economic and social

²⁰ (www.undp.org n.d.)

²¹ Ibid

situation, it appears Sierra Leone will remain dependent on international donor support for a long time to come.

Relevance of Study

Africa has been home to some of the world's bloodiest conflicts. Using the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset (ACD), there are two peak war periods in Africa: 1989 with nine wars and 1991/1992 with eight civil wars.²² Despite having only 12 percent of the global population living in Africa, it appears that Africa has experienced more violent conflict than other continents simply because of the intractable nature of wars on the continent. African civil wars have also lasted longer. On average, African wars last about eight years while the global average is about six and a half years.²³

Unsurprisingly, a majority of war-related deaths worldwide take place in Africa.²⁴ Indeed, it is estimated that Africa loses around \$18 billion per year due to wars, civil wars, and insurgencies. On average, violent conflict shrinks an African nation's economy by 15 percent.²⁵ As a result, there has been an increasing focus on the causes of conflict in Africa on the part of policy makers and scholars. In particular, more attention has been devoted to the economic incentives that influence rebels, which illustrates the role of natural resources in inciting conflict and allowing wars to continue. Many of these issues have been attributed to the lack of adequate natural resource management practices. It has become evident that governments in resource-rich states, especially in Africa, are unable to develop viable natural resource management structures capable of mitigating competing interests within their states. Clearly, the politics of natural resource management has brought out some extremes in some

²² (Uppsala/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset, 2011)

²³ Ibid

²⁴ (UNICEF, 1990)

²⁵ (Uppsala/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset, 2011)

African countries that have to be addressed. Understanding the implications of weak natural resource governance and the consequences of internal and external influence is a critical step.

Collier postulates that a country heavily dependent upon natural resource exports, with at least a quarter of its national income coming from these resources, has a risk of conflict four times greater than one without natural resource exports.²⁶ He proposes that preventing illegitimate suppliers from gaining access to legitimate channels, and the diversification of the economies of such countries will help eliminate the risk of dependence on such natural resource, and hence the prevention of conflicts.²⁷ This thesis builds on this argument and situates it in the context of Liberia and Sierra Leone.

This study, therefore, has been an attempt at presenting some comprehensive links between natural resource abundance, economic development and violent conflict by analyzing the civil wars that ensued in Liberia and Sierra Leone in the 1990s. It explores the root causes of such conflicts and prescribes how states with abundant lootable natural resources can prevent civil wars through effective resource governance. It also shows that the key to resource-conflict prevention lies in understanding natural resource governance within the broader frame of governance and civil society. Thus, this thesis is a valuable contribution to the literature on resources and conflict, not only in Africa, but also in other parts of the world.

Methodology

The study is based on theoretical and empirical analysis of events that culminated into both conflicts and the analysis of the conflicts themselves, in the two countries. Hence,

²⁶ (Collier, *Doing Well out of War*, 1999)

²⁷ *Ibid*

extensive use has been made of mostly archived and secondary data and media reportage/coverage of the conflicts.

To this effect, books published on natural resources and conflicts in Africa and reports from magazines and newspapers have been used. Other official documents and news/press releases, including reports of many local and international governmental organisations, multi-national corporations and civil society groups, including the UN panel of expert reports, have been useful to this study. Expert opinions on events have also been considered.

The study combines an empirical and inductive method in drawing conclusions from the available data. This involves arguing from general theories and relating them to specifics of the study and occasionally drawing inferences from the specifics to draw general conclusions. The study does cross conflict comparisons as well.)

Structure of study

The thesis is made up of five chapters. This chapter, Chapter One, comprises a general introduction, background and context to the subject matter. This chapter sets the tone for the discussion in the thesis by outlining the purpose and research questions of the study. It also presents a brief history and insight into the case studies of the thesis and touches on resource issues that both countries face. Chapter One also mentions some of the challenges of the study. Chapter Two reviews literature on the subject of conflict and natural resources. First, the chapter explores the causes of civil wars and the various theories that explain their occurrence. It explores three theories of civil wars: the deprived actor, the rational actor and the resource mobilization theories. Second, the chapter discusses various types/classifications of natural resources and their effects on civil wars/violent conflicts. Third, the chapter explores the link between violent conflicts/civil wars and natural resources, focusing on

lootable²⁸ natural resources. Three main approaches are identified in the literature: grievances created by the increasing reduction or scarcity of natural resources mainly due to environmental and human factors; economic considerations of individuals who seek to exploit the benefits from natural resources for personal gain; and the weakness and inadequacies of the resource-rich state, resulting in poor management and administration of natural resources.

Chapter Three details a political and economic history/background to Liberia and Sierra Leone. This is crucial simply because understanding the histories of both countries with regards to governance and management of natural resources is crucial to the discussions and arguments of this study. Chapter Four discusses natural resource considerations/connections at the centre of the eruption of civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The chapter analyses the effect of natural resources on both countries' effectiveness in governance and control of their territories. The examination centres on whether the immediate causes, prolongation and resolve of these conflicts are deeply rooted in the presence of natural resources in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The chapter argues that 'state-centric' issues and personal gain/economic agenda of individuals, couched in grievances, are largely the root causes of the conflicts. Thus, the chapter identifies the absence of credible natural resource management practices in resource rich countries in Africa, and specifically in Liberia and Sierra Leone to be very detrimental to peace. Chapter Five (the final chapter) concludes and offers recommendations. The Chapter asserts that natural resource governance

²⁸ Lootable resources are easily stolen resources that can be hidden in pockets/cars/trucks. For example diamonds, gems and timber (although timber does require more complicated extraction. Also, some studies expand this description to include drugs). Non-lootable resources are not easily stolen. For example, oil needs to be drilled, is difficult to transport and requires considerable manpower to extract.

must be tackled on three levels; national/domestic, international and civil society levels and offers policy recommendations for action on these three levels.

Challenges to Study

A few challenges were encountered while writing this thesis. First, the use of two countries as examples to make natural resource-civil war connections may not be large enough to make generalizations representative of other resource rich countries. Thus, conclusions have been limited to these two case studies. It will be useful in future to conduct this study using a larger number of case studies as it offers an opportunity for a more solid basis for generalizations.

Second, both countries used in the case studies are rich in fairly 'lootable' natural resources and so the findings of this thesis may not apply to countries with non-lootable natural resources such as oil, gas and non-alluvial mineral mining. Other studies have focused on these types of natural resources and how they influence violent conflicts. The findings of some of these studies suggest that non-lootable natural resources affect violent conflicts in a slightly different way.²⁹ Thus, the findings of this study may differ from those cases involving other types of natural resources, and also areas/regions of the world.

It is, of course, difficult to adequately account for all variables that might lead to violent conflict in a state. Natural resources are part of a more complex set of variables/factors that can predispose/incline a state to violent conflict. Thus even in situations where all the conditions for violent conflict exist, the interplay of other variables might lead to a very different outcome. Given the context of this thesis, other variables are out of scope of study, and would require an entirely separate investigation.

²⁹ (Koubi et al, 2013).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Introduction

A World Bank study contends that countries that are heavily dependent on natural resources (especially ‘lootable resources’)³⁰ stand a greater chance of experiencing civil wars.³¹ Of course, this is not to suggest that natural resources are the sole causes of conflict, or that once a country is dependent on income from natural resources that there is bound to be civil war. Evidence from the literature, however, suggests that the abundance of natural resources, especially in developing states with very low incomes, exacerbate the risks of a civil war.

In situations where conflict breaks out, the presence of natural resources tends to make it very difficult for the conflict to be resolved, hence prolonging it. To better understand the relationship between natural resources and civil wars in the literature, this chapter begins with a discussion on civil wars in general and their probable cause. It explores the various definitions for civil wars and examines theories explaining their onset. The chapter then discusses the connection between civil war and natural resources. A close examination between natural resource and the eruption of conflict is made. Discussions are centred on three main broad theories: 1) environmental scarcity, 2) loot-seeking behaviour and 3) state action/inaction as cause of conflicts in resource rich/dependent states. The literature on civil wars is an expansive one; hence the focus here is on issues that directly address the subject matter of the thesis. “Civil war” may be differentiated from other types of internal and external violence. Clearly defining the term helps clarify and improve understanding, which

³⁰ Refer to definition in Chapter One, pg. 15

³¹ (Collier & Hoeffler, Greed and Grievance in Civil War, 2004)

helps in drawing conclusions about expected patterns and remedies. Understanding clearly what civil wars are is important to counteracting them.

Defining “Civil War”

Fearon defines civil wars as "a violent conflict within a country, fought by organized groups that aim to take power at the centre or in a region or to change government policies."³² Civil wars always have the state involved as one of the belligerents, fighting off a challenge to its control by a group or groups, with members predominantly recruited from within the population.³³ To be considered a ‘war,’ the conflict must go beyond mere skirmishes or isolated acts of violence.³⁴ This implies that spur-of-the-moment, unorganized violence such as riots or conflicts between groups in society that do not involve the state cannot be considered a civil war. By extension, isolated acts of terrorism can also not be considered as civil wars. This is mainly because these riots, disturbances and terrorist activities are short in duration and the use of arms is limited.

Olson and Pearson argue in their book *Civil Wars: Internal Struggles, Global Consequence* that civil wars entail political goals and outcomes in a form of an armed contest between and among governments, factions, and groups wanting to gain political control of the state.³⁵ Civil wars are at the upper end of a violence continuum and involve a sustained combat between relatively organized forces. The core of the argument is that civil wars must entail both sides engaging in more than sporadic fighting, regardless of the tactics used.³⁶ To

³² (Fearon, 2004, pp275-302)

³³ (Olson & Pearson , 2009)

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ (Olson & Pearson , 2009)

this end, civil wars are not mere skirmishes. The violence necessarily must go beyond isolated clashes.

Rather than concentrate on whether or not the state is involved for a conflict to be classified as a civil war, Olson and Pearson dwell on the intensity of the fighting. To them, the intensity of fighting distinguishes civil wars from lesser forms of political violence.³⁷ An emphasis is also placed on the ability of both sides to inflict some levels of casualties on the other party. This is intended to discern civil wars from genocides and ‘politicides.’ David Mason discusses this in relation to the Rwandan genocide and the Khmer Rouge’s reign of terror in Cambodia. In the first instance, the Hutu-led government mostly did the killing with the Tutsis hardly doing any killing in the first few months, until the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) joined the fight. Similarly, the Khmer Rouge politicide followed a comparably grisly trend but, in this case, targeting was not based on ethnicity, but class. Landlords, officials of the former government, intellectuals, amongst others were mainly the victims.³⁸ Thus, the above examples do not count as civil wars as the killings were mostly one-sided.

Small and Singer in the *Correlates of War (COW)*, defined civil war as an armed conflict that involves: a sustained military action within the state, the active participation of the national government, an effective resistance by both sides, and a total of at least one thousand deaths during each year of the war.³⁹ This definition is mainly concerned with the intensity and number of casualties emerging in a conflict. The problem with this view is that,

³⁷ (Olson & Pearson , 2009)

³⁸ (Mason, 2009)

³⁹ (Correlates of War, 2010)

in a low intensity conflict, significant number of deaths may occur, but once the casualty level does not get to one thousand battle-related deaths, it would not be considered a war. For instance, in a village of one thousand-two hundred people, the death of six hundred in a conflict would seem a huge loss to the villagers despite COW's definition of a thousand battle related deaths.

With COW's concentration only on soldier death, there is also an issue with what is, and can be described as, a 'battle-related' death. COW only counts soldier deaths. It is no secret that in countries ravaged by internal conflicts, insecurity, displacement, deprivation and disease become part of citizens' (mostly civilians, who are the main targets of civil wars) daily existence and these cause death. Certainly, such victims should be counted as casualties of the conflict. They cannot just be considered as collateral damage. Clearly, adopting the COW definition for civil wars - a minimum of a thousand battle-related deaths - is rather costly. Besides, it is difficult to explicitly know what to consider battle-related death and what not to consider as such. For instance, a family who died of hunger because they could not go out to the farm or market to buy food due to the war might be considered as battle-related deaths. Their deaths are a result of the war, even if indirectly, but going by the COW definition of war, these sorts of casualties are not counted. This makes the COW definition problematic.

Other definitions of a civil war have been postulated, taking into account the aforementioned weaknesses of the COW definition. Reagan, for instance, has defined a civil war as violence against a government with at least two hundred battle related deaths during a year.⁴⁰ This definition significantly reduces the casualty rates, compared to COW's definition. Peace Research Institute of Oslo (PRIO) separates internal conflicts and civil

⁴⁰ (Reagan, 2009)

violence in terms of intensity: armed conflicts with between twenty-five to nine hundred and ninety-nine battle-related deaths per year are considered as ‘minor conflicts,’ while conflicts with a thousand battle-related casualties are considered wars.⁴¹ These definitions have indeed broadened the scope of casualties, which makes for easy recognition when conflicts break out. However, they still suffer from a “causality” bias; the deaths must be as result of direct-armed conflict, not deaths due to the displacement or disruption of war.

Civil wars remove years of progress and development in a state. They bring untold hardships to the population, especially non-combatant civilians. Incomes tend to take severe tailspin. For instance, the civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo has disrupted all economic activity in the country, severely affecting sources of income and livelihood. Mortality, as well as the spread of diseases, has increased significantly.⁴²

Statistics point to the fact that for the past three decades, most wars have been intra-state rather than interstate. Between 1816 and 1992, the world witnessed 152 civil wars and 75 interstate wars.⁴³ Similarly, 80 per cent of all wars recorded in 2012 were intra-state wars. This is an increase from the previous record of 303 to 314 in that year.⁴⁴ According to COW, there were only 23 inter-state wars between 1945 and 1997 as opposed to 108 intra-state wars within the same period.⁴⁵ In their dataset on wars, PRIO reported that the period 1946 and 2002 witnessed 163 intra-state wars, with only 46 interstate wars in the period.⁴⁶ These

⁴¹ (Olson & Pearson , 2009)

⁴² (www.bbc.co.uk/news/Africa, 2013)

⁴³ (Singer & Small, 1982)

⁴⁴ (HIIK-www.hiik.de/en, 2012)

⁴⁵ (Singer D. , 1972)

⁴⁶ (Uppsala/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset (1948-2008), 2011)

numbers demonstrate that, for the past three decades or so, most wars have been intra-state rather than inter-state.

Most civil wars occur in the developing world of Africa, Asia and Latin America.⁴⁷ Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Mali, Ivory Coast, Syria, Cambodia, Nicaragua, Cambodia and Peru are a few examples. David Mason points out this contrast to pre-1945 patterns of war in which the overwhelming majority of civil wars were fought predominantly in Europe.⁴⁸ Until the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s and the upsurge in the number of civil wars among its constituents, Europe was largely peaceful after World War Two.⁴⁹ Mason argues that even though there were few wars in Europe, the major European powers were involved in revolutionary wars in their (former) colonies in Africa, Asia and Latin America whose people were fighting for self-determination. For instance, the Indonesian struggle for independence from the Netherlands (1945-1950), the Vietnamese war against France (1945-1954), the nationalist takeovers in Egypt (1952) and the struggle between Guinea Bissau and Portugal (1963-1974) are examples of wars of decolonisation.⁵⁰ The post-Cold War period has seen an increasing number of civil wars. Even though scholars such as Gurr have seen a decline in new wars,⁵¹ recent intra-state wars in Mali, Ivory Coast, Sudan, Syria and the Central African Republic (CAR) point to the fact that civil wars are not going away anytime soon.

⁴⁷ (Mason, 2009)

⁴⁸ (Mason 2009)

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ (www.history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952, 2013)

⁵¹ (Gurr, 1986)

Civil War Typologies

Civil wars are generally classified according to the goals of the rebel/insurgent group/groups and the motivations for the rebellion. With regard to rebel goals, it is usually either to replace the government, and/or overhaul the social system, referred to as a revolution.⁵² Revolution here implies more than just a mere overthrow of the ruling elites. Revolutions attempt to change the political and social structures themselves.

Revolutionary conflicts/civil wars may be ideologically or ethnically motivated. Ideological civil wars are usually about a disagreement with the government by the rebels concerning governance issues, issues of extreme inequality in the distribution of resources such as land, wealth and other social goods, and generally unacceptable levels of poverty.⁵³ These issues are behind the eruption of civil wars in the Philippines, El Salvador and Guatemala, among others.⁵⁴

Ethnic civil wars can be distinguished from ideological ones when one ethnic group dominates government and monopolizes high status positions in the state to the disadvantage of other ethnic groups. Under such conditions, rebel leaders frame injustices as ethnic discrimination so as to mobilize support against the government.⁵⁵ An example is the Americo-Liberian domination of the other ethnic groups in Liberia for over 150 years.⁵⁶ Samuel Doe cited the unfairness of the Americo-Liberian oligarchy's domination of Liberia's

⁵² (Mason, 2009)

⁵³ Ibid

⁵⁴ (Abiodun, 2007)

⁵⁵ Ibid

⁵⁶ (Adebajo, 2002) Pp21

political and economic landscape to the disadvantage of the other ethnic groups as a reason for the coup.⁵⁷

Also, rebels may seek to break away and create their own nation state out of a fraction of the existing territory as opposed to toppling the existing government.⁵⁸ These are secessionist wars. The Biafran war in Nigeria from 1967 to 1970 was one such example.⁵⁹ This war was caused by the attempted secession of the south eastern territories of Nigeria as the self-proclaimed Republic of Biafra due to perceived economic, political and social discriminations by the central government. Other scholars identify some secessionist groups as ‘irrendentist’ in nature in that they seek to break away and form an independent nation state and also attach themselves to groups that share similar cultural identity whether in the same territory or in another state. The Kurds in Iraq easily come to mind here. They wish to establish Kurdistan by uniting Kurds in Iran, Iraq and Turkey.⁶⁰

Causative and Sustaining Factors of Civil Wars

This section discusses general theories explaining civil wars, concentrating mainly on causative and sustaining factors. Individuals and groups sometimes depart from legally accepted, peaceful modes of dispute resolution and engage in violence despite the dangers involved. Several theories explain the phenomenon of civil wars.

Broad social environments and unpredictable event sequences condition the actual outbreak of war; thus war may occur or not, based on turning points.⁶¹ The mere presence in

⁵⁷ (Adebajo 2002)

⁵⁸ (Mason, 2009)

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ (Olson & Pearson , 2009)

⁶¹ (Mason, 2009)

a state of factors that favour civil war does not mean that there will be an outbreak of war automatically. Background and proximate perspectives must be employed to understand the origins of civil wars. This means that theories of civil war are probabilistic in their usefulness and should not be considered absolute.

David Mason identifies four different explanations for the occurrence of civil wars: the ‘Deprived Actor Model’ (DA), the Rational Actor Model’ (RA), ‘Resource Mobilization or Social Movement’ (SM), and finally the ‘State-Centric Model’ (SCM).⁶² The ‘deprived actor’ model argues that when deprivation in terms of economic welfare and political rights is high in a state, the risk of conflict is correspondingly high. The ‘rational actor’ model comes as a reaction to the ‘deprived actor’ model. ‘Rational actor’ theory argues that the ‘deprived actor’ ignores the problem of collective action, where individuals may choose not to partake in rebellion no matter the level of deprivation the society suffers, unless they stand to benefit personally (usually in economic terms). The ‘rational actor’ theory thus concentrates on how rebels overcome this problem of collective action.

The ‘resource mobilization’ argument postulates that when it comes to a rebellion, it is only when the rebel leaders effectively exploit existing social institutions and networks to mobilize people for ‘dissident collective action’ that there can be a successful revolt. This is because individuals do not choose between participating in a rebellion or not as isolated individuals but rather, they make their decisions, taking full cognisance of societal ties and societal reactions to these decisions. State-centric theories argue that by concentrating on conditions within society that engender rebellion, the other three theories fail to factor in the state which is usually the price over which the rebellion is usually started. The state has its

⁶² (Mason 2009)

own agenda and in pursuing these interests, the state often generates the crises that lead to the outbreak of a rebellion.⁶³

Deprived Actor Arguments

The deprived actor model applies when the deprivation suffered by citizens in terms of economic, social and political wellbeing, is high such that the likelihood of an eruption of a civil war becomes higher. For example, country ‘A’ has a higher chance of experiencing a civil war if the levels of inequality and deprivation in most spheres of life in the country are high (a high Gini coefficient (e.g. 1 or 100%) is often referenced). Empirical evidence, however, shows there is no direct correlation between inequality and civil war.⁶⁴ The lack of correlation between inequality and civil war is mainly because the level of inequality in any country varies marginally over time and while the existence of inequality may make civil war more likely, other dynamics are usually responsible in explaining its occurrence.⁶⁵

A variant of the deprived actor model is the ‘relative deprivation’ model. It makes the case for the connection between deprivation and civil wars more persuasive. The chance of civil conflict in a country is higher where a long period of social, political and economic development is followed by a sharp decline in progress.⁶⁶ This sharp decline leads to intense frustrations among the population as it has become used to a higher level of need maximization and a reduction in level of lifestyle becomes unacceptable. As long as the gap between the perceived ability to meet needs and the actual ability to meet them is small,

⁶³ (Mason, 2009)

⁶⁴ Ibid

⁶⁵ Ibid

⁶⁶ (Davies, 1979)

people are unlikely to resort to arms. However, where the difference is great, the likelihood of civil war is higher.⁶⁷

The above situation is what Davies refers to, as need expectations and need achievement. As long as the gap between these two is small, stability is achieved. Gurr argues that the excessiveness of complete deprivation wears away the social fabric that could lead to collective violence.⁶⁸ Where extreme deprivation is the case, people are too preoccupied with fending for their needs to engage in any form of mobilisation that could lead to violence. Hence, as mentioned above, revolt is more likely in a state where its citizens have experienced some kind of improved lifestyle but have started experiencing some sharp decline in standards of living.⁶⁹ Mason argues that these people, unlike their counterparts in severely deprived states, have both motive and means to engage in revolt/rebellion.⁷⁰

However, the rational deprivation argument appears to over predict the occurrence of civil wars. People do not regard political violence as the only option when levels of living and need satisfaction fall. They are usually able to adjust their expectations when situations get bad. Other variables that induce violence are usually at work and these must be accounted for.

Furthermore, the deprived actor model does not address how people are able to come together for collective action, such as civil violence in addressing their grievances. Groups do not automatically engage in coordinated behaviour that civil war requires under such a context. There must be an explanation for what motivates people to put their lives in danger

⁶⁷ (Davies, 1979)

⁶⁸ (Gurr , Why men rebel, 1970)

⁶⁹ (Mason, 2009)

⁷⁰ Ibid

in a civil war against the government.⁷¹ Collier and Hoeffler suggest that, as long as perceived grievances are sufficiently widespread to be common across societies and time, rebel organizations can capitalize on them to incite the populace and end up either making profits out of the rebellion or not.⁷²

Rational Actor Arguments

The rational actor model considers the motivations for profit-making behind rebellions and rebel organizations. People engage in civil wars in spite of the dangers involved as a result of rational calculations on the benefits they stand to gain. It is extremely difficult to know whether individuals and groups are genuinely motivated to fight in a civil war by grievances they hold against the government or ruling elites. Several arguments can be made to support why partaking in a rebellion would be the least desired option for individuals.

First, if the benefits⁷³ of a successful rebellion cannot be denied to those who did not partake in the fighting, people may be unlikely to join in a rebellion when it starts (relative gains argument). Similarly, it is assumed by the rational actor argument that the consumption by one does not diminish the ability of others' consumption of these benefits (absolute gains argument);⁷⁴ individuals might keep away from the revolt and enjoy whatever benefits may accrue from it; that is, a new, fair and just political order or the removal of whatever injustices that sparked the rebellion in the first place. The motivations not to partake are also very strong since it is not certain if the rebellion will be successful or not (simply because rebellions often fail). There is also the possibility that the rebels' new regime will be as repressive as the government was and might not change anything at all as promised.

⁷¹ (Mason, 2009)

⁷² (Collier & Hoeffler, Greed and Grievance in Civil War, 2004)

⁷³ Benefits here implies a successful overthrow of corrupt/unfair and repressive government/regime

⁷⁴ (Mason, 2009)

Perceived injustices might remain or be worsened by the new ‘rebel’ regime. The average person, therefore, will feel less motivated to endanger his life in a civil war.⁷⁵

Rebel leaders’ appeal to and incitement of the populace through grievances relating to identity, justice, honour and other reasons may not be enough to incite people to violence. The rational actor model, therefore, argues that economic motivations are what usually condition war support and participation. Individuals will join a rebellion based on their calculations of the benefits, particularly economic. Participation is usually decided by ‘mercenary’ considerations in addition to other factors. People will fight so long as they can benefit economically. Once the economic benefits stop coming or appear uncertain, they are likely to desert.⁷⁶

In regards to the above, Collier and Hoeffler argue that, where the cost of participating in rebellion is lower than abstaining from it, individuals are likely to be found partaking in rebellion. Where people have significantly low incomes, with low levels of education (usually below secondary school levels), and where there are no real prospects of self-development either through a career or other viable economic ventures, the risks or costs of engaging in a rebellion become significantly lower.⁷⁷ Collier and Hoeffler refer to this situation as ‘proxying earnings forgone in a rebellion.’⁷⁸ Where earnings forgone are low, there is really not much to lose if caught engaging in a violent rebellion, but much to gain if the rebellion succeeds. By this argument, a country with high illiteracy rate or low levels of educational attainment, with a greater proportion of its male population below the age of 25

⁷⁵ (Mason, 2009)

⁷⁶ (Collier & Hoeffler, Greed and Grievance in Civil War, 2004)

⁷⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸ Ibid

and unemployed makes for a conducive atmosphere for recruitment of rebel fighters; hence a higher risk of conflict onset. The reverse of this argument is also true.⁷⁹

This model connects lootable natural resources to the outbreak of civil wars. Where rebels have access to lootable, natural resources such as diamonds, timber and gold, they generate enough income to pay for arms and recruits (which serves as a major motivating factor) for both rebel leaders and recruits. This contributes significantly to perpetuating the war.⁸⁰ This will be discussed in more detail in subsequent sections, but the point of the rational actor model is that individuals are driven to start or join a rebellion and sustain it only based on individual benefits that will accrue to them. Usually these benefits are calculated in economic terms.

Resource Mobilization Arguments

Resource Mobilization theory explains how dissident leaders are able to organize a group of people into a revolutionary faction to challenge the sitting regime. This theory presents a framework within which to analyse the mobilisation of individuals and groups in a community by rebel leaders for a rebellion, which then spirals into a civil war.

With RA theory as its basis, the resource mobilization school argues that individual rationality is embedded in the social structure, and derived from interactions within the society. These social networks have within them their own in-built enticement for participation in collective actions. Thus, choosing between joining a revolution and what personal benefits to derive are not mutually exclusive. Individuals are fully cognizant of these two options in making their decisions.

⁷⁹ (Collier & Hoeffler, Greed and Grievance in Civil War, 2004)

⁸⁰ Ibid

Mason for instance, contends that, “community members are aware of and familiar with incentives [in society], who allocate them, and by what criteria.”⁸¹ Even though individuals are rational in choosing whether or not to join a rebellion and, by extension, a civil conflict, their decision is usually dependent on their ties with the community as well. This is because they are aware of, and anticipate the community’s reaction to, a call for collective action. Rebel leaders find out these communal ties and take advantage of them in mobilizing people for action.⁸² Rational actors are, therefore, induced to participate in public action even when there are no individual benefits, so long as they remain members of the community.

For civil wars’ onset, the argument is that dissident leaders take advantage of existing social ties that are used for cooperative endeavours by adapting them for other less-conventional political acts such as civil wars.⁸³ Individuals would easily participate in actions with which they are already familiar. Rebel leaders, therefore, identify injustices that afflict the community as a whole and blame them on the state, which is usually the target of the revolt. This way, citizens believe that the state is responsible for these injustices and, as such, is responsible for rectifying them. Citizens are made to believe that, unless each of them contributes to bringing pressure on the state, their grievances will not be addressed and reforms will not be made.

To succeed, the groups’ collective identity must be redefined in a way that encourages and makes citizens willing to contribute to the rebel movement’s cause. Hence rebel leaders take advantage of ethnic ties, communal bonds and relations to drive mobilization. Regardless of the motives of the rebellion, people will not act together unless they perceive

⁸¹ (Mason, 2009, pp 63-99)

⁸² Ibid

⁸³ Ibid

themselves as being in the same boat.⁸⁴ Collier and Hoeffler found that in societies where there is ethnic dominance (one majority ethnic group dominates the others), there is usually a higher chance of conflict. However, ethnic dominance must be considered in conjunction with other factors as the effects of “social fractionalisation.”⁸⁵ They further postulate that societies with diverse ethnic groups are much safer with regards to the onset of conflicts so long as they avoid ethnic domination by one group. This is particularly interesting because it makes rebel recruitment in socially diverse societies a more difficult undertaking, hence lessening the risk of conflicts.

The literature on resource mobilization also recognizes the importance of ‘political opportunity’ in the form of a reduction in state stability and cohesive powers. This increases the likelihood of success and also increases the willingness of people to participate if they perceive a chance of success.⁸⁶ Hence, insurgencies are more likely to succeed in the face of declining and weak states that are susceptible to revolutions. This takes us to discussions on state-centric theories explaining the onset of civil wars in the next section.

State-centric Arguments

The state centric theorists focus more on factors that relate to the state in engendering civil wars, unlike the other three theories discussed above. Their main hypothesis is that factors that bring about revolutions, social disturbances, and civil wars are not solely the result of developments in society, but rather a failure of state effectiveness.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ (Lujala, Gledistch, & Gilmore, 2005)

⁸⁵ (Collier & Hoeffler, Greed and Grievance in Civil War, 2004)

⁸⁶ (McAdam & McCarthy, 1988)

⁸⁷ (Skocpol, 1979)

Simply, successful revolts are a result of actions of the state itself. Revolutions are successful only when there are crises within the state for the leaders of the revolution to exploit. These crises are brought about by state action, according to Mason, who contends that revolutionary situations are a result of politico-military crises of state and class domination.⁸⁸ A slight change in the political structure of the state could lead to an uprising, which could turn into a full-blown conflict. This argument is similar to that of the resource mobilization theorists who argue that unless there is a chance for success due to state weakness and instability, revolts rarely occur.

Skocpol argues that the relationship between the state and the dominant economic class usually determines how ‘strong’ the state is.⁸⁹ She contends that when the dominant economic class captures the state, the state will lack the autonomy and capacity needed to be efficient. State policies and decisions are often skewed to the advantage of the dominant class, while neglecting the less dominant class. Such states are affected by neo-patrimonialism, inefficiency and corruption. Governments in this sort of situation quickly become vulnerable to rebellions, especially when the masses that make up the majority in society become disenchanted with their situation and lose faith in the ruling elites. On the other hand, a state that is sufficiently independent of the dominant economic class is autonomous enough and is unlikely to suffer rebellions.⁹⁰

Goodwin expands on Skocpol’s argument. When states promote “unpopular economic and social arrangements,”⁹¹ there are bound to be grievances by the maligned class, which

⁸⁸ (Mason, 2009)

⁸⁹ (Skocpol, 1979)

⁹⁰ Ibid

⁹¹ (Goodwin, 1997)

result in revolt. Second, when a state is indiscriminately but not overwhelmingly repressive, the possibility for an uprising would be high. The opposition to the ruling elites and their supporters become radicalized by the indiscriminate repression of the state, which does not succeed in completely crushing them. Third, when a state is corrupt and neo-patrimonial, it is bound to alienate, divide and weaken the ruling elite as there are bound to be grievances among the ruling elites. This opens them up for challenge by opposing forces within the state. Finally and more importantly, states expose themselves to revolt when they exclude newly mobilized groups from accessing state power and state resources.⁹² Such situations leave the groups with few options but unconventional methods of challenging the state's authority.⁹³

Natural Resources and Violent Conflict

The previous sections explored the plausible causes of violent internal conflicts that have dominated the literature and conflict resolution organizations for a considerable period of time. It has been argued that these conflicts have been a primary source of concern for policy makers' worldwide. Apart from the factors discussed earlier, a highly popular analysis of civil wars explores the connection between natural resources and civil wars, suggesting that such resources cause/start, fuel and sustains violent conflicts. This section explores these discussions.

Natural resources have the potential to promote and consolidate a country's economic development. As an important source of foreign exchange and an avenue for job creation for many countries, income from valuable natural resources, when well managed, can lead to sustained development, improved standards of living and increased economic equality. In many countries, revenues from natural resources form an important part of the state budget.

⁹² (Goodwin & Skocpol , Explaining Revolutions in the Contemporary World, 1989)

⁹³ (Goodwin, 1997)

In most resource rich countries in Africa, for instance, income from natural resources form between sixty and ninety-nine per cent of government revenue. Angola (85%), Botswana (70%-80%), Nigeria (80%) and Libya (99%) are examples of countries heavily dependent on revenue from natural resource exports.⁹⁴

The mere presence of natural resources can be detrimental to peace. Short-sighted and inefficient management of these resources can plunge a country into civil conflict, thereby derailing its developmental process. Often these resources lead to deep-rooted corruption and patronage, with resources as the focus of violent disputes, and in some cases, providing funds for groups that seek to cause civil wars.

As a result of the above considerations, there has been growing interest in the links between natural resources and civil wars for the past two decades. Research suggests that developing countries that are heavily dependent on natural resource commodities face a higher risk of bad governance and civil wars. Incomes from lawful and unlawful exploitation of natural resources, especially lootable ones, such as gold, diamonds, and timber, have financed civil wars in several countries across the world.⁹⁵ Rebels are able to extort the resources and fund their supporters. The argument is that even in cases where states with abundant natural resources initially succeed in preventing civil wars, rents from these resources weaken state structure and capacity with the long-term effect of bringing about rebellion, which eventually leads to civil wars.

Different types of resources have varied effects on conflict. Some natural resources may be associated with conflict while others may not. Those types of resources associated

⁹⁴ (www.cia.gov)

⁹⁵ (Collier & Hoeffler, Greed and Grievance in Civil War, 2004)

with conflict are types that are likely to have negative impacts on a peace process since continued conflict may be more profitable to the belligerents and to governments than a situation of peace. The next section discusses the classifications of resources.

Classification of Natural Resources

Several classifications of natural resources exist. Judith Rees classifies natural resources in two ways.⁹⁶ First, renewable natural resources such as plants, water bodies, animals, fisheries and forests can, and are usually, renewed or replenished by human activity or by nature when used. Second, non-renewable natural resources such as mineral resources, oil, and croplands, cannot be easily replenished or replaced once they are extracted/harvested. These resources are considered to be of a fixed supply.⁹⁷

Scholars, such as Alao Abiodun, have other classifications, separating natural resources into existence-dependent and comfort-dependent. The former are those needed for human existence and survival and may include resources such as water, cropland and fisheries. The second types are those that make humans' life on earth more comfortable. These include resources as oil and mineral resources, such as gold, silver and diamond.⁹⁸

Another classification, relevant to the subject matter of this thesis, involves lootable and non-lootable natural resources. Lootable natural resources are those that can be easily mined, carried and converted into money. They can be harvested by simple methods and do not require investing in expensive equipment.⁹⁹ Examples include alluvial diamonds, gold, ivory and other gemstones. Non-lootable resources, on the other hand, are not easily mined due to

⁹⁶ (Rees , 1990)

⁹⁷ Ibid

⁹⁸ (Abiodun, 2007)

⁹⁹ (Lujala, Gledistch, & Gilmore, 2005)

their availability, and require advanced technological capabilities to access them. They are usually not easily converted to liquid cash due to the restrictions around their trade. Examples here include non-alluvial diamonds, oil and natural gas. This classification is important mainly due to the financing potential of lootable natural resources.¹⁰⁰ However deep grievances are, rebellions are unlikely to start or be sustained without financing opportunities; these types of resources offer an easy source of finance with many cash markets. The lootability of a resource is central to determining the impact on conflict.

Non-lootable resources usually depend on sophisticated and expensive extraction methods and may require special types of equipment. Because such resources are difficult to loot, they provide fewer avenues for conflict financing. Resources such as offshore oil, natural gas, kimberlite diamonds, deep mining gold, and copper are some examples.

Le Billon classifies natural resources first into proximate and distant categories (according to geography), and second into point and diffuse categories (according to concentration).¹⁰¹ He asserts that point resources, when they are proximate, increase the risk of conflicts that aim at state control. On the other hand, point resources when distant increase the risk of secessionist wars.¹⁰² Diffuse resources are associated with rioting when they are proximate and with “warlordism”¹⁰³ when distant.

¹⁰⁰ (Collier, *Doing Well out of War*, 1999)

¹⁰¹ (Le Billon, 2012).

¹⁰² (Le Billon, 2012).

¹⁰³ An individual, (usually a military commander), exercising civil powers in a region, whether in nominal allegiance to the national government or in defiance of it.

Connection Between Natural Resources and Civil Wars

The importance of natural resources to politics and inter-group relations cannot be overemphasised. Throughout history, various groups have fought wars with natural resource as the main motivation or consideration.¹⁰⁴ The literature surrounding natural resources and conflicts makes it obvious that the subject does not lend itself to easy comprehension. Research on the subject has yielded ambiguous evidence relating natural resource endowment to the susceptibility to conflict. The practical evidence supporting the natural resource-conflict connection is mixed. It is difficult to establish causality between natural resources and violent conflicts or civil wars, even in wars that there appear to have obvious linkages.

The general relationship between natural resources and civil wars can be traced in three distinct but interconnected ways: first, natural resources can be the direct or remote causes of conflict; second, they may fuel or sustain the conflict when it erupts; third, natural resources can come into consideration in resolving violent conflicts.¹⁰⁵ These issues are explored into detail later in this section.

There are three main approaches to resource-conflict analysis. 1) Grievances created by the increasing reduction or scarcity of natural resources may be the result of environmental factors, 2) Economic considerations of individuals who seek to exploit the benefits from natural resources for personal gain and 3) the weakness and inadequacies of the state leads to poor management and administration of natural resources.

¹⁰⁴ (Abiodun, 2007)

¹⁰⁵ Ibid

1. Environmental Factors as a source of Conflict (Environmental depreciation/ Scarcity)

Some natural resources, such as freshwater, fisheries, and forests are vital for life. There has been increased pressure on such resources in most countries due to increasing population size resulting in a depletion of these resources. The main concern is with the quantity and quality of availability of these vital natural resources and the demand for them.¹⁰⁶ Many poor people are hardest hit in developing countries as a result of significant dependence on these resources.¹⁰⁷ The depletion of these resources continues to reduce individuals' quality of life, as the ratio of demand for the resources is greater than the environment's ability to supply them.

Continued environmental scarcity fuels pre-existing grievances such as ethnic, economic and social discrimination, especially in poor countries, and this could lead to violent conflicts.¹⁰⁸ David and Gagne, for instance, argue that not addressing environmental scarcities "hampers economic productivity, spawns mass migrations" and imposes other unhealthy effects on economic, social and political growth, which in the long term can escalate into violent conflict and seriously threaten social stability.¹⁰⁹ Consequently, issues of ownership of resources, management and control are crucial to address these issues. The politics of ownership, control and management of these resources remains the underlying cause of conflicts in most parts of the world including Africa.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ (Abiodun, *Natural Resources and Conflicts in Africa: The Tragedy of Endowment* 2007)

¹⁰⁷ (Stoker, et al. 2013)

¹⁰⁸ (David & Gagne, 2006-2007) Pp. 6-17.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid

¹¹⁰ (Abiodun, 2007)

Effective management of these resources could reduce their rate of depletion and also address the issue of uneven distribution. How efficiently and prudently these issues are tackled will determine whether violent conflicts ensue.

However, it is not established that environmental scarcity induces violent conflict automatically. In fact, a majority of countries in the world experience some form of environmental scarcity. Evidence from Hauge and Ellingsen conclude that environmental scarcity does not lead to violent conflicts (even though in some instances low intensity conflicts may erupt and this may be as a result of other pertinent factors that are economic and political in nature rather than as a result of environmental scarcity).¹¹¹ Hauge and Ellingsen argue that the level of economic development and type of political regime are more decisive factors in bringing violent domestic conflicts about instead of factors related to the environment. They conclude that the severity of such a conflict is determined by military expenditure rather than by environmental degradation, poverty or non-democratic rule.¹¹²

2. Economics of Conflict (Loot-seeking behaviour as cause of violent conflicts)

Paul Collier argues that rebel leaders justify their rebellion with grievances against the government.¹¹³ Rebel leaders also attempt to recruit fighters with the promise of addressing these perceived injustices. However, the promise of addressing wrongs, grievances and injustices by the rebel leaders often fails to attract and retain people to bear arms in fighting against the government.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ (Hauge, 1998)Pp. 299-317

¹¹² Ibid

¹¹³ (Collier, Rebellion as a quasi-criminal activity, 2000)

¹¹⁴ (Mason, 2009)

Collier enumerates three reasons as an explanation. First, as mentioned earlier, people do not want to endanger their lives partaking in a rebellion when they can choose not to participate and still benefit from the victory of the revolt if it succeeds. ‘Free riding’¹¹⁵ is definitely a more attractive option since one avoids harm and still gets to enjoy the benefits from the struggles of others; a new political order, a more equitable economic system, new and more equitable social arrangements that could result from the revolt are public goods. Second, the fact that a rebel group can easily be defeated by the state’s army could discourage potential recruits from participating in the rebellion since the dangers/risks involved in participating are high. Third, there are no guarantees that the rebel group, once it defeats the government, would act any differently and keep their promises.¹¹⁶ It might actually be worse than the incumbent government it seeks to overthrow.

Collier argues that this makes grievances an inadequate motivation for participation in a rebellion. He contends that economic gain provides a better understanding why individuals participate in a rebellion. According to him, conflicts come about as a result of the “silent force of greed” rather than the “loud discourse of grievance.”¹¹⁷ This is especially so in impoverished countries where other economic opportunities are either limited or non-existent. These countries are usually characterised by high illiteracy levels with a corresponding high unemployment rate and endemic poverty.

Collier and Hoeffler raise three distinct factors crucial to the greed/grievance hypothesis: the level of per capita income; the rate of economic growth, and if the economy is dependent

¹¹⁵ Refers to individuals refraining from participating in the rebellion but hoping that others do enough to succeed so they can enjoy the benefits of the rebellion

¹¹⁶ (Mason, 2009)

¹¹⁷ (Collier & Hoeffler, Greed and Grievance in Civil War, 2004)

on primary commodity exports.¹¹⁸ They argue higher per capita income, increasing economic growth and lower dependence on primary/mineral commodity exports reduces the risk of conflict. On the other hand, endemic poverty and worsening standards of living and dependence on primary/mineral commodity export increase the prospects of civil wars. This connects lootable natural resources to the outbreak of civil wars. Where rebels have access to lootable natural resources, such as diamonds, timber and gold, they generate enough income to pay for arms and recruits (which serves a major motivating factor) for both rebel leaders and recruits. Access to these resources contributes significantly to bringing about the war.¹¹⁹

Civil war is an expensive proposition. Unless rebel organizations are funded by an external donor/source, they must generate income. The presence of valuable, lootable natural resources solves a lot of the financing issues for rebels. The promise of access to natural resources that can be traded easily for cash is likely to be a more attractive prospect to recruits than whatever grievances might be trumpeted by rebel leaders. Le Billon contends that lootable resources are more attractive in this regard simply because they have high value and can easily be mined, concealed, smuggled and sold.¹²⁰

Once fighting breaks out, the rebels usually aim to capture areas that produce these resources. This usually leads to warlordism, as seen in the Angolan, Sierra Leonean and Liberian wars. The rebels captured, controlled and exploited resource rich regions in these countries for significant periods of the war. Profit from the sale and exploitation of these resources are used to attract new fighters to the group and keep old members. David and Gagne argue that for the actors involved in these civil wars, the 'lure of economic gain

¹¹⁸ (Collier & Hoeffler, Greed and Grievance in Civil War, 2004)

¹¹⁹ Ibid

¹²⁰ (Le Billon, Bankrupting peace spoilers: Can Peacekeepers curtail belligerent' access to resource revenues?, 2012)

outweighs the risk of engaging in combat.’¹²¹ Opportunity for self-enrichment motivates rebels.

Apart from control and extraction of natural resources for revenue, rebels also rely on illegal taxation of trade and export routes, ransoms from kidnapping, and sabotage of production plants of mining companies for cash.¹²² These points buttress the important role natural resources play in rebellions. Indeed, civil wars in resource rich countries last twice as long as they do in other countries without natural resources.¹²³ Rebel groups that benefit from natural resource income consider war situations as more rewarding. Gagne and David argue that, to maximize the benefits from natural resources, rebel groups usually try to establish a “monopoly on predatory behaviour” by violence and become the sole controllers of these resources in the locality. As a result, civilians are usually tortured, maimed and killed in order to assert control over resource abundant regions/localities. The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in the Sierra Leonean war, for instance, amputated the limbs of several civilians to instil fear in the community and to assert their authority over diamond-producing territories under the RUF control.

David Keen agrees with the idea of economic gain serving as motivations for rebellion. He argues that natural resources have been used to promote and sustain wars by warlords all over the world, especially in Africa.¹²⁴ William Reno also argues that warlords exploit the natural resources under their control to consolidate economic and political

¹²¹ (David & Gagne, 2006-2007)

¹²² (Le Billon, Bankrupting peace spoilers: Can Peacekeepers curtail belligerent' access to resource revenues?, 2012)

¹²³ (David & Gagne, 2006-2007)

¹²⁴ (Keen, 1998)

domination over the territory of the resource, thereby encouraging the war and derailing all attempts at achieving peace.¹²⁵

Alao, on the other hand, disagrees with the greed hypothesis. He contends that it downgrades the genuine reasons for which groups have gone to war to seek better management of their country's natural resources.¹²⁶ He asserts that groups fight to rectify the mismanagement of the natural resources by their governments. Alao further states that the greed/grievance theory ignores the vital role of charismatic leadership, citing Jonas Savimbi of Angola's National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) as one such example. He suggests that the fact that the war ended following Savimbi's death, despite the opportunity for greed by UNITA members, is evidence against the greed/grievance hypothesis.¹²⁷

Alao's argument in this regard is persuasive. It is apparent that even though greed plays a role in conflicts, other factors usually come to play as well. The assumption that greed is constant with the rebels and never changes is also problematic. One cannot explain the willingness of rebel fighters to sometimes sacrifice for the group if all they are concerned about is personal aggrandisement. However, it is also apparent that most warlords start or premise their rebellions on grievances but end up being predatory and resource grabbing (in the long run) to enrich themselves.

3. State-centric arguments

The state-centric analytical perspective takes a look at political opportunities for rebellion as opposed to economic conditions. State ineffectiveness in governance can lead to

¹²⁵ (Reno, 1996)

¹²⁶ (Abiodun, 2007)

¹²⁷ (Abiodun, 2007)

conflict, and state weakness may be a decisive factor in explaining the onset of conflicts.¹²⁸ Individuals and groups aggrieved by the state may see an opportunity to topple the government if it is perceived to be weak. No matter the grievances groups and individuals possess in a state, unless the opportunity arises for them to express them violently, dissent is low. In this regard, states that adopt rent-seeking policies are especially vulnerable since these states are associated with weak institutions. A state may be thought of as rent-seeking if it imposes legal, political and other restraints, obstacles, burdens, and delays to such a degree that they make it necessary for a large percentage of the population to spend resources in rent-seeking activities or (especially low-income members) take steps to avoid such restraints. Rent seeking refers to investing in something that will not actually improve productivity and may even lower it, but does raise income because it gives an individual some special advantage or monopoly power/privilege. Examples taken from real life generally involve payments made by an entrepreneur (or would-be entrepreneur) to a government to obtain the right to produce or exploit something at a later date. An importer may bribe an official or officials in order to be able to import certain goods or equipment that are necessary and valuable to them in a business enterprise. Indeed, such payments may simply be a way of doing business in some cases, where governmental bureaucracies and policies may be otherwise impenetrable or immovable. A rent-seeking economy or society is thus one in which a great many people invest money and other resources in seeking privileges. That being the case, there is a need to assess the risk of conflict in a resource rich or dependent state.

Bannon and Collier argue that many resource-dependent states have an increased risk of conflict simply because they are usually associated with bad management of natural

¹²⁸ (David & Gagne, 2006-2007)

resources, poor governance, high levels of corruption and poor economic performance.¹²⁹ David and Gagne concur, arguing that resource-rich and dependent states are usually rent seeking in nature, resulting in weak institutions. The result usually is slow growth, corruption, and authoritarian political order. These make for unstable domestic policies and greatly increase the risk of conflict.¹³⁰ Furthermore, resource dependent states finance themselves with revenue from resources and citizens are usually not taxed. This diminishes their right to demand accountability in governance, which is usually denied them, including the opportunity to speak and be heard in the political sphere.¹³¹

Because the resource rich/dependent state is increasingly less accountable to the people, it fails to invest in such important sectors as education, health and other social programs.¹³² The armed forces, the police and other security apparatuses are neglected while investment is made into the resource sector. These states also neglect the development of state institutions for effective state administration. This has the cumulative effect of weakening the state's control over the entire country. Countries that are rich in lootable natural resources, but with a poor majority, tend to develop governance problems and weak institutions due to high dependence on export of these resources. There are also few economic opportunities outside the resource sector for citizens. Being rentier in nature, resource-dependent states tend to be repressive and offer few avenues for citizens to express their grievances.

Subsequently, the gap between the people and government leads to increased grievances that are not redressed. Rebel and opposition groups are able to mobilise support

¹²⁹ (Bannon & Collier, 2003)

¹³⁰ (David & Gagne, 2006-2007)

¹³¹ Ibid

¹³² Ibid

due to state weakness and eventually rise up against the government through violence in order to topple it.¹³³ Fearon contends that the main factors determining both the secular trend and the cross-sectional variation in civil violence in this period are not ethnic or religious differences or broadly held grievances but, rather, conditions that favor insurgency.¹³⁴ No matter what the grievances may be in a state, once the opportunity for rebellion is non-existent, civil violence/rebellion is unlikely. Hence fiscally, organizationally, and politically, weak central governments render rebellion more feasible due to poor economic performance, weak local policing, incompetent, corrupt security practices, or a combination of these factors.¹³⁵

This is not to underestimate the importance of grievance to a rebellion. Indeed, political, economic and other social grievances often serve as motivation for rebels and their supporters. But where the opportunity to rebel is non-existent or where engaging in revolt is extremely dangerous, it is highly unlikely to occur. Scholars such as Eisinger and Tilly contend that a rebellion is better explained by opportunity than by grievance. This opportunity usually comes in the forms described above, in addition to financial support and means of recruitment for the rebels. Le Billon contends that countries most vulnerable to civil war are those with declining economic growth rate, weak state coercive capacity and weak institutional ability.¹³⁶

David and Gagne argue that revenue derived from the sale of natural resources is usually susceptible to shocks from the international market. In the likely event that prices drop dramatically with a significant reduction in revenue, governments may decide to impose

¹³³ (David & Gagne, 2006-2007)

¹³⁴ (Fearon, 2004)Pp. 275-302

¹³⁵ Ibid

¹³⁶ (Le Billon , Diamond Wars? Conflict diamonds and geographies of resource wars, 2004)

arbitrary taxes on citizens.¹³⁷ This may be the case especially in less democratic societies. When citizens are burdened with taxes but do not get any return through social amenities, this situation can lead to a rebellion. On the other hand, where world market prices increase, political leaders are likely to pocket the proceeds from the sale of resources due to deep-seated corruption and unaccountability in the state. This could also lead to anti-corruption protests and may also lead to violence.¹³⁸ The volatility of prices of natural resources on the world market also prevents long-term planning by resource dependent countries, eventually leading to grievances, which creates conditions for violent conflicts.

Fearon and Laitin argue that the most vulnerable states for a rebellion are the semi-democratic and semi-autocratic states. Fully democratic states and fully autocratic states are unlikely to experience violent rebellion. Democratic states have developed fully accessible channels for voicing grievances; hence opposition groups are more likely to use these channels in redressing their grievances. Fully autocratic states have the maximum capacity of state violence and coercion, and would be capable of overwhelming any dissent. The violent capacity of the autocratic state instills fear into people and prevents them from starting any acts of insurgency. The consequences of being caught engaging in acts of revolt in an autocratic state are grave enough to deter people.

On the other hand, semi-democratic states lack the necessary grievance and mediating mechanisms while granting limited civil liberties. The limited liberties afford opposition leaders the opportunity to mobilize. Where their grievances are persistently and consistently ignored, it could lead to the eruption of violence in the long run.¹³⁹ In the same vein, semi-autocratic states repress and are intolerant towards dissent. However, they lack the capacity

¹³⁷ (David & Gagne, 2006-2007)

¹³⁸ Ibid

¹³⁹ (David & Gagne, 2006-2007)

of repressiveness that could overwhelm opposition. Hence, in the absence of avenues or channels of grievance expression, the only option usually left to the opposition is violence.

The argument revolves around what conditions of governance most likely cause resource-dependent states to experience civil conflicts. Resource dependency creates disorganized, corrupt and inefficient public administration, which in turn disrupts the delivery of public services and leads to a negative perception of the state's ability to rule, heightening the risk of civil insurrection.¹⁴⁰ State weakness is thus seen as a decisive factor in the onset of civil violence in such states. Fearon and Laitin argue, "political instability at the center may indicate disorganization and weakness and thus an opportunity for a separatist or center seeking rebellion."¹⁴¹ The eruption of violence then further weakens the state, eroding all capability of re-emerging to address nation building in the post conflict era.

Conclusion

This chapter explored discussions surrounding the onset of civil wars and the possible link natural resources have with conflicts. Grievances, individual greed and rationality, group mobilization and state weakness are crucial in determining civil war onset. Grievances may serve as reasons for the mobilization of groups/collectivities in starting a rebellion. Weak states are susceptible to rebellions mainly because they offer the opportunity for the success of revolt. Greedy individuals may capitalize on all these factors to bring about violent rebellion aimed at satisfying personal economic, political and other interests. This is in line with Lujala et al who assert that a rebellion is decided by motivation, opportunity and identity.¹⁴² Motive comes in the form of grievance against the state of affairs or a desire to get

¹⁴⁰(David & Gagne, 2006-2007)

¹⁴¹(Fearon & Laitin, 2002)

¹⁴²(Lujala, Gledistch, & Gilmore, 2005)

rich. Opportunity has to do with the ability for potential rebels to achieve their aim. Finally, a common identity is essential for the formation of the rebel group.¹⁴³

Surrounding the link between natural resources and conflicts, three broad linkages are made. First, environmental scarcity hinges on the ownership, control and management of vital natural resources. Continued depletion of these resources and the subsequent inability to satisfy demands could lead to violent conflict.

Second, economic considerations of individuals in resource-rich, resource dependent states could be a cause of conflicts. Greedy individuals usually aim to control these natural resources due to the large rents that can come from their extraction and sale. This is especially crucial as a source of finance for violent action and serves to sustain it. Natural resources considerations would then be crucial in resolving the conflict.

Finally, state weakness serves as an opportunity for rebellion. Resource dependent states tend to be rentier in nature and rulers encourage patron-client relations. Lack of sound management of natural resources thus characterizes such states. This is especially so when the state is captured by a 'minority dominant' class. This hugely decreases state effectiveness and efficiency. Citizens then lose confidence in the state's ability to address their needs and may resort to violence. Resources can motivate conflict, especially in the form of violent revolts. Rebels not only claim poor management of the resources, but also that national authorities are discriminating and misusing the money from these resources.

Natural resources have powerful political, economic, and social effects on civil wars. Resource abundance can create low-capacity states that are vulnerable to rebel challenge. Grievances such as poverty and discrimination and the presence of natural resources do not in

¹⁴³(Lujala, Gledistch, & Gilmore, 2005)

fact generate conflicts. It is the interplay of this factors and state effectiveness that determine the onset of civil wars.

CHAPTER THREE

Political History and Context of Liberia and Sierra Leone

The previous chapter discussed the linkages natural resources have with civil wars. (More precisely, it discussed different theories concerning the catalysts of civil war. Natural resources are mentioned as a factor, but not the direct causal factor). Discussions centred on the importance of natural resources to politics and inter-group relations. The chapter argued that the relationship between natural resources and conflict is traced in three distinct ways. First, environmental scarcity has the potential to engender civil wars through a continuous reduction in the quality and quantity of vital natural resources. This is a direct consequence of the conscious and unconscious depletion of the environment by human activity. Environmental scarcity and the frustrations it comes with fuel pre-existing economic, social and ethnic grievances, leading to violent conflicts.

The second link between natural resources and conflict revolves around loot-seeking behaviour or greed as a cause of conflict in resource rich states. The allure of economic benefits from natural resources serves as incentives to rebels in starting civil wars. Economic benefits from natural resources also serve as a source of financing for rebels during civil wars. They are able to pay recruits and acquire weapons with proceeds from natural resources. The consensus is that 'lootable natural resources' are more attractive to rebels than non-lootable resources. This is because lootable natural resources are easily accessible and converted into cash.

The final linkage between natural resources and civil wars discussed in the previous chapter was political opportunity as a result of state weakness that leads to civil wars. The concern is that resource-rich states, especially in the developing world, are characterised by bad governance, corruption and institutional weakness. The ruling elites fail to develop

robust, effective institutional mechanisms for governance. Additionally, political leaders are increasingly alienated from the people they rule. This situation leaves room for disgruntled individuals to organise rebellions aimed at overthrowing the government, eventually leading to civil wars.

This chapter explores the political history of Liberia and Sierra Leone. In order to understand and appreciate the issues involved in both civil wars, one needs to explore the political history and context of both countries. This will help uncover the intricacies of natural resource management, politics and inter-group relationship in both countries.

Liberia

With a total land area of 111,369 square kilometres, Liberia is rich in natural resources of a varied nature: timber, diamond, gold, iron ore, hydro power and palm oil processing, for instance.¹⁴⁴ Dogged by a long period of civil war, the country is currently one of the heaviest dependants on international donor support. Eighty per cent of the total population lives below the poverty line.¹⁴⁵ In 2012, Liberia's estimated public debt stood at 4.4 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP).¹⁴⁶ Despite marked improvement in economic performance under the current president, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the country continues to depend heavily on international donor support.

Founded in 1847 by freed slaves from the United States and the Caribbean, Liberia was Africa's first independent black republic, and is located along the Atlantic Coast of West Africa, between Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, and Guinea.¹⁴⁷ According to the United Nations'

¹⁴⁴ (Www.undp.org n.d.)

¹⁴⁵ Ibid

¹⁴⁶ Ibid

¹⁴⁷ (www.mapsofworld.com/Liberia, 2013)

Department of Economic and Social Affairs' projection in 2010, Liberia's population stands at 3,994,000 people.¹⁴⁸ Prior to the arrival of the slaves, pre-Liberia was and is still made up of sixteen major ethnic groups. These major groups include the Bassa, Dei, Grebo, Gola, Kru, Vai, Krahn, Mandingo, Gbandi, Belle, Gio, Kissi, Kpelle, Loma, Mano, Mende.¹⁴⁹ Before the arrival of the settler slaves (later known as Americo-Liberians), two main forms of political systems existed in pre-Liberia.¹⁵⁰ They were the central chieftaincy state and the decentralized acephalous (or non-hierarchical) dominion.¹⁵¹ The Gbandi, Kpelle and Loma, for instance, practised centralized chieftaincy. Groups such as the Kru, Bassa, Krahn and Dei practised the acephalous political system.¹⁵²

Liberia's first republic was dominated and controlled by the Americo-Liberian oligarchy.¹⁵³ The Americo-Liberian oligarchy established the True Whig Party (which acquired political power from the Republican Party in 1883)¹⁵⁴ through which the indigenous people of Liberia's hinterlands were controlled and oppressed.¹⁵⁵ There were attempts during this time to isolate the people of the hinterlands from external economic influences and insulate them against modernity.¹⁵⁶ Even though Presidents Tubman (1944-1971) and Tolbert (1971-1980) enacted reforms to heal the scars of political division and oppression

¹⁴⁸(United Nations, Department of Eco and Soc Affairs, 2013)

¹⁴⁹(Levitt, 2005)

¹⁵⁰Ibid

¹⁵¹ The central chieftaincy state has a centralised structure of authority with a recognised central authority figure. The acephalous structure consists of a complex organisation of kinships performing various functions of centralised authorities.

¹⁵²(Levitt, 2005)Pp.180-194

¹⁵³Ibid

¹⁵⁴Ibid Pp.184

¹⁵⁵(Adebajo, 2002) Pp.21

¹⁵⁶(Levitt, 2005)Pp.183-194

suffered by the indigenous people of Liberia, these reforms generally failed to achieve their aims.¹⁵⁷ The first republic came to an end in 1980. Twenty-eight-year-old Master-Sergeant Samuel Kanyon Doe led a coup against the Tolbert government and brought to an end 158 years of Americo-Liberian political domination.¹⁵⁸ Sergeant Doe's coup was a direct response to social and political conditions in Liberia in the 1970s. Educated and enlightened Liberians began to challenge the socio-political order and the supremacy of the Americo-Liberian oligarchy.¹⁵⁹ Groups, such as the Progressive Alliance of Liberia (PAL) and the Movement for Justice in Africa, emerged to champion the opposition to Tolbert's True Whig Party government. These groups believed that a change in the government's ethno-political composition would ensure better governance and cure the ills of Liberian society.

The People's Redemption Council (PRC) government that emerged after the coup comprised seventeen members and was led by Samuel Doe. The product of a country with an autocratic and corrupt political culture, the military junta and Doe embarked on eliminating any opposition to its rule. Doe purged all senior officers from the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), executed key figures of the True Whig Party, and adopted a generally aggressive stance towards all potential opponents.¹⁶⁰ By 1985, the entire Liberian society was affected by Doe's military repression. The military Junta banned "all political activities, decreed strikes [as] illegal, banned student campus political organizations, closed newspapers, imprisoned editors and looted business houses."¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ (Levitt, 2005) Pp.183-193

¹⁵⁸Ibid Pp.194

¹⁵⁹(Adebajo, 2002)Pp.23

¹⁶⁰ Ibid Pp.24-30

¹⁶¹ (Sawyer, 1992) Pp290-294

Liberians in the hinterland did not escape military oppression. Members of the junta imposed control over villages and districts and, in some cases, instigated conflicts among ethnic groups.¹⁶² Doe was described by many commentators of Liberian politics as a “relentless evil brute” whose regime shed more blood in five years than “deadly conflict between settler and indigenous Liberians had in the 158 years that preceded his rise to power.”¹⁶³ In addition, Doe, and his officials, illegally acquired wealth and land through the diversion of funds from logging concessions, sale of mineral products and even U.S. food assistance.¹⁶⁴ The Doe regime brought about an era of unparalleled brutality, warfare and state disintegration. These socio-political and economic problems eventually led to the end of Doe’s regime and the start of a long and devastating civil war that lasted from 1989 to 2003.

Liberia’s civil war between 1989 and 2003 left hundreds of thousands dead, and many more were affected by the extreme violence that ravaged the country. The Liberian conflict was in two phases. The first phase of the war began with a rebellion against Samuel Doe’s government led by Charles Taylor in 1989. Taylor waged a long and brutal campaign for power which saw the country split into numerous military groups and factions, mostly along ethnic lines. The Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) led by Nigeria, established the Economic Community of West Africa Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to help restore peace to the country. According to Abiodun Alao, ECOMOG was initially not effective in restoring order to Liberia due to poor planning, poor intelligence and inadequate logistics/equipment.¹⁶⁵ Two weeks after the arrival of ECOMOG

¹⁶² (Sawyer, 1992) Pp294

¹⁶³ (Levitt, 2005)Pp.199

¹⁶⁴ (Adebajo, 2002) Pp.27

¹⁶⁵ (Abiodun, The burden of collective goodwill: The international involvement in Liberian civil war, 1996)

peacekeeping forces, Prince Johnson, a former ally to Taylor¹⁶⁶ captured Doe at the ECOMOG Headquarters.

Several attempts at negotiating peace by international and regional bodies (largely the UN and ECOWAS) were unsuccessful. Between 1991 and 1996, fourteen peace deals/accords were negotiated by ECOWAS and signed by the belligerents.¹⁶⁷ The UN Security Council (UNSC) also adopted 15 resolutions in respect of the conflict in Liberia including one, which applied an arms embargo against Liberia¹⁶⁸ including the creation of a UN observer mission to support ECOMOG called, UNOMIL from 1993-1997.¹⁶⁹ This was the first UN peacekeeping mission to work with a regional peace operation. On the surface, it appears that these attempts at peace failed for two main reasons. First was Charles Taylor's unquenchable thirst for power. He simply would not accept peace without political power and consistently frustrated the peace process. The second reason, which is connected to the first, had to do with the uneasy nature of the peace deals coupled with the bad will/faith of the belligerents.¹⁷⁰

Eventually, the fourteenth peace deal led to a democratic election, with Charles Taylor emerging as an overwhelming winner. He received a total of 70 per cent of total votes cast. His party, the National Patriotic Party (NPP) also secured a majority of seats in both the upper and lower legislatures.¹⁷¹ The election victory for Charles Taylor effectively ended the

¹⁶⁶ Taylor and Johnson started the insurrection together in the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). Later after a disagreement, Johnson formed his own splinter group called the Independent NPFL.

¹⁶⁷ (Levitt, 2005)Pp. 209-210, also see S/RES/788 (1992) - http://www.sipri.org/databases/embargoes/un_arms_embargoes/liberia/UNSC_res788

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, Pp. 209-210 and S/RES/788 (1992) - http://www.sipri.org/databases/embargoes/un_arms_embargoes/liberia/UNSC_res788

¹⁶⁹ (United Nations Organization n.d.)

¹⁷⁰ (Adebajo, 2002)Pp. 201-226

¹⁷¹ Ibid

first phase of the civil war. Several reasons have been offered to explain Taylor's overwhelming victory at the polls. First, it is suggested by some scholars that the opposition was too divided to have been any real challenge to Taylor's better-organized and well-resourced NPP.¹⁷² In addition, it has been alleged by Adebajo that Taylor earned an estimated \$450 million annually from natural resources in areas he controlled during the war.¹⁷³ The opposition was no match in terms of resources. Second, and more importantly, Taylor was seen as the only guarantor of peace. Liberians regarded him as the strongest among the candidates to exert control and, therefore, voted for him in spite of all the atrocities his NPFL committed during the war.¹⁷⁴ The argument is that Liberians feared a return to war if Taylor lost the elections. Hence, war weariness contributed to Taylor's overwhelming victory.¹⁷⁵

Following Taylor's election, the international community supported a disarmament program and peacekeeping forces withdrew. Leaders from former rebel groups were given important government posts in return for disbanding their rebel factions. However, two years into his government in 1999, the tensions between ethnic groups and Taylor's continuation of old practices of corruption, malfeasance, gross mismanagement of natural resources, threats, intimidation, torture, acts of terrorism, authoritarianism, exploitation of ethnic divisions, several extra judicial killings and a high level of poverty in Liberia, brought about renewed conflict.¹⁷⁶ By April 1999, rebels had crossed from neighboring Guinea and fought with Taylor's forces. This erupted into a full-blown civil war until 2003. Peace building and reconstruction have been daunting challenges for a country that was divided and

¹⁷² (Adebajo 2002)Pp. 201-206

¹⁷³ Ibid, Pp. 221-224

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, Pp221-224

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, Pp. 201-206

¹⁷⁶ (Vinck, 2011)

impoverished even before the war. The conflict has been damaging to the country, destroying almost all structures and institutions of the state, the economy, and everyday life. Many businesses fled the country during the civil war, taking capital and expertise with them. The Security Council put in place a series of sanctions against Liberia. At first, these sanctions were aimed at stopping the illicit sale of Liberia's resources. Later the sanctions were to encourage subsequent governments (mainly the Sirleaf government) to put in place natural resource management practices. The sanctions regime included prohibitions on the import of all round logs and timber products from Liberia. It also included prohibitions on the import of rough diamonds from the country.¹⁷⁷

However, with the conclusion of fighting, and the installation of a democratically elected government in 2006, the Security Council decided to allow the timber sanctions to expire on 20 June 2006 with the adoption of resolution 1689 (2006). This was done in light of the Government of Liberia's commitment to transparent management of the country's forestry resources. With the adoption of resolution 1753 in April 2007, the diamond sanctions were also terminated,¹⁷⁸ opening new sources of revenue for the government. In 2010, Liberia made its first major timber exports to Europe.¹⁷⁹ Several businesses have since returned. Current President Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson has done a lot since assuming power to reduce corruption, build support from international donors and encourage private investment.

Conclusion

Liberia is Africa's oldest republic. The country's political origins began with a charter from the U.S Congress to the American Colonization Society in 1816 to establish a

¹⁷⁷ (See [SC/8856](http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8856.doc.htm)): <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8856.doc.htm>

¹⁷⁸ Ibid

¹⁷⁹ (Economy Watch, 2013)

settlement for freed slaves on the west coast of Africa. For more than a century prior to the 1980 coup, an Americo-Liberian elite had dominated Liberia's politics through the True Whig Party (TWP). The coup marked the end of dominance by the Americo-Liberians but foreshadowed a long period of chaos and instability. By the late 1980s, arbitrary rule mismanagement of funds from natural resources and total economic collapse led to a civil war when the NPFL, led by Charles Taylor, took over rule of the country.

Liberia's civil war has left over 250,000 people dead and many thousands more displaced. The war left Liberia's economy in ruins and total collapse. In spite of the high rate of growth achieved by the country since the end of the war, continued rebuilding of infrastructure and raising incomes depend on generous financial and technical assistance from donor countries and foreign investment in key sectors such as infrastructure and power generation.

Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone's brutal 1991-2002 civil war destroyed infrastructure and hampered political, social, and economic development. Sierra Leone's physical and social infrastructure suffered so much devastation from the war that it will take decades to recover completely.

Despite being rich in several natural resources such as diamond, cocoa, coffee, fish and rutile, the country's public debt as at 2012 constitutes 60 per cent of its GDP.¹⁸⁰ The IMF completed a 'Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility' program that helped stabilize economic growth and reduce inflation and in 2010 approved a new program worth \$45 million over three years.¹⁸¹ However, with over 70 per cent of Sierra Leoneans below the poverty line,¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ (UNDP Global Human Development Report 1990)

¹⁸¹ (Economy Watch, 2013)

the fate of the economy depends upon the maintenance of domestic peace and the continued receipt of substantial aid from abroad, which is crucial to balance the bad trade deficit and complement government revenues.

Sierra Leone, like its neighbour Liberia, is made up of several different ethnic groups. The Temne make up about thirty-five per cent, the Mende make up about thirty-one per cent, Limba (eight per cent), Kono (five percent), the Kriole (who are the descendants of freed slaves from Jamaica who settled in the Freetown area between 1787 and 1850) constitute two per cent of the population, the Mandingo two per cent, and the Loko two per cent. Other groups make up about 15 per cent of the population of Sierra Leone. These other groups mainly include foreigners such as Europeans, Lebanese, Pakistanis, Indians, and some refugees from Liberia and other West African States.¹⁸³

Despite being a minority group within the Sierra Leonean population, the Krios assumed dominance over the indigenous African population by the early nineteenth century.¹⁸⁴ The Krio dominance of Sierra Leone was similar to the position of the Americo-Liberians in the neighbouring Liberian society, prior to the fall of the Liberian first republic. By the time Freetown became a British colony in 1808, the Krios were better educated than the other ethnic groups; hence, they were part of the British colonial service, developed schools and businesses and assumed economic and political dominance.¹⁸⁵

After independence, Sierra Leone saw a brief period of democratic rule followed by over thirty years of a combination of one party rule and military dictatorships. Consistent

¹⁸²(Economy Watch 2013)

¹⁸³(www.cia.gov)

¹⁸⁴(Hirsch, 2001), Pp. 23

¹⁸⁵Ibid, Pp. 23-27

patterns of mismanagement of resources, corruption, and electoral fraud by most of the ruling parties over the years culminated into public disorder. Poverty increased despite rich natural resources in Sierra Leone. All of these issues contributed to a bloody civil war that plagued the country for almost a decade.

Sierra Leone's first Prime Minister, Milton Margai and his Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), ruled the country from independence until his death in 1964. Margai's rule has been described as a genuine effort to unite the many ethnic groups in Sierra Leone.¹⁸⁶ His brother Albert, whose rule was characterised by mismanagement, corruption, nepotism and ethnicity, succeeded Milton. Under Albert Margai, the SLPP became a regional party, dominated by the Mendes. This led to political division along ethnic lines. The main opposition party APC, led by Siaka Stevens (a popular unionist), capitalised and mobilised their support from the other ethnic groups marginalised by Albert Margai and the SLPP.¹⁸⁷

Steven Siaka defeated Albert Margai in an election in 1967. Reluctant to relinquish power, Albert Margai, brought about a flurry of coups and counter coups. Eventually, Siaka was installed as Prime Minister. Siaka ruled for seventeen years and succeeded in turning Sierra Leone into a one party state. He perpetuated a rule of corruption, gross mismanagement, and total disregard for the public good.¹⁸⁸ When he finally stepped down as Prime Minister, Major General Joseph Momoh, his right hand man, succeeded Siaka. Momoh's seven-year rule was also characterised by continued corruption and economic decline. There was incessant misappropriation of government funds, "smuggling of

¹⁸⁶ (Hirsch 2001), Pp28

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, Pp.28-30

¹⁸⁸(Hirsch, 2001), Pp. 29

diamonds, or poaching of lucrative fishing grounds,”¹⁸⁹ with the degradation of social and physical infrastructure, leading to the emigration of many Sierra Leoneans who could not bear the corruption and maladministration any longer. Despite all of the rich natural resources Sierra Leone possessed, it was ranked as one of the poorest nations in the world in the 1990s.¹⁹⁰ There was continued disillusionment of the Sierra Leonean people and the total loss of faith in the government. It was therefore not shocking news when an armed revolt was started to oust the Momoh regime.

The invasion of the country on the 23rd of March 1991 by a group of about one hundred fighters marked the beginning of the Sierra Leonean civil war. The group comprised of dissidents from Sierra Leone, some mercenaries from Burkina Faso and some Liberian fighters loyal to Charles Taylor.¹⁹¹ The group called itself the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and was led by Foday Sankoh, an ex-Corporal in the Sierra Leonean army. They invaded Sierra Leone from two fronts; from the east in the Kailahun District and from the southwest in the Pujehun District.¹⁹²

Sankoh’s crusade against the Momoh regime would not have gone smoothly but for the collaboration he received from Charles Taylor and Muammar Al’qaddafi of Libya. Sankoh and Taylor met in a Sierra Leonean prison.¹⁹³ Sankoh had been arrested for his role in an attempted coup d’état against Steven Siaka’s government in 1971.¹⁹⁴ Momoh arrested

¹⁸⁹ (Hirsch 2001), pp30

¹⁹⁰(www.cia.gov)

¹⁹¹(Hirsch , 2001)Pp. 31

¹⁹²Ibid, Pp. 31

¹⁹³ Prince Johnson’s Testimony to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia; Video can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x6Pnfm2Y-VE>

¹⁹⁴ (Hirsch , 2001)Pp. 31

Charles Taylor when he sought to use Sierra Leone as a launching ground for his rebellion against the Doe regime in Liberia (this request was turned down by Momoh, hence Taylor's arrest).¹⁹⁵ Taylor supported Sankoh and the RUF by providing them with arms. Qaddafi provided funding, guerrilla training and arms.¹⁹⁶ The invasion began a decade long civil war that engulfed Sierra Leone and plunged it into despair and hopelessness. The RUF attacked economic targets and put severe pressure on the Momoh regime. Due to the lack of funding/economic resources the Momoh regime faced, junior officers, who were sent to fight the RUF rebellion, did not get paid. Most of the soldiers wounded from the battle against the RUF were not given adequate treatment as well. This led to a protest by the officers in Freetown. Fearing he would be overthrown in a violent coup, Momoh fled to neighbouring Guinea for asylum in 1992.

Momoh's successor was a twenty-seven year old junior officer, Valentine Strasser. He led the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC), formed to govern the country in an interim capacity, and made efforts at turning the country's dire economic and political situation around. Strasser and his NPRC promised an end to corruption, improved standards of living and a decisive victory over the RUF.¹⁹⁷ The NPRC, however, failed to achieve these objectives. In one of the many attempts to bring an end to the war, the RUF and Foday Sankoh were offered a peace deal (one of many to come) by the NPRC. Strasser commenting on the peace deal stated, "[w]e remain optimistic that Corporal Foday Sankoh and his men will now see sense and accept the peace offer so that this senseless and destructive war can be

¹⁹⁵ Prince Johnson's Testimony to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia; Video can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x6Pnfm2Y-VE>

¹⁹⁶ Ibid

¹⁹⁷ (Hirsch, 2001)Pp. 32.

brought to an end."¹⁹⁸ Strasser said if the RUF declined his offer, "We shall fight them in the forests and in the fields, we shall fight them in the hills and in the air, we shall fight them in the sea and mountain if need be ... we shall fight them wherever they go. We shall chase them wherever they hide."¹⁹⁹ The plan called for an unconditional ceasefire and urged the RUF to draft a political agenda for a transition to peace. This peace plan failed and the war with the rebels continued.

An internal coup in the National Provisional Ruling Council saw Strasser removed as head of state and ostracised to Guinea in 1996.²⁰⁰ The leadership of the ruling council now taken over by Major General Maada Bio concentrated on fighting the RUF rebellion and moving the country back to democratic rule. In the midst of the chaos of the war, a general election was held. The RUF was vehemently opposed to the elections and embarked on attacking the civilian population. Several Sierra Leoneans had their arms and hands cut off to discourage them from participating in the elections.²⁰¹ In spite of the rebel attacks and brutality, the elections went ahead as scheduled. Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, a former UN staffer, was elected as Head of State after a second round of elections. Kabbah's Sierra Leonean People's Party won the second round elections by 59 per cent of votes. His closest rival, John Karefa Smart of the United National People's Party (UNPP), had 41 per cent of the votes cast.²⁰²

¹⁹⁸ (The Sierra Leone Web, 1995)

¹⁹⁹ Ibid

²⁰⁰ (Hirsch , 2001)Pp. 32.

²⁰¹ Ibid, Pp. 45

²⁰² (Hirsch, 2001), Pp. 46

On assuming office, the Kabbah government continued efforts to bring peace to Sierra Leone through negotiations with the RUF, which largely failed. Barely two years into his Presidency, on the 25 March 1997, Tejan Kabbah was overthrown in a coup by a faction of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council in an alliance with the RUF, and led by Major Paul Koroma. The coup d'état drew condemnation from the Security Council, with statements from the council's president urging the AFRC/RUF to restore the Kabbah government. In addition, UNSC resolution 1132 (1997) was imposed on the military junta. The resolution recalled the importance of the Abidjan peace accord and urged the junta to relinquish power and restore democracy. The resolution further imposed oil and arms embargoes (exempting the recognised government of Sierra Leone and the UN to import petroleum or petroleum products for verified humanitarian purposes), travel sanctions on members of the military regime and their families. (Travel bans were however on case-by-case basis, with exemptions granted if it is proven to the committee to be for humanitarian purposes.) The Security Council would re-evaluate and terminate these measures if the military junta met these demands. The military junta refused to step down. When the AFRC/RUF junta refused to step down after failed negotiations (so Kabbah's democratically elected government could be restored), they had to be chased out by international forces led by ECOMOG. The Sierra Leonean war thus became one of the most complex civil wars in Africa at the time. The complexity of this civil war was one major obstacle to its resolution. These complexities are discussed in the analysis of the war in the next chapters.

The civil war in Sierra Leone for a long time was seen as a sideshow to the Liberian war and did not get the needed attention from outside countries. Despite efforts of the erstwhile Organisation of African Union (OAU) and ECOWAS, help from the international world to the resolution of the conflict was slow in coming. The focus of the world was on the Bosnian

war during the same period, which did not help matters. Resources were focused on resolving the Bosnian civil war while little attention was paid to the Sierra Leonean war. The level of brutal violence inflicted on the defenceless population and the protracted nature of the war, however, brought the notice of the international world to the war. Sierra Leone's civil war, like the Liberian war, was intricately linked to natural resources and state ineffectiveness/weakness.

A UN mission (UNAMSIL) was finally launched in 1999 to help restore and maintain peace in the fragile country. Later in 2000, resolution 1315 was adopted by the UNSC, requesting the Secretary General to create a special court to prosecute those responsible for crimes during the conflict. Following the withdrawal of UNAMSIL, UNIOSIL was created and tasked to aid the government of Sierra Leone enforce human rights, bring about transparency in all spheres of the economy including the diamond and mineral resources sector and help the country toward achieving its Millennium Development Goals and help curb arms and human trafficking. Sanctions against diamonds have been in place until 2003, when the Sierra Leonean government established a "country-of-origin" certification scheme. Similarly, sanctions against arms and travel were only lifted in 2010.²⁰³ These efforts go to prove that the international community also recognized that natural resources were a problem in the context of civil wars, especially in Africa.

Conclusion

Sierra Leone emerged from a decade of civil war in 2002 with the help of the largest peacekeeping mission in the history of the UN. Besides the economic ruin and the deaths of tens of thousands of people, one lasting feature of the war is the brutalities of the rebels, who hacked the hands and feet of potential rivals/dissenters. A UN-backed war crimes court was

²⁰³ <http://www.globalpolicy.org>

set up to prosecute individuals who bore the greatest responsibilities for atrocities during the civil war. Unsurprisingly, economic recovery of Sierra Leone has been extremely slow due to the huge reconstruction needs of the country after the war. More than half of the country's revenue comes from donors. Being endowed with all kinds of natural resources, the country continues to grapple with issues pertaining to the management of these resources. The trade in illicit gems, smuggling of resources and corruption are amongst the challenges being faced by Sierra Leone. How well these issues are dealt with is crucial to the maintenance of peace in the West African state.

In the next chapter, an in-depth analysis of both wars is made, with focus on the role of natural resources in starting, sustaining/prolonging and in ending both wars. The chapter examines the effects of natural resources on both countries and how crucial natural resources have been to the civil wars in both countries.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF THE LIBERIAN AND SIERRA LEONEAN CIVIL WARS

The objective of this chapter is to identify natural resource considerations/connections at the centre of the eruption of civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. An analysis is made of the effect of natural resources on both states' effectiveness in governance and control of their territories. The examination centres on whether the proximate causes, prolongation and resolve of these conflicts are deeply rooted in the presence of natural resources in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The chapter argues that 'state-centric' issues and personal gain/greed/economic agenda of individuals, couched in grievances, are largely the root causes of the conflicts.

State-centric factors

Bad governance, mismanagement of natural resources, corruption and weak institutions

An analysis of the catalysts of the civil wars in both Liberia and Sierra Leone reveals extensive corruption and mismanagement of the countries' natural resources. In the periods before the start of the civil wars, both countries were plagued by corrupt regimes, which consistently plundered funds from natural resources.²⁰⁴ The result was poor economic performance and a decline in standards of living. Citizens became disenchanted by worsening conditions of life in spite of all the rich natural resource endowments of their countries.

In Liberia, the Americo-Liberian oligarchy mismanaged the economy for over a century, leaving an economically weak Liberia to successive leaders.²⁰⁵ After overthrowing the Americo-Liberian oligarchy, Samuel Doe continued with the corrupt practices that existed in the country. To appease his support base, Doe took personal control of the management of the country's iron and diamond sectors, and established a patronage system that resulted in

²⁰⁴ (Hirsch, 2001)

²⁰⁵ (Adebajo, 2002)Pp. 1-19

the diversion of proceeds from these resource sectors.²⁰⁶ These fraudulent practices exacerbated Liberia's economic regression during the 1980s. Exports declined and the three most important multinational mining corporations (namely, the Liberian American Mining Company (LAMCO), the national Iron Ore Company, and the Bong Mining Company) all left Liberia.²⁰⁷ Doe and his officials diverted funds from logging concessions and other mineral resources into their personal bank accounts.²⁰⁸ Ordinary Liberian citizens were continuously denied the benefits of the natural resource endowments of their state, even though they saw their political leaders living wealthily.

Similarly, in Sierra Leone, political leadership over the years mismanaged proceeds from the country's diamond industry. The corruption in Sierra Leone was so endemic that, despite its richness in natural resources, it was classified by the United Nations development index as one of the poorest countries in the world by the 1990s.²⁰⁹ This decay began during the period in office of Joseph Marga, and worsened during Siaka Steven's seventeen-year rule. Over the years after its independence, Sierra Leonean diamonds were steadily smuggled out of the country with the connivance of politicians.²¹⁰ This situation greatly reduced the official export of diamonds through the Government Gold and Diamond office (GGDO) established by the Momoh government with the mandate of overseeing the export of all mineral resources.²¹¹ According to Alao, "local politicians and resident Lebanese entrepreneurs colluded with external business interests and petty criminals to bypass official

²⁰⁶(Reno W. , 1998) Pp. 80-91

²⁰⁷ Ibid

²⁰⁸ (Hirsch , 2001)

²⁰⁹ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

²¹⁰ (Abiodun, Natural Resources and Conflicts in Africa: The Tragedy of Endowment, 2007)

²¹¹ Ibid, Pp. 112-156

channels in order to smuggle the diamond resources.”²¹² Politicians administered Sierra Leone through an entrenched system of patron-client relationship, corruption was endemic, and theft of public funds was the norm rather than the exception. Rents were demanded in the allocation of access rights for the exploitation of Sierra Leone’s natural resources.²¹³ These bad governance practices continued under successive administrations of Momoh, Strasser, and Bio. Indeed, in its report the Security Council Panel of Experts on Sierra Leone recognised the need for “probity and transparency”²¹⁴ in governance in Sierra Leone if the country was not to digress into chaos in future. Governments in both countries over the years failed to achieve high standards of transparency and accountability, especially in the extractive industries.

These issues in both Liberia and Sierra Leone greatly reduced state efficiency and effectiveness. Sierra Leone was unable to secure tax revenue from diamond mining. Underpaid and corruptible officials were prepared to collude with smugglers, negatively affecting revenue from natural resource exports. Another consequence was the erosion of confidence in the state and the ruling elites, which eventually served as a fertile ground for rebel leaders in both countries to base as their justification for taking up arms.²¹⁵ Issues, such as poverty, bad governance, and centralization of authority, caused deep-seated frustration among ordinary Liberians and Sierra Leoneans. The start of rebellion in both countries was successful simply because disenchantment against the governments was widespread and the rebels had a large base of unemployed and hungry people from which to recruit,²¹⁶

²¹² (Abiodun, *Natural Resources and Conflicts in Africa: The Tragedy of Endowment* 2007)

²¹³ (Davies V. , 2000)

²¹⁴ (UN Panel of Expert Report on Sierra Leone, 2000), Pp. 2-60

²¹⁵ (Abiodun, *Natural Resources and Conflicts in Africa: The Tragedy of Endowment*, 2007)

²¹⁶ (Njagbuma Community Report on Youth in Crisis, 1999) Pp. 50-53

highlighting citizens' disagreement about their governments' natural resource management policies. The NPFL started the war in December 1989 with 168 fighters drawn mainly from farmers and soldiers from Liberia in addition to mercenaries from Burkina Faso, Gambia and Sierra Leone.²¹⁷ By May 1990, the NPFL had built up their number to about 10,000 fighters. Recruitment was mainly from the disgruntled, poor and unemployed young men and women in Liberia.²¹⁸ On the other hand, the national army of about 6,000 soldiers dwindled rapidly to about 2,000 men. In Sierra Leone, the increasingly difficult nature of the economy, despite all the natural resource endowments, meant that many young people faced a bleak future. Many young men were left feeling hopeless, with no social status and no role to play in society.²¹⁹ According to Richards, most young men joined the rebel forces in an attempt to gain attention from society due to a feeling of being marginalised and forgotten.²²⁰ RUF was able to recruit relatively easily due to grievances held against the government by disgruntled youth.²²¹ Abdullah et al suggest that the majority of RUF fighters were drawn from three groups. The first group, the urban marginal, largely included Freetown dropouts and illiterate youth in the cities and big towns.²²² The second group, the "socially-disconnected village youth," had some disputes with local authorities, such as chiefs, and no social obligations or responsibilities. The final group that served as a base for RUF recruitment was the 'illicit miners' who made their living by risking harassment from public officials in the diamond

²¹⁷ (Adebajo, 2002) Pp.57

²¹⁸ Ibid, Pp.58

²¹⁹ (Chege, 2002) Pp. 153

²²⁰ (Richards, 1996)

²²¹ (Abdullah, et al., 1997)

²²² Ibid

mining areas.²²³ It appeared to these youth groups that the life of a rebel was more exciting than the setbacks of peace time where they were powerless against corrupt government officials, disillusioned by the deceptive opportunities from diamonds and other natural resources and a general atmosphere of hopelessness.²²⁴

Corrupt management of natural resources were also manifested in weak institutions in both Sierra Leone and Liberia. Both countries had dysfunctional political and economic institutions. For instance, corruption was ingrained so deeply into the Liberian political system that the country had become a “flag of convenience for the fringe air cargo industry”²²⁵ due to lax maritime and aviation laws. Many aircraft and ships under the Liberian national flag were unknown to the Liberian government.²²⁶ Weakened institutions also meant both states were unable to establish a level of bureaucratic capacity adequate for managing social crises. The weakness of state institutions in Liberia also showed in the manner in which dubious individuals took advantage of the system to enrich their wealth. For instance, a Kenyan national, Sanjivan Ruprah (allegedly) was authorised by the Liberian government to act on its behalf on all issues regarding civil aviation. But the Ministry of Transport denied any knowledge of his existence when asked by the Panel of Experts on Sierra Leone about Mr. Ruprah’s work with the Liberian government.²²⁷

Additionally, the Government Diamond Office (GDO) in Sierra Leone during Steven’s reign was (allegedly) partly owned by a close associate named Mohammed Jamil.

²²³ (Abdullah, et al., 1997)

²²⁴ Ibid

²²⁵ (UN Panel of Expert Report on Sierra Leone, 2000)Pp. 2-60

²²⁶ Ibid

²²⁷ (UN Panel of Expert Report on Sierra Leone 2000)

The mandate of the GDO was to serve as a central office for buying diamonds from miners, thereby reducing the smuggling of natural resources, especially diamonds. During the pre-war years, the GDO was managed mainly for short-term profit.²²⁸ For instance, it bought diamonds cheaply from miners and sold them at very high prices. The GDO also undervalued diamonds for export purposes. This served to encourage smuggling and further weakened the state by encouraging corruption. In 1956 Sierra Leone introduced the Alluvial Diamond Mining Scheme to encourage local people to get involved in the diamond extraction business. However, in reality, most ordinary people could not afford the licenses and equipment needed to mine; hence, politicians, chiefs, civil servants and rich Lebanese and other foreign businessmen captured the 'native' mining sector. During Steven's 1971 to 1985 rule, immunity was granted to loyal supporters to facilitate illegal mining. Chiefs in diamond rich areas made fortunes through corruption in granting licenses.

The national armies and police suffered significant neglect in both Liberia and Sierra Leone before the start of the civil wars. Government control was weak over the rural areas and national borders. The ability of rebels to sneak into Liberia and Sierra Leone through, respectively, Nimba County and Kailahun/Pajehun, showed the lack of control both countries had over their territory and the porous situation of their borders. The Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) was unable to quell the rebellion when it began, mainly because it lacked vehicles and ammunition to contain the rebellion from the NPFL. Similarly, throughout its fight with the RUF, subsequent governments in Sierra Leone did not have a national army of sufficient size and skill to combat the rebel group. At one point during the civil war, the Kamajors had to take matters into their own hands to protect their communities against RUF brutalities, simply

²²⁸ (Abiodun, *Natural Resources and Conflicts in Africa: The Tragedy of Endowment*, 2007)

because the national army was incapable of protecting helpless citizens.²²⁹ The weakness of the Sierra Leonean security forces dates back to Siaka Stevens' time as president. A victim of a coup in 1967, Stevens ensured that security forces were kept to only ceremonial roles. Arms supplies were limited to the military, with a counter security apparatus, the Special Security Division (SSD), created by Stevens. The SSD, unlike the regular military, was well supplied with arms and was mainly used for suppressing the ruling party's opponents.²³⁰ This significantly weakened the military and police force.

In addition, the military, in pre-war Sierra Leone, was kept busy with minor internal issues such as dealing with illegal miners. For instance, between 1968 and 1969, forces were sent to Kono in the eastern province of Sierra Leone to help the police quell activities of illegal miners.²³¹ These campaigns in Kono, among others, had negative effects on the morale and discipline of the police and army. There was no discernible reduction in illegal mining. The police force went into serious decline during these periods due to inadequate funding, and increased politicization of the force; in the 1970s, for example, the Inspector-General of the police was made a 'politically active' cabinet minister.

Corruption in the management of natural resources in both pre-civil war Liberia and Sierra Leone was so endemic that both states became too weak to stand up against rebellion. The governments were not in effective control of the state. Hence, the NPFL and the RUF were both able to start a drawn out civil war against their respective governments. According to Adebajo, pre-war Sierra Leone, "had a weak economy and an ill-equipped army" which could not effectively suppress the rebellion.²³² The situation was not different in Liberia.

²²⁹ (Hirsch , 2001)

²³⁰ (Cox, 1976)

²³¹ (Van der Laan, 1975)

²³² (Adebajo, 2002) Pp.62

Liberia's armed forces were unable to deal effectively to contain the guerrilla insurgency due to the country's thick rain forests and the "army's lack of vehicles and ammunitions."²³³

Both country's extractive industries' economy and the corrupt and autocratic regimes were mutually supporting. The weakness in other sectors/industries of the economy, such as agriculture and manufacturing, and the apparent lack of opportunities for citizens increased the desire to hold political office or capture state power. Before their civil wars, Liberia and Sierra Leone lacked the ability to harness their abundant resources to promote genuine development, largely due to corrupt political systems. There was also a neglect of the rural areas in favour of the 'bigger' towns and cities in both Liberia and Sierra Leone. The neglect suffered by the eastern province of Nimba under the Doe regime was visible for all to see. For example, in Sierra Leone, rural areas barely had access to sanitation and clean drinking water. In 1990, for instance, access to sanitation and potable water in rural Sierra Leone stood at 32 per cent and 2 per cent respectively, compared with the 45 per cent and 82 per cent, respectively, in the urban areas/centres.²³⁴ Similar conditions existed in Liberia. This neglect had two implications for the conflicts in both countries. First, it made rural people indifferent to the security problems confronting the central government. Thus, when rebel forces took up arms against the state, the rural dwellers were apathetic to the plight of the central governments. Second, the rural areas became an aggrieved operational base, and were exploited by the rebels to challenge the government. A similar pattern in both civil wars was that the areas where the rebellions started gave varying degrees of support to the rebels' causes simply because of the perception that they were the neglected group in a socially unjust polity, where proceeds from natural resources never got to them.

²³³ (Adebajo 2002)Pp.62

²³⁴ (UNICEF, 2011)Pp. 10

In effect, both states faced a very difficult situation: they failed to translate their resources into funding for a disciplined bureaucracy and developing strong institutions, and without strong institutions, it became impossible to translate their natural resource endowments into sustainable benefits and wealth. Consequently, both states created a ‘socially excluded underclass’ that harboured grievances against their governments,²³⁵ and in the process, lost legitimacy with their citizens. Being impoverished and weak, Liberia and Sierra Leone proved ineffective in suppressing the rebellions; hence, both countries fell into a long spell of civil wars that lasted for close to a decade. Indeed, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) established after the Sierra Leonean civil war concludes that one of the causes of the civil war has been actions of governments over the years, which, in effect, rendered Sierra Leone vulnerable to conflict through abuse of political power and gross mismanagement of the country’s rich resources.²³⁶

Personal Gain/Economic Consideration

Analysis of the literature and events before the start of the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone reveals that personal interests and considerations were important in the initiation of the conflicts. However, issues such as corruption, poverty, bad governance, and bad management of natural resources, with their corresponding need for security, justice and economic well-being, served as grievances for which the rebellions were started. One might be tempted to lay emphasis on greed and economic consideration of rebels as a key cause of the conflicts. However, we must note that greed and the willingness to use violence to acquire riches from natural resources is, in itself, a direct result of grievances. For example, both Charles Taylor and Foday Sankho based their rebellion on grievances against the Liberian

²³⁵ (Abiodun, *Natural Resources and Conflicts in Africa: The Tragedy of Endowment*, 2007) Pp. 112-156

²³⁶ (The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, 2004)

and Sierra Leonean governments, respectively.

In launching his attack on the Doe regime, Charles Taylor couched his reasons for the rebellion as grievances against the regime's abuses and mismanagement of power in Liberia. Taylor denounced Doe as a dictator whose brutal reign had to end at any cost. Hence, he led a multi-ethnic "coalition of Liberians and foreign insurgents ... that aspired to overthrow the Second Republic [of Liberia]."²³⁷ Later events (discussed elsewhere in the chapter), however, proved Taylor had other motives for the rebellion.

Similarly, Foday Sankho was angered by the lavishness of the governing class, in particular. He argued that the "pattern of raping the country side to feed the greed and caprice of the Freetown elite and their masters abroad [is unacceptable]. In our simple and humble ways we say, 'No more slave and no more master.' It is these very exploitative measures instituted by so-called central governments that create the conditions for resistance and civil uprising."²³⁸ The RUF leadership and Foday Sankho justified their reasons for starting the civil war in Sierra Leone mainly in terms of grievances against the state. They made statements such as:

We are therefore fighting for democratic empowerment to enable us to reclaim [a] sense of ourselves as enterprising and industrious Africans, using the history of our glorious past to create a modern society contributing to world peace and stability through advancement in agriculture, architecture, medicine, science and technology, industry, free trade and commerce. In other words, we are fighting for food and good drinking water for all. We are fighting for affordable energy, fuel and power, including access to appropriate technology so that we can build for ourselves modern housing, healthcare, education and recreation facilities ... we are tired of poverty, bad drinking water, poor housing, second-hand clothing and footwear, and our state of self-imposed backwardness... We are tired of being down and out and on the ground... We are crying out against hunger, disease and deprivation ... We are tired of

²³⁷ (Anning, 1999)

²³⁸ (Richards P, 1995) See also (Richards, 1996).

state-sponsored poverty and degradation. We are tired of our children dying of preventative diseases...We are tired of rural folks being exploited.²³⁹

These anti-elitist arguments were meant to rally the socially excluded to RUF's cause. To capture the minds of the alienated masses, the RUF warned that the only way corruption could be ended in Sierra Leone was for "the people to take up arms in order to take back their power and use this power to create wealth for themselves and generations to come by reconstructing a new African society in Sierra Leone consistent with the highest ideals of our glorious past and the challenges of the modern world we live in."²⁴⁰ The RUF also alluded to the destructive effects diamond and gold mining had on agriculture. The emergence of the mining economy had negative impacts on the agricultural sector, particularly in Kono where agriculture had to compete with mining for land. The coming of the mining economy posed a threat to the balance of demand and supply of land. The acquisition of land for mining reduced the availability of arable land. This was particularly acute in the South and Eastern Provinces.²⁴¹ In addition, whatever benefit the country may have derived from mining was not equitably distributed. Politicians, powerful chiefs in the diamond-rich chiefdoms, and Lebanese traders made a fortune, but the ordinary Sierra Leonean's standard of living continued to decline throughout the 1980s.²⁴² While attacking the exploitative classes, the RUF sought a broad coalition of the *déclassé* elements in society: workers, intellectuals, members of the armed forces students, traders, farmers, and people who were prepared for the sustained struggle against the decadent political system.²⁴³ Interviews with Sierra Leoneans confirm they had similar sentiments:

²³⁹ (Zack-Williams, 1999) Pp. 143-162

²⁴⁰ Ibid

²⁴¹ (Abiodun, *Natural Resources and Conflicts in Africa: The Tragedy of Endowment*, 2007), Pp.112-156

²⁴² Ibid

²⁴³ Ibid

[The RUF] told us that they are fighting to overthrow the APC government because they exploited the people and were taking all the money to Europe to build mighty houses or buy luxurious cars and forgetting about the youth. We, the young people, do suffer a lot in this country. Greed and selfishness was another factor, which made the rebel war come to Sierra Leone. Nobody was willing to help the young men; especially the politicians have no sympathy for the young men. [...] Actually we were fighting for awareness and also to have justice in the country. [...] We fought against bribery and corruption in the country. [...] If I become the president I will make all the youth to be engaged in skill training to avoid [the] idleness that will create confusion or make people commit crimes. If you do that for the youth they will not be any problem in this country. [Providing them with jobs should encourage the young men.] I think that will make the country stable. If I have my tools I will not go round town just being idle. I will survive through my trade.²⁴⁴

As shown above, Liberia and Sierra Leone, before the wars, had a majority of their populations living in abject poverty, with high levels of youth unemployment and limited opportunities. Countless numbers of young people struggled to find work, and expressed dissatisfaction with a lack of prospects and a growing cynicism towards political authority.²⁴⁵ For the few educated youth and those in school, unemployment and a dim future was the reality. Many of these groups joined the ranks of rebel groups that emerged in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Prior to the 1989 invasion of the NPFL in Liberia, few would disagree that Doe's regime brought about an unparalleled era of violence, brutality, mismanagement and corruption in the history of Liberia. Doe's regime was the first native one, after the first republic, which was dominated by the Americo-Liberian oligarchy, but failed to progressively overhaul Liberia's socio-economic and political order. Rather, it widened pre-existing crevices and led the country into a gulf of despair and backwardness. Doe's reign signified the extent to which authoritarianism, corruption, ethnic divisions, and elitism were engrained into the Liberian political culture. Doe's coup in 1980 ended the control and domination of the settler regime, but his time in power failed to reconstruct the constitution of

²⁴⁴ (Peters, 2011) Pp.20-21

²⁴⁵ (Kandeh , 1992) Pp. 30-43.

order in Liberia so as to ensure the natural resource benefits reach the ordinary Liberian. More crucially, Doe did not fundamentally enhance the quality of life of the Liberian masses; this proved critical to the start of the 1989 rebellion. Doe and his PRC regime implemented policies that systematically hindered basic political and economic freedom of the ordinary Liberian and increased the perception of gross mismanagement and abuse of the country's resource revenue and economy in general.²⁴⁶

Similarly in Sierra Leone, before Momoh's government and the RUF-led rebellion, Stevens set up a whole network of informal markets, the 'shadow state,'²⁴⁷ in his quest to control the diamond-rich Kono District. It was through this channel that patronage was distributed and denied: chiefs and individuals prepared to cooperate with the Stevens government were rewarded, and those who refused were removed from office or punished. Stevens survived several military coups and assassination attempts. Following the alleged coup plots, a number of military officers, opposition politicians and ex-Congress members were executed. Violence, intimidation and political thuggery were always central to the strategy for dealing with any sorts of popular political activity. Economic decline was accompanied by the intensification of Stevens' patrimonial grip on society, through 'crony capitalism', and state control of the diamond industry. The resentment against government by the chiefs and people of Southern Sierra Leone led to the relative neglect of these areas, as they were deprived of major developmental efforts and basic welfare provisions.²⁴⁸ The decay did not cease under subsequent governments of Momoh, Strasser, or Bio. Indeed, the

²⁴⁶ (Adebajo, 2002),

²⁴⁷ (Hirsch, 2001)

²⁴⁸ Ibid

situation in Sierra Leone got so bad that it was considered one of the poorest countries in the world, despite its natural resource endowments.²⁴⁹

From the discussions so far, the record of state corruption, mismanagement and abuse of resources in both Liberia and Sierra Leone, reduced the regard the masses had for the state. This situation created a fertile ground from which both the NPFL and RUF based their justification for the beginning of the rebellions in 1989 and 1991 respectively. Clearly, the rebels in both countries had grievances they used to justify the use of violence against their respective states. However, this is not to discount greed or personal interests or gain as being an important factor to the start and the prosecution of the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Despite the rhetoric of grievances by the rebels for taking up arms against their states, their intentions became questionable once the civil wars got under way.

In Liberia, for instance, the various rebel groups lost sight of why they were fighting half way through the civil war because the groups became embroiled in the “warlord political economy” logic of the war. This ended any chances of seeing an early end to the war. The various factions and sub-factions fought for control of areas of the country with natural resources, which they could exploit. They used forced labour to extract resources such as diamonds, gold, rubber, hardwood, palm oil, marijuana and looted goods of all sorts. This created a lucrative trade for middlemen who could buy looted goods and natural resources from warlords and supply weapons and ammunition in return.²⁵⁰

In fact, the logic of the informal economy that existed in Liberia and Sierra Leone during the wars is central to understanding civil war contexts. This is because, by linking

²⁴⁹ (UNDP Global Human Development Report, 1990)

²⁵⁰ (Adebajo, 2002)

local markets and transboundary networks of production and exchange, the informal economy provided needed outlets for the channelling of critical resources to the warring factions. Interestingly, in Liberia, ECOMOG forces became just another faction in the conflict to such a magnitude that the common Liberian spelling of the ECOMOG abbreviation became ‘Every Car Or Moving Object Gone.’²⁵¹ Thus, as ECOMOG forces seized control of Liberia's main ports, the middlemen of the informal civil war political economy were soon only able to work by paying off ECOMOG officers. Several ECOMOG officers, therefore, made fortunes from racketeering and from the warlord economy in general. The result was several years of destruction of property, human life and dignity in Liberia.²⁵² Additionally, Taylor was reported to have made fortunes from the sale of gold, diamonds, timber, iron ore and rubber in areas under his control during the civil war in Liberia. Taylor had commercial ties with foreign corporations from Europe, the United States and Japan. Indeed, during the early parts of the 1990s, Taylor’s Liberia became France’s third largest supplier of tropical hardwoods.²⁵³ Taylor and the NPFL were reported to have made as much as \$450 million a year through the export of natural resources.²⁵⁴ The plunder and sale of these resources enabled Taylor to fund and prosecute the war, while enriching himself in the process. In addition, commanders promised unpaid, unruly and undisciplined NPFL rebels that they could loot in enemy territories as compensation for fighting. Hence rebel fighters raped and plundered helpless civilians throughout most of the civil war.

Charles Taylor was actively involved in fuelling the violence in Sierra Leone as well.

Many businessmen close to Taylor’s inner-circle operated on a global scale, sourcing their

²⁵¹ (Adebajo, 2002)

²⁵² Ibid

²⁵³ (Weissman F, 1997), Pp. 104

²⁵⁴ Ibid

weaponry in Eastern Europe, for onward sale to the RUF rebels.²⁵⁵ One key individual was a wealthy Lebanese businessman named Talal El-Ndine. El-Ndine has been described as the inner-circle's paymaster. He paid Liberians fighting in Sierra Leone alongside the RUF, and those bringing diamonds out of Sierra Leone personally. The pilots and crew of the aircrafts used for clandestine shipments into or out of Liberia were also paid by El-Ndine.²⁵⁶

The story was no different in Sierra Leone. Even though inhabitants of south and southeast Sierra Leone were sympathetic to the RUF cause at the beginning of the war, the RUF's looting and atrocities quickly squandered the support. As the civil war raged on, Foday Sankho continued to claim an ideological basis for the rebellion, framing the insurgency as an attempt to save Sierra Leone from years of corruption and mismanagement. However, the RUF's looting and abuses against the civilian population, often for economic benefits, continuously undermined these claims. It is not surprising, therefore, that the insurgency grew rapidly as more socially- and economically-marginalised youth joined the rebellion. Shrinking opportunities for education apparently made the young generation increasingly marginalised and alienated from their society, making the rebel soldier's life a more attractive option. According to Abdullah, the number of students registered in secondary schools increased from 16,414 in 1969 to 96,709 in 1990. However, only about 60,000 were in paid employment by 1985, and the situation in job markets deteriorated; even university graduates found it difficult to secure jobs in the public sector by 1990 while the private sector was also rapidly downsizing.²⁵⁷ During the 1970s and beyond, many middle-class students and school dropouts formed close ties with poorer alienated youths in urban

²⁵⁵ (UN Panel of Expert Report on Sierra Leone 2000) Pp. 2-60

²⁵⁶ Ibid

²⁵⁷ (Abdullah I. , 1998), pp. 203-235.

areas. This created the general circumstances that enabled student protests to move beyond campuses, particularly in 1977.²⁵⁸ The revolt offered these groups both an opportunity to be defiant of political authority and, easy access to resources previously denied them. Thus, most combatant's predominant reason for joining the rebel group was to gain personal security and economic advantage. In addition, the RUF, as an organization, was sustained logistically through a systematic exploitation of and trade in the country's resources, especially alluvial diamonds, which they exchanged for ammunitions and arms.²⁵⁹ Hence, for most of the rebels, economic benefits derived from the conflict ensured that the civil war became an end in itself.

It must be pointed out that some rebels derived non-economic benefits, such as physical security and social empowerment, from the civil war. The opportunity to exact revenge on those deemed to have been responsible for the inequalities in the enjoyment of the nation's resources, served as a motivating factor for some combatants in both civil wars.²⁶⁰ Thus, some of the rebels did not join the rebellion based on solely economic cost-benefit analysis. For many rebels, the lure of plunder was not the main motivation; rather, it was the opportunity to rise against authority and punish their societies for the unequal treatment they received during peace times. Violence was therefore seen as a means to achieve empowerment or some level of basic welfare and security.

The RUF leadership continually frustrated all efforts at peace, and sought the perpetuation of conflict for the spoils of war. Several efforts at reaching peace accords throughout the civil war failed as these peace deals offered the RUF leadership no real

²⁵⁸ (Keen D. , 2003)

²⁵⁹ (Hirsch , 2001)

²⁶⁰ (Adebajo, 2002), also see (Hirsch , 2001)

incentives for peace. For instance, the Abidjan accord offered the RUF the opportunity to transition into a political party after disarming.²⁶¹ The invitation to form a political party held little appeal for the rebels as they were motivated less by political ideology as by the pursuit of economic wealth and status. The RUF leadership continued to profit from the conflict and so were peace spoilers even though the rank and file, who gained less economic advantage, were generally more willing to seek peace if it provided welfare and security.²⁶² The rebel group controlled over ninety percent of the country's diamond mines by 2000 and earned \$70 million through diamond exports in 1999 alone.²⁶³ The RUF therefore kept a tenacious grip on the Kono and Tongo mining fields, the two most valuable diamond fields in Sierra Leone.

The failure of the Abidjan peace accord demonstrated clearly that the RUF sought more than merely political integration. The Lomé peace accord signed in July 1999 offered a direct incorporation of the RUF into government, immunity from prosecution for the rebels and appointed Foday Sankho as Vice-President and head of the Commission for Strategic Mineral Resources, National Reconstruction and Development.²⁶⁴ Seven other ministerial positions also went to the RUF. Thus, the Lomé accord offered economic and political benefits, such as official control over lucrative resources.

However, the RUF leadership continued to pursue personal gain through continued conflict and impeded full implementation of programs, such as disarmament and demobilisation. Aware that the RUF would not do well as a political party in an open election, Foday Sankho sought to maintain his political status as leader of the rebel group. He

²⁶¹ (Hirsch , 2001)

²⁶² (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2004), pp27-29

²⁶³ (Andrews & Beckman, 2005)

²⁶⁴ (Hirsch , 2001)

saw programs as disarmament and demobilisation as threats to his status and bargaining position, an assumption shared by almost all the commanders in the RUF, who also profited from the looting and illegal trade conducted by their combatants.²⁶⁵ The report of the Panel of Experts on Sierra Leone indicated clearly that “between the time he returned to Sierra Leone in 1999 and the resumption of hostilities in May 2000, the Commission [for the Management of Strategic Mineral Resources] never actually functioned, but Foday Sankho spent money lavishly, without an obvious source of income. Sankho was, in fact, encouraging a wide variety of potential foreign investors, many thinking they would reap exclusive benefits from the same mineral resources of the country. A picture emerged of a double-dealing leader, who clutched at financial opportunities for personal and political gain, outside of the governmental framework in which he was ostensibly working. Most of this related to the diamond trade.”²⁶⁶

Some dissident members of the Sierra Leonean military also benefited from the civil war economy. After years of neglect and being short of funds, equipment, training and discipline, the Sierra Leonean Armed Forces soon turned into invading forces. Some soldiers fought with the RUF part time in return for booty, thus earning the appellation “sobels”- part time soldiers, part time rebels.²⁶⁷

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the events that led to the start of the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone vis-à-vis natural resource interests/considerations. Lootable natural resources

²⁶⁵ (UN Panel of Expert Report on Sierra Leone 2000) Pp. 2-60

²⁶⁶ Ibid

²⁶⁷ (Adebajo, 2002)

played significant roles in the Liberian and Sierra Leonean civil wars. The mismanagement of natural resources over the years has had negative effects on both states. With abundant revenue flowing from natural resources, leaders in Liberia and Sierra Leone became corrupt, patrimonial and oppressive, leading to the eventual political weakness of the two countries, exposing them to internal revolt. In addition, the corrupt practices of political leaders in terms of diversion of funds into private accounts and affluent life styles made the capture of the state in both Liberia and Sierra Leone economically attractive for individuals and groups. Also, the mismanagement of natural resources in both Liberia and Sierra Leone brought about the perception that the distribution of resource rents by their governments was unfair giving rebel leaders (Charles Taylor and Foday Sankho respectively) the justification needed to start a rebellion.

The root causes of the Liberian and Sierra Leonean civil wars are intricately linked to natural resource considerations, especially governance: control, extraction, and distribution. Issues that are directly related to the state (state-centric factors), and the loot-seeking/ economic/greed aspirations of individuals and groups in both countries, help explain the cause of both wars. The extent of the corruption and mismanagement of natural resources in both countries became crucial to the start of both wars. The Liberian and Sierra Leonean civil wars were thus the result of varied interactions between structural problems in both societies, which increased grievances among the populace. Accordingly, this facilitated the emergence of the NPFL and the RUF in Liberia and Sierra Leone respectively. Although lootable natural resources, such as diamonds, timber and gold, apparently played a significant role in financing the wars once they started, these natural resources more likely contributed to corrupting state institutions in the pre-war periods, thereby increasing grievance and the attractiveness of state power to marginalised and ambitious individuals who were willing to

use violence to achieve their aims. The problems of marginalized youth following the collapse of these patrimonial societies were also serious issues: without proper education and employment, many young people were left vulnerable to recruitment by rebel forces.

The next chapter concludes the thesis by discussing empirical findings and the policy implications for the presence and dependence on natural resources not only for Liberia and Sierra Leone, but other resource rich/resource dependent countries in Africa aiming to prevent or reduce the risk of natural resources contributing to or extending civil wars.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUDING NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

This thesis sought to explore the link between natural resources and civil wars by examining the Liberian and the Sierra Leonean civil wars, both of which lasted for over a decade. The thesis tested the proposition as to whether or not and to what extent natural resources interests were fundamental in starting, fuelling, or prolonging internal conflicts in both African states. The issue of violent conflicts and natural resources in Africa has become important since the 1990s with a considerable number of natural resource-related conflicts. Natural resources, especially lootable ones involving ivory, diamonds, timber and precious minerals, have been at the centre of deadly conflicts across the African continent and are linked to the start, prolongation and resolution of most of these conflicts. The general consensus in the literature is that the root cause of many internal conflicts in the developing world is often deeply rooted in social structures and wider political and governance issues closely linked to economic benefits derived from natural resources.

The study aimed to answer three main questions:

1. How are violent conflicts linked to the management and pursuit of benefits from natural resources?
2. To what extent are the Liberian and Sierra Leonean civil wars connected to or influenced by natural resource considerations?
3. If indeed natural resources are linked to the causes, prolongation and resolution of conflicts, what can be done to mitigate such conflicts? How should natural resources be managed in African states so as to curb violent conflicts?

In answering these questions, the thesis identified three distinct relationships between natural resources and conflict. First, environmental scarcity has the potential to engender civil wars through a continuous reduction in the quality and quantity of vital natural resources. This is a direct consequence of the conscious and unconscious depletion of the environment by human activity. Environmental scarcity, and the frustrations it comes with, has the potential to fuel pre-existing economic, social and ethnic grievances, leading to violent conflicts.

The second link between natural resources and conflict revolves around personal gain/consideration, loot seeking behaviour, or greed as a cause of conflict in resource rich states. The allure of economic benefits from natural resources serves as an incentive to rebels to start civil wars. Economic benefits from natural resources also serve as a source of financing for rebels during civil wars. They are able to pay recruits and acquire weapons with proceeds from natural resources. The consensus is that 'lootable natural resources' are more attractive to rebels than non-lootable resources.²⁶⁸ This is because loutable natural resources are easily accessible and converted into cash.

The final linkage between natural resources and civil wars made by the study has to do with political opportunity as a result of state weakness that leads to civil wars. The concern is that bad governance, corruption, and institutional weaknesses characterize resource rich states, especially in the developing world. Ruling elites either fail (intentionally or not) or are unable to develop robust and effective institutional mechanisms for governance. Additionally, political leaders are increasingly alienated from the people they rule in these states. This

²⁶⁸ (P. Le Billon , *Diamond Wars? Conflict diamonds and geographies of resource wars* 2004) also see (Snyder and Ravi 2005) and (W. Reno 1996)

situation leaves room for disgruntled individuals to organize rebellions aimed at overthrowing the government, eventually leading to civil wars.

In analyzing the Liberian and the Sierra Leonean civil wars, the study concluded that most of the connections between both wars with natural resource considerations has to do mainly with the following interrelated factors: personal considerations/greed, usually couched in grievances against the states; the weakness of both states' capacity and institutions due to inefficient management/governance of natural resources; and corruption, patron-clientelism, and maladministration of the states. Therefore, natural resource considerations have been vital to the start, perpetration, and the resolutions of both the Liberian and the Sierra Leonean civil wars.

Empirical Findings

The study recognized three main connections/roles natural resources have played in the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. First, lootable, natural resources served as a remote trigger for both civil wars. Issues pertaining to management and ownership of natural resources in both Liberia and Sierra Leone became crucial in setting off the two nations on the path of violence. Inefficient management of natural resources and immense corruption depicted the periods preceding the civil wars. Governing elites were perceived as corrupt and unfair in distributing wealth from the abundant natural resources. Institutionalized corruption through a patrimonial system, blatant theft of proceeds from natural resources, and rents from the allocation of exploitation rights of natural resources in both countries had debilitating effects on the lives of citizens in Liberia and Sierra Leone. These issues formed grievances upon which the NPFL and the RUF based their rebellions, and sought support of the ordinary people for their cause.

More crucially, wealth from natural resources and the incessant corruption and mismanagement in both Liberia and Sierra Leone over the years before the civil wars contributed significantly in weakening the states politically, institutionally and economically. Both Liberia and Sierra Leone, as resource rich nations, failed to develop well-designed institutions that would provide their populations with basic services and maintain the rule of law, promote efficiency, equality among citizens, economic growth and stability. In addition, governments in both Liberia and Sierra Leone in the pre-civil war era were typically arbitrary and derelict in their duties. They mostly ignored their own country's laws and rules when it suited their interests (Chapter Four discussed these examples). Hence, opportunities were created for the NPFL and the RUF to successfully challenge the legitimacy and authority of their respective states. The majority of citizens (especially the rural dwellers), who were discontented by the lack of economic security and inability to satisfy basic needs, willingly joined ranks with the rebel groups to fight against what they felt were illegitimate governments. State weakness also implied that both states were not in total control of their territories due to weak policing and general lack of security. The inability of security forces to crush the rebellions when they started demonstrates this weakness.

Mismanagement of natural resources led to wide-spread disenchantment with both states, giving the NPFL and RUF rebel groups the grounds upon which to launch a rebellion against their respective governments and gain sufficient recruits from the largely unsatisfied population. Mismanagement also manifested in the weakness of state institutions and apparatus, leaving both nations vulnerable to rebellion. The military and police forces in both Liberia and Sierra Leone in the pre-civil war period had been weakened by nepotism and corruption and could not meet the resolute challenge of the rebel forces.

Second, natural resource considerations came to the fore in sustaining and fuelling the Liberian and the Sierra Leonean civil wars. Once the civil wars began, the exigencies of war

meant that armed groups had to find a way to finance themselves. The NPFL and the RUF exploited natural resources in their respective countries to fund their war efforts. Charles Taylor and the NPFL made as much as \$450 million a year through the export of natural resources.²⁶⁹ The plunder and sale of these resources enabled Taylor to fund and prosecute the war against the Doe regime. Similarly, Foday Sankho and his RUF rebels fought and captured diamond rich areas in Sierra Leone and systematically exported diamonds through Liberia to help pay for guns and ammunition. Access to funding through the exploitation of natural resources is one reason for the protracted nature of both civil wars. Both wars lasted for over a decade partly because the rebel groups had access to easily lootable natural resources to help fund their war efforts. In addition, access to wealth from these resources made it very difficult for the belligerents to agree to disarm. The fact that they made money from resources that they were previously denied became an incentive to perpetuate the civil wars.

In addition, the Sierra Leonean government, in particular, attempted to use natural resources to crush rebellion and consolidate its authority. The Tejan Kabbah government used diamond fields as mortgage to secure Executive Outcome's assistance in quelling the RUF rebellion. Hence, the study recognizes the fact that natural resource considerations, especially lootable ones, were instrumental in prolonging and sustaining both civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Third, natural resource considerations were crucial in resolving both wars in two ways. First, natural resource considerations came to be included in peace agreements. This was especially the case in Sierra Leone. The Lomé Peace Accord in July 1999 saw the management of Sierra Leone's diamond industry put under the control of the rebel leader

²⁶⁹ (Weissman F, 1997)

Foday Sankho. Second, the international community tried to stop the rebels from exploiting natural resources through embargoes placed on Liberian and Sierra Leonean diamonds in the late 1990s. These measures were aimed at frustrating the rebel groups by denying them sources of income with the hope that the rebels would be forced to end the fight.

Theoretical Implications

Resource based conflicts attract attention simply because they directly affect politics and inter-group relations in any society, and have the potential of impacting a large number of individuals in the world. The costs of these wars spill over to the country's neighbours and the global community, and may be as high as the costs suffered within the warring country. This study has posited some theoretical connections between the presence and dependence of natural resources (especially lootable ones) on violent conflicts. Natural resource considerations have influenced the start and duration of violent civil conflicts in various ways. These theoretical approaches suggest different influencing factors in the connection between natural resources and violent conflicts. In analyzing the resource-civil war relationship, three general incendiary factors that are often associated with these wars (and thus used as an approach to studying them) have been identified: 1) grievances created by the increasing reduction or scarcity of natural resources mainly due to environmental and human factors; 2) economic considerations of individuals who seek to exploit the benefits from natural resources for personal gain; and 3) state weakness and low capacity resulting from poor management and maladministration of natural resources. The link between natural resources and violent conflicts/civil wars can thus be traced in three distinct but interconnected ways. First, natural resources can be the indirect or remote causes of violent

conflicts/civil wars. Second, they may fuel or sustain the war when it erupts. Third, natural resources can come into consideration in resolving these violent conflicts/civil wars.²⁷⁰

A development of a theoretical approach to analysing resource conflicts must take into consideration the effects of natural resources on a particular society, including their political, economic and social aspects. Natural resources create diverse dynamics in different societies. Also, people pay attention to the type of natural resource under consideration simply because different natural resources have diverse effects on various stages of conflicts. A comprehensive framework must, therefore, accommodate change and interaction since key factors may vary widely and change over time, and from one society to the other. Several uncertainties exist in the connection between natural resources and conflicts. As mentioned in Chapter Two, it is difficult to establish causality between natural resources and violent conflicts or civil wars, even in wars where an obvious linkage appears. Collier and Hoeffler, for instance, argue that growth in natural resources increases the risk of violent conflict/civil wars,²⁷¹ while Fearon and Laitin, applying a slightly different dataset, do not find a general connections between natural resource wealth and civil wars/violent conflicts.²⁷² The complexity of the processes involved makes it difficult to be absolutely certain of the causes and effects of any conflict. Thus, one is left to estimate the probabilities in a particular given context. When the context is altered, even slightly, the analytical framework must change.

The various links and approaches to establishing a connection between natural resources and violent conflicts, as put forward by this study, emphasize different factors as significant. However, all these approaches point toward the same conclusion. Where a lootable natural

²⁷⁰ (Fearon J. D., 2004)pp. 275-302

²⁷¹ (Collier & Hoeffler, On the economics causes of civil war, 1998) pp571

²⁷² (Fearon J. D., 2004)pp. 275-302

resource in a society is intimately connected to survival or the hope of a better future, the prudent management of these resources become crucial in ensuring peace. Natural resource governance for these resources is very much at the root of violent conflicts anywhere in the world where natural resources form an integral part of the economy- and so is the case in Africa and more specifically, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Thus, focusing on the kinds of conditions in a particular natural resource endowed state that may engender conflict, will better help come up with a suitable framework for understanding these types of violent conflicts.

Policy Implications/Recommendations

It is apparent from the discussions in this thesis that the issue of natural resource governance is central to the link between natural resources and violent conflict. Natural resource governance here refers to the system of values, policies and institutions by which a society manages its natural resources. It therefore includes the capacity of the government to effectively manage its natural resources and implement sound policies. The absence of effective natural resource governance arrangements in resource-rich states especially, explains the occurrence of conflicts over natural resources. Hence, any attempts at curbing/limiting natural resource conflicts must be tackled through effective governance of natural resources. This thesis argues that an effective resource governance policy offers the potential for conflict prevention, management and resolution, and provides multiple opportunities to improve human security in producing countries by generating broad benefits for all. Natural resource governance in Africa must therefore be examined and tackled from three levels: civil society, national/domestic and international .²⁷³

²⁷³ (Abiodun, *Natural Resources and Conflicts in Africa: The Tragedy of Endowment*, 2007), Pp.32

Civil Society Level

The civil society level comprises international non-governmental organizations, industry, and consumers of these natural resources. Their role involves their activities and influence with regards to the management of proceeds from natural resources. The organized expression of diverse groups and interests within society and the global community at large is essential to natural resource governance processes, and to democratizing politics and decision-making processes in resource-rich countries. These are vital to the process of articulating interests and building social cohesion. With regard to governance, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and corporations in the natural resource industry have an important role to play, which includes generating legitimate demands, monitoring government policy making and implementation, and enabling people to participate actively in the governance of the in resources in society.

The extractive industries have a duty to set guidelines and regulations in their operations to help resource-rich states in Africa achieve sustainable development. This is important because in the absence of supplementary regulation, routine extractive activities can fuel conflict dynamics, often in ways that are legally problematic. For instance, the absence of full disclosure of revenues, such as concession payments, royalties and bonuses paid by companies to host governments, may create incentives for actual corruption, thereby reinforcing predatory elites, while denying affected citizens critical information by which they might hold their leaders accountable. Thus, there is a need to improve corporate conduct in resource rich countries.

Initiatives aimed at improving the conduct of the extractive industry in resource-rich countries, such as via UN sanctions and legal prosecutions, must be combined with measures such as voluntary codes of responsible corporate conduct for extractive firms operating in

fragile settings. Although voluntary codes and other forms of industry self-regulation suffer from self-selection and weak enforcement, they can continue to provide important guidance and even a niche for progressive companies seeking to improve business practices in many resource rich states that are vulnerable to conflict. Problems with voluntary codes (self-selection and weak enforcement), however, can be addressed with the creation of appropriate statutory and legal regulations or fiscal inducements with a supportive incentive structure that rewards responsible and conflict-sensitive corporate conduct while penalizing poor performers. There is need for international initiatives such as the UN General Assembly's Resolution on the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative to be established as an international best practice to serve as a guiding framework to which all responsible corporations can subscribe. Also, extractive firms must endeavour to provide safe working conditions for locals, and sometimes go as far as allowing them to buy shares in the company. These have the effect of reducing local grievances that can fuel conflicts.

National/Domestic Level

As highlighted throughout the study, the ineffective management of natural resources affects millions of ordinary citizens through poor economic growth, high inequalities, corruption, authoritarianism and violent conflicts.²⁷⁴ Some actions needed to prevent civil wars must come from governments of these resource-rich states. The challenge is to adopt policies that harness the potential of natural resources to bring about development. Thus, transparency, accountability and fairness in the distribution of revenue from natural resources must be a top priority for any government in Africa seeking to avoid resource conflicts. Transparency and accountability requires making sound policies and building strong institutions that reflect local interests.

²⁷⁴ (Le Billon P. , 2003)Pp. 215-285

This means that governments of resource-rich nations must have the political will and a strong interest in ensuring that resources bring about improvement in living standards for its population. This also means that governments must ensure credible scrutiny of resource revenues they receive, how they are budgeted and how they are spent. However, merely accounting for revenues and showing they have been well utilized may not be enough. Governments need to establish credible, independent processes of verification. Governments must endeavour to report all sources of natural resource revenue and make sure that they are easily tracked as they pass through the budget. There must also be the creation and strengthening of anti-corruption institutions and oversight agencies. These internal measures are necessary simply because, as shown earlier, rebel movements are greatly bolstered by acts of corrupt leadership that siphon the country's revenues rather than use them in a transparent manner. These acts of mismanagement of revenue from natural resources serves as provocations and provide justification for rebellion.

Thus, states must have credible structures in place to handle natural resource governance and prevent violent conflict. Governments must abide by four principles in the governance of resource revenues. First, there must be clarity of roles and responsibilities of the various institutions within the state. This means that the relationship between and among the various institutions and agencies of government must be specified and clarified in relation to other aspects of the economy to avoid ambiguity and confusion. Second, there must be publicly available information and data. It is vital governments publish comprehensive fiscal reports pertaining to earnings from natural resources at specified times/periods that are also verified and audited by an independent auditor (eg. similar to the Auditor General role Canada's Parliament has). Third, governments of resource rich countries must ensure open budget preparation, implementation and reporting and also assure the public of their integrity by

providing quality fiscal data and allowing for independent scrutiny of information provided on earnings from the resource sector.²⁷⁵ Sound resource management therefore involves government transparency, responsibility, accountability and responsiveness to the needs of the population. Fourth, there must be the participation of local interests/people and most importantly, benefits and opportunities from natural resource wealth must be distributed and managed in ways that benefit the citizens. Governments, therefore, must provide the following: leadership in terms of vision and strategy; rules and legislations; control of the industry by, for instance, setting and defining standards and issuing resource extraction licenses, concessions and permits to regulate how resources are extracted; and finally enforcement of the rules and sanctioning those who break the laws.

However, even states that make the attempt to manage effectively natural resources and act accountably face several obstacles. One of these is the sheer volume of resource revenue and the scale of rent relative to the economies of these states, which make it very difficult to track and absorb effectively large revenue flows. This is not to make excuses for or accept the endemic corruption in most resource rich states, but rather it is to make known the fact that even resource-rich countries willing to do the right thing need help from the international world/community.

International Level

The international level comprises international organizations such as the UN and its agencies, IMF and the World Bank. It also includes regional bodies such as the African Union, ECOWAS, SADC, IGAD and other similar regional bodies. The role of these bodies mainly pertains to their influence in the conduct of affairs of their members over issues

²⁷⁵ (Le Billon P. , 2003)

regarding the governance of natural resources. One such influence is the creation and integration of an international or regional template for the acceptable governance of natural resource revenues to which resource rich countries can subscribe. These frameworks must provide a generalized standard so as to allow for appropriate scrutiny and international comparability. If successful, these measures and frameworks may exert pressure on those governments/states that do not manage their resource wealth effectively.

The Kimberley Certification Process Scheme, designed to make it increasingly difficult for rebel movements to sell rough diamonds in global markets (by ensuring that governments adopt a certification process), is an encouraging sign that this type of international action is a possibility. In addition, the naming and shaming of individuals and organizations through the UN Panel of Experts has led to a reduction in the illegal sale of lootable natural resources such as diamond. Such global efforts/actions must be strengthened. Other global initiatives such as the joint IMF/World Bank's Code of Good Practices on Fiscal Transparency and its related reports on the standards and codes (ROSCs), is another coherent attempt to set frameworks of international standards to guide fiscal conduct and policy.²⁷⁶ The code was first adopted in 1998 and is used to measure a country's fiscal transparency. It includes a supporting manual providing guidelines for implementation, a questionnaire and a summary self-evaluation report.²⁷⁷ Although the IMF/World Bank initiative does not directly address resource revenue, it emphasizes acceptable conduct related to every important source of income/revenue. Hence, if revenues from a country's resources are significant, the ROSC will likely focus attention on it and highlight the need to be transparent in handling these sorts

²⁷⁶ (International Monetary Fund-www.imf.org)

²⁷⁷ Ibid

of funds by suggesting how data on revenues from these natural resources should be reported. This particular initiative is based on the assumption that over time, fiscal transparency will result in good governance and equitable distribution of a country's wealth and revenue.

Another international initiative that should be encouraged and strengthened in resource-rich countries is the Forest Law Enforcement and Governance Ministerial Process (FLEG). This initiative was launched by the G8 in conjunction with the World Bank's Forest Governance program and aimed at increasing the amount of rent from forest resources that accrues to governments. It is also to discourage and reduce the illegal appropriation of such rent including illegal logging. Similar initiatives can be undertaken for other kinds of natural resources by instituting systems that encourage responsible behaviour and deter criminal and corrupt conduct. It would also provide consistent, accurate and timely information to monitoring organizations and help develop and implement a transparent and participatory approach to the allocation of exploration rights.

In most cases in Africa, even the best scrutiny and information on the dealings of corrupt officials and politicians may fail to have any effect. Leaders and politicians might be resistant to moral pressure or place themselves above their country's laws, and fail to adopt any of the initiatives described above. In these instances, the international community needs to impose some penalties that target these figures and their associates, while minimizing the effects on ordinary citizens. Thus, targeted sanctions as developed by the UN can be used effectively for such directed punishment of offenders. These sorts of sanctions should be strengthened and internationally supported so as to encourage transparency and accountability of governments in resource rich countries.

In addition, there is a need to analyse, institutionalize, and make available the understanding and lessons learned from the investigations and conclusions of consecutive

panels of experts constituted by the United Nations Security Council on specific countries such as Angola, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Sudan. This can be very useful for other resource rich countries in the region and the world at large. A committee should also be established by the UN to follow up on the findings and recommendations of the panel of experts in fragile economies recovering from natural resource conflicts in order to prevent them from falling back into chaos.

The cooperation of other countries, especially neighbouring countries within the immediate region of resource rich states, is essential at the international level. Countries in the region should improve their border controls and tighten security. This is helpful in preventing resource conflicts in a number of ways. First, tightening borders by neighbours discourages and reduces smuggling, as illegal dealers in natural resources will not find ready markets in these countries. Second, it prevents the easy transfer of weapons to armed groups across the borders to perpetuate violence. Third, effective border control/security discourages persons of questionable character (such as international criminals and terrorists) that such uncontrolled borders tend to attract.

Thus, there is a need for a geographical and regional approach to dealing with illegal natural resource exploitation. The geographical approach will help focus on the trans-border nature of most illegal exploitation as well as generate international and inter-state cooperation among African countries in improving border control.²⁷⁸ Here, regional bodies such as the AU, ECOWAS, IGAD and the SADC must serve as anchors to regional initiatives to curb illicit natural resource extraction and trade. Member states of these regional bodies must thus

²⁷⁸ (Abiodun, *Natural Resources and Conflicts in Africa: The Tragedy of Endowment*, 2007)

commit themselves to criminalizing and penalizing all illicit trade and activities in natural resources.

In order to respond to new dynamics and opportunities arising from globalization, many regional and global cooperative programs have begun over the past decade to enhance border controls, modernize customs operations, harmonize trade practices, expand worldwide non-proliferation efforts, and to update export controls.²⁷⁹ The objective behind these efforts is both enhanced security and economic gain. Therefore, it is likely that these efforts can provide insights and lessons learned that would be helpful in broadening border security efforts in future conflict areas/regions.

Conclusion

This thesis advanced a few arguments with regard to the connection between natural resources and violent conflicts. First, the abundance of natural resources does not necessarily mean that a country will experience violent conflict. In the same vein, scarcity of resources does not automatically predispose a country to violence. Natural resources, the role they play in a given society, and their susceptibility to bringing about violent conflicts comes down to the socio-economic and political factors of such a society in terms of laws, structures and practices guiding the management of these resources. It is crucial how the privileges, opportunities and benefits from these resources are distributed in the state, and not necessarily the circumstances or nature of the resources. The argument here is that there is no direct link between natural resources and violent conflict beyond the structures, processes and actors directly responsible and involved with the management, control and distribution of these resources. Implicit in this argument is the fact that people will most likely fight over

²⁷⁹ (Stimson survey-www.docstoc.com/docs)

natural resources where there are no properly organized means of distributing benefits and opportunities from them. This was the situation in pre-war Liberia and Sierra Leone, and significantly contributed to the start of the civil wars. Resource wealth over the years has not been distributed and managed in ways that benefitted the citizens. In situations where citizens feel they do not have ownership over their country's natural resource endowment, and where existing political structures are not adequate in redressing citizens' grievances, they are more likely to resort to violence.

The issue of natural resources and violent conflicts must be treated as a governance issue, and must be addressed at the national, regional/international and civil society levels. Natural resource governance must be participatory, transparent and accountable. It must involve development strategies and efficient and effective economic management including systems of revenue and expenditure management.

It must be emphasized, however, that transparency and good governance alone will not be the solution. Resource wealth must necessarily be beneficial to the citizens in the country or else the risk of violent conflict continues. Despite being endowed with some of the most sought after natural resources in the world, Liberia and Sierra Leone have continually failed to transform their enormous economic potential and wealth into tangible benefits in terms of human security, sustainable peace and development. To date, both countries are heavily dependent on international aid and support for their economies.²⁸⁰ This situation must change if both countries are not to revert to violence. Countries that have poor governmental capacity to regulate the natural resource sector are susceptible to violent conflicts.

In this regard, minimum standards for the governance of natural resources are directly relevant to the entire continuum of conflict prevention - management, resolution and post-

²⁸⁰ (www.cia.gov)

conflict reconstruction - as well as the broader peace, security and development agenda in resource rich countries. Thus, effective governance of the natural resource sector is very decisive in both Liberia and Sierra Leone. Both countries did not have credible natural resource governance structures that could prevent violent conflict. To put it succinctly, “crucial issues such as ensuring equity and fairness in the allocation of benefits and opportunities coming from natural resources, prevention of [all kinds] of hazards coming from the process of resource extraction, striking an acceptable balance between local claim and national interests, proper definitions of the limits of multi-national corporations...and a host of other considerations that can ensure harmonious intergroup relations in the management of resources [are fundamental in ensuring peace in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and by extension other resource rich countries in Africa.]”²⁸¹

Avenues for future research

The risk of violent conflict in any resource rich country is clearly dependent on intervening factors that make a state vulnerable to conflicts. One important intervening factor involves the institutions (both political and economic) responsible for the access to, distribution, and management of natural resources. According to Snyder and Ravi, the quality of institutions is more important than material incentives for rebels (in engendering violent conflict).²⁸² Thus, institutions that are deficient or weak in terms of enforcing laws and regulations actually may increase the impact of resource abundance on conflicts. Thus, future research could concentrate on how political and economic institutions can serve in mediating the effect of the abundance of natural resources on violent conflicts.

²⁸¹ (Abiodun, *Natural Resources and Conflicts in Africa: The Tragedy of Endowment*, 2007)

²⁸² (Snyder & Ravi, 2005)Pp. 563-597

Furthermore, this study, and many others like it, mostly focuses on the state/national level by examining the impact of natural resource abundance on the state. Focusing on the state level usually is too general and does not enable one to make a deep assessment of the roots of these conflicts. This is especially so as the tendency to oversimplify the effect of natural resource abundance is very high. It is important to realize that individuals are also affected by the abundance of natural resources and it is these individuals who ultimately decide to participate in violent conflicts. Therefore, future research should focus attention on the individual and household levels in understanding the effect of natural resource wealth on conflict at the most basic level.²⁸³ Additionally, social stratification in terms of ethnic composition and distribution could also be considered as a variable in future studies relating to natural resources.

Another area for future research could be the expansion of analysis from ‘civil wars’ as defined by major armed conflicts data sets as PRIO, Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) or Correlates of War (COW), since civil wars or armed conflicts are not the only conflict typology or the predominant ones in resource rich states. Equally destructive or devastating are events such as violent demonstrations, riots and communal violence not involving state actors. Thus, concentrating on ‘civil wars’ would lead one to ignore other potential effects of natural resources on conflict besides the influence on onset, duration and intensity of civil wars. It is important to note that data set on conflicts other than civil wars are being developed. For instance the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) provides data on low intensity conflicts for Africa from 1997-2010.²⁸⁴ There is also the Social Conflict in Africa Dataset (SCAD) that provides data on low intensity conflicts on

²⁸³ (Deligeanis, 2012) Pp. 78-100

²⁸⁴ (Raleigh, Linke, Hegre, & Karlsen, 2009)Pp. 651-660

about forty-seven African countries from 1990-2010.²⁸⁵ All these research work is laudable and must be expanded upon.

Finally, most research on violent conflict and natural resources, including this one, concentrate on the effect of natural resource considerations on intra-state violent conflicts. Few of these studies look at the effect of natural resources on inter-state conflicts. Even though a few of these studies look at the effect of water resources on inter-state conflicts, future research may aim at bringing out the plausible role other natural resource types play in inter-state conflicts.

Notwithstanding the above limitations to the study, this thesis demonstrates that natural resources interests have been fundamental in starting, fuelling or prolonging internal and inter-state conflicts in Africa. The source of most of these violent conflicts is a result of objections from citizens to their government's management policies of the resource sector. A close look at the Liberian and Sierra Leonean civil wars has shown that the corruption of governing elites in the management of natural resources, mismanagement of proceeds from natural resources, neglect of rural-resource producing areas/where resources are located, inequitable distribution of benefits from natural resources and general lack of transparency in the resource sector became crucial in urging citizens to challenge their political leaders through violence. In the process, warlords managed to maximize the incidence of the wars for economic and political gain. Thus, to ensure peace, one cannot underestimate the importance of prudent natural resource management in resource-rich, resource dependent states in Africa.

²⁸⁵ (Salehyan, et al., 2012)Pp. 503-511

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