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VIOLENT PEACE IN LIBERIA

A Study of the Roles and Ambitions of Ex-combatants

Christopher Agoha

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Abstract

Christopher Agoha

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Keywords: Violence, Post-Conflict, Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR), Ex-combatants

Liberia emerged from 14 years of brutal civil conflict, demobilized and "reintegrated" large numbers of ex-combatants, but there are still concerns about ex-combatants' re-engagement in violence. Yet, adequate knowledge and empirical evidence about this are still sketchy. Qualitative fieldwork among ex-combatants conducted in five locations in Monrovia from 2012-2013, suggests that ex-combatants are re-marginalized. This research presents ex-combatants' current status, their re-marginalization, and factors indicative of their re-engagement in violence in post-conflict Liberia. The study contends that ex-combatants were apparently not satisfied with the outcome of the DDRR programme, as it failed to reintegrate them successfully. The study developed a four dimensional analytical framework that includes, (a) re-marginalization (b) re-criminalization (c) exploitation, and (d) economic insecurity, which are then applied to the outcome of the reintegration of ex-combatants in Liberia. On the basis of the data collected in fieldwork, the analytical framework reveals how these factors and dynamics interacted and facilitated the occurrence of violence. The study argues that an awareness of ex-combatants' vulnerability and re-marginalization should put state actors in a position to better predict their violent inclinations. It further notes that ex-combatant re-engagement in violence is largely manifested at the political and economic levels and this has the potential to lead to a renewed conflict if not mitigated. This study by no means completes the tasks of research and analysis on violence and ex-combatants, but it outlines theoretical propositions and conclusions, which can hopefully spark further debate and collective efforts among researchers to push this field of study forward.

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Dedication

I dedicate this effort and work posthumously to my parents, Adolphus and Cecelia Agoha, both of whom I love and owe so much for inspiring me to achieve a life time academic success.

CONTENTS

List of Abbreviations

ACCORD – African Center for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes

ACS – American Colonization Society

AfL – Agenda for Transformation

AFL – Armed Forces of Liberia

AFL – Armed Forces of Liberia

AFRICOM - African Command

APSA – African Peace and Security Architecture

CISAC – Stanford University Center for International Cooperation

CPA – Comprehensive Peace Agreement

CRRS – Community Resettlement and Reintegration Strategy

DEA – Drug Enforcement Agency

DDM – Disarmament and Dismantling of Militias

DDRCP – Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Capacity Programme

DDRR - Disarmament, Demobilization Rehabilitation and Reintegration

DRC – Democratic Republic of Congo

ECOMOG – The Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group

ECOWAS – Economic Community of West African States

EU – European Union

EVD – Ebola Virus Disease

FBI – Federal Bureau of Investigations

GEMAP – Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme

GoL – Government of Liberia

GRC – Governance Reforms Commission

HRW – Human Rights Watch

HPN – Humanitarian Practice Network

ICGL – International Contact Group for Liberia

IDDRS – Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards

IDP's – Internally Displaced Persons

ILO – International Labor Organization

INGO's – International Non-Governmental Organizations

INPFL – Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia

IPA – International Peace Academy

IRIN – Integrated Regional Network News

ISF – International Stabilization Force

ISS – International Strategic Studies

JMC – Joint Monitoring Committee

LAC – Liberia Agriculture Company

LDF – Lofa Defense Force

LIMA – Liberian- Ivoirian Mercenary Association

LISGIS – Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo-Information Services

LMTU – Liberia Motorcyclist Transport Union

LNP – Liberia National Police

LNP – Liberian National Police

LPC – Liberia Peace Council

LURD – Liberia United for Reconciliation and Democracy

MNS – Ministry of National Security

MDG's Millennium Development Goals

MDRP – Multi-County Demobilization and Reintegration Programme

MNC's – Multinational Corporations

MODEL – Movement for Democracy in Liberia

MOJA Movement for Justice in Africa

MRU – Mano River Union

NBI – National Bureau of Immigration

NDI – National Democratic Institute

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NCDDRR – National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization Rehabilitation and Reintegration

NGO's - Non-Governmental Organizations

NPFL – National Patriotic Front of Liberia

NPRAG – National Patriotic Reconstruction Assembly Government

NSA – National Security Agency

NTGL – National Transitional Government of Liberia

PAL – Progressive Alliance of Liberia

PCRD – Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development

PRS – Poverty Reduction Strategy

PSD – Peace and Security Department

PSU – Police Support Unit

PTSD – Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

REC – Regional Economic Communities

RENAMO – Mozambican National Resistance

RFTF – Result-Focused Transitional Framework

RREEI – Re-marginalization, Re-criminalization, Exploitation and Economic Insecurity

RUF – Revolutionary United Front

SABU – Small Boys Unit

SAP – Structural Adjustment Programme

SATU – Special Anti-Terrorist Unit

SIDDR – Stockholm Institute on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

SRA – Social Research Association

SRSG – Special Representative to the Secretary General

SSR – Security Sector Reform

SSS –State Security Services

TRC – Truth and Reconciliation Commission

ULIMO-J - United Liberation Movement for Liberia – Johnson led

ULIMO-K - United Liberation Movement for Liberia – Kromah led

UN – United Nations

UN/OSAA – United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa

UNDOC – United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

UNDPKO – United Nations Peacekeeping Operations

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNIDIR – United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research

UNITA – National Union for the Total Independence of Angola

UNMIL – United Nations Mission in Liberia

UNPOL – United National Police

WHO – World Health Organization

Chapter One: Introduction

I was there at the beginning 12 years ago. I observed the entire process, participated, reported, and analysed as a United Nations staff in post-war peacebuilding work, and now, I have documented all in a personal research endeavour. What I did not observe, read, reported, and documented may have been official government secrets not within my reach. What I was not told by the participants (Ex-combatants) in this study and therefore not documented, was because they did not want to let me know – a dilemma in research.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the issue of violence in the post-conflict environment. Violent is a particularly significant concept as it sometimes presents something of a paradox within a post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding setting. At the end of conflict peace is restored and parties to the conflict begin to build new lives around them and seeking to participate and benefit from the new peace that has been achieved. Yet, the post-war regime continues to face challenges posed by ex-combatants who did not benefit from the reintegration programmes and therefore feels excluded, economically and politically marginalized. In this chapter, I discussed the context in which violence occurs in post-war environment, the aims and objectives of the research, the main arguments and rationale of the study, its genesis as well as the research question. The study aims to contribute to the literature by developing a four dimensional analytical framework which is then applied to the reintegration of ex-combatants in Liberia. On the basis of the data collected in fieldwork, the analytical framework of this study includes four explanatory factors: *Re-marginalization, Re-criminalization, Exploitation, and Economic Insecurity* of ex-combatants in post-war Liberia. It shows that these elements can be useful tool to investigate the micro and macro factors and dynamics in ex-combatants post-war experiences. It reveals how these factors and dynamics have facilitated the re-engagement of ex-combatants in violence.

From its founding in 1847 by freed slaves from America until 1980, Liberia was controlled politically and economically by Americo-Liberian elite. These elite violently repressed and discriminated against the much larger,

indigenous population. In 1980, Samuel Doe overthrew President William Tolbert to become the first indigenous president but was himself overthrown by Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) in the context of a violent civil war that lasted from 1989 until 1997. The July 1997 elections established Taylor as president but in 1999, two anti- Taylor movements, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), initiated a new civil war that lasted four years. A Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in August 2004 between Taylor's government, LURD, and MODEL ended the war. The 1989–1997 and 1999–2003 conflicts killed more than 200,000 Liberians and displaced many more (McMullin, 2013:392).

Since the end of the civil conflict in Liberia in 2003, violence has become a major national issue and has continued to have impact on the sustainability of peace in the country. In the post-war era, despite the Disarmament and Demobilization, violence continues to increase in intensity. Thus, very little work has explained the ways in which violence linked to the DDRR of ex-combatants reflects or masks other forms of social struggle. In general, the ways these forms of violence systematically feature in post-war environments remain under researched. In Liberia, what look like 'mobile-militant-groups' have emerged, operating as mercenaries across the MRU region. The elite-rebel leaders dominated government continues to appropriate the wealth from the country's rich natural resources, creating anger and frustration among the larger population. Violence also underlines the important issue of youth vulnerability and exclusion, rooted in the phenomenon of ex-combatant volatility and agitation. In Liberia, a country that emerged from the decade-long bloody war, peace is a state of restoring normal relations among people and among institutions directly and/or indirectly affected by the armed conflict and of addressing the root causes such as social exclusion, marginalization, deprivation, mal-governance, social disharmony and ethnic tension, as well as achieving social, psychological, mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing. Liberian society is fractured, disconnected, frustrated, and alienated due to the civil war and associated effects. Therefore, achieving stability and peace in Liberia requires an appropriate process that deals with the past and envisions a better future by generating hope and aspiration. In this regard, peace building is

crucially important in Liberia. It refers to strategies and actions to be undertaken to institutionalize achievements made through the implementation of provisions in peace agreements and the consolidation of democracy for sustainability.

Civil wars are the most dangerous type of conflict in the international system. After the end of civil conflicts, the international community usually intervenes in order to offer support and assistance in post war reconstruction, including dealing with internal displacements, refugees and ex-combatants through disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration (DDRR). The civil war saw fighting in Liberia among various warring factions from 1989 - 2003. Given that most civil wars are post-conflict relapses, recent scholarship has focused on ways to prevent civil war recurrence. Scholars agree that securing post-war peace requires settlements that address many elements, including protection issues, human rights, refugee repatriation, demobilization and disarmament of rebels and ex-combatants, free and fair elections, and economic growth (Stedman et al. 2002; Hartzell and Hoddie 2003; Walter 1999, 2002). Recognizing that policy-makers under resource constraints face dilemmas in deciding how to address each element, a growing body of work contends that priority should be given to disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation, and reintegration (DDRR). This is because satisfying ex-combatants is a necessary first step in moving towards long-term goals like protection of the population and building legitimate governance (Stedman et al. 2002).

Different forms of violence exist and in a particular form of what Michel Foucault (1982) called "governmentality" Governmentality is about the disciplining of forms of life. Foucault was concerned to show how the human species and the human body, through specific categories rather than juridical ones, became the object of systematic and sustained political attention. Thus, building on Foucauldian notions, the study argues that violence is increasingly present and yet frequently hidden by both the state and the perpetrators of violence, leaving little opportunity for the observer to make informed judgments.

According to Astri Surke, et.al (2006:1) violence in a post-war situation, whether associated with ex-combatants, organized crime, disaffected war-lords, recriminating agents of the state or marginalized groups, seems

widespread but poorly understood. Consequently, there is a growing recognition of the risks that wars can occur and spread across borders if acute violence in the post-conflict period is not adequately addressed (Suhrke and Samset 2007; Collier, et.al 2006). Paul Collier, et.al (2003:83) observed that "the typical country reaching the end of a civil war faces around a 44 percent risk of returning to conflict within five years". In August 2013, Liberia celebrated ten years of "uninterrupted peace". However, Collier had a different view about Liberia when, in 2013, he commented and gave two reasons for the country to be hopeful: one is the passage of time – that after ten years of peace, the risk of going back to war is much less; the other is economic development, when income doubles, the risk of civil war halves. However, Collier's argument did not completely eliminate the possibility of war, but points to the potential for war with time and income considerations. Liberia remains economically underdeveloped with low national and personal income, prompting comments from some segments of the society that the war years offered better economic and livelihood opportunities.

This study builds on existing works by examining several factors that might influence individuals to engage in violence and the types of violence they are likely to engage in. In this context, the study analyses the DDRR of ex-combatants, the level of their satisfaction/dissatisfaction, including economic and security concerns, and social reintegration. My empirical tests focus on DDRR of ex-combatants in Liberia, which was a key component of the war-ending Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2003. Scholars understand that ending a civil war does not necessarily promote positive peace. While the civil war may end in our datasets, a rise in crime and violence level might indicate a failure of DDRR in some cases (Kingma 1997; Paris 2001). These issues contribute to the recurrence of conflicts as dissatisfied former combatants make ripe recruitment targets for criminal and rebel groups (Berdal 1996). For example, the M23 rebel group in the Democratic Republic of Congo was formed by ex-combatants who were dissatisfied with poor living conditions and a lack of regular salaries, which they largely blamed on DDRR (Wilen 2013:122). Their subsequent rearmament and fighting has wreaked havoc in the North Kivu region, leading to the displacement of 500,000 civilians (IRIN 2012). Liberian ex-combatants and mercenaries were activated on at least two

occasions to fight in Cote d'Ivoire: first during the 2010/2011 post-election crisis in that country, and then in a series of cross-border attacks that occurred during 2012, 2013 and 2014 respectively. The ability of recruiters in Cote d'Ivoire to contact and activate rebel leaders in Liberia, and for those leaders to, in turn, recruit their former fighters to join them during the 2010/2011 crisis presents a potential domestic and regional threat to security. Internally, there has been an intensification of agitation by tens of thousands of unemployed ex-combatants. This situation creates an environment where this vulnerable population can be easily mobilized for a variety of purposes. This potential is particularly concerning when one considers that ex-combatant networks remain intact, at least in terms of communication between ex-leaders and former fighters, and that most ex-combatants are familiar with weapons. In this context, former fighters could be quickly recruited for violent activities that could threaten peace in the nascent democracy. The havoc caused by armed groups, Charles Taylor's repressive rule, and the excesses of Samuel Doe are among the horrors graphically described. Other leaders have also shared the blame for the problems of Liberia. William Tubman is blamed for establishing a benevolent dictatorship, William Tolbert for being tight-fisted and nepotistic, and the so-called radicals of the 1970s for trying to shape the debate and bringing the system down (Sawyer, 2005:2) Even if one accepts the view that the roots of the Liberian tragedy lie wholly in a sustained crisis of leadership and embraces the "bad man" theory of history, one must still see such crisis through the prism of history and, at least, as a project of many accomplices, internal and foreign, witting and un-witting (Sawyer, ibid). Therefore, this study sets out to examine the role of individual agency and the importance of analysing individual actions within the context of post-war development. Failure to deal with violence can lead to a resumption of war as was the case in Angola in 1992, or genocide as in Rwanda in 1994.

Given the strong link between ex-combatant reintegration and long-term peace in post- conflict states, researchers must understand as much as possible about how to implement programmes that produce ex-combatants who are satisfied with DDRR. This is not to say that understanding ex-combatant satisfaction with DDRR is the most important subject deserving study for researchers interested in post-war stability and development; the

focus of this study on violence and the DDRR of ex-combatants is an attempt to uncover a part of the micro-level process, as successful reintegration of combatants may contribute to positive peace-building and discourage resort to violence. The study does not guarantee either that a satisfied ex-combatant will be unwilling to engage in violence and re-join a rebel group, or that an unsatisfied ex-combatant will return to violence and fighting. In a study on post-conflict Sierra Leone, Humphreys and Weinstein (2007) suggest that participation in formal DDRR programmes may do little to improve reintegration outcomes along social, political, and economic measures. It may therefore be fruitful to focus our attention on other sources of ex-combatant livelihood rather than formal DDRR programmes. This study recognizes these limitations, but it contends that DDRR is an integral component of post-war reconstruction if well planned and successfully implemented.

DDRR has been at the forefront of multidimensional peacekeeping efforts in recent years, with its primary objective to "contribute to security and stability in post-conflict environments so that recovery and development can begin" (UN IDDRS 2010:24). Despite the overwhelming consensus that DDRR serves as a necessary first step in assuring post-war peace, we know very little about the effectiveness of DDRR. Schulhofer-Wohl and Sambanis's (2010:4) assessment of DDRR programmes critique past research for over-emphasis on implementation issues and technical details, and for promoting 'best practices' with little empirical assessment. The UN, ECOWAS, AU and other regional and international organizations, including donor countries, have been at the forefront of this policy oriented endeavour. There is limited analysis on what alternatives could be deployed at national levels when the DDRR process fails, particularly if viewed against the background of resource endowment available in most African countries to capacitate former combatants. Underscoring this argument is the recognition that the causes of most African conflicts are due to greed for power and the desire to loot the wealth and resources available in these countries. At the continental level, except for political-military support and interventions, there have not been any coherent regional efforts in pulling resources together to address post-war challenges posed by ex-combatants as alternatives to the DDRR strategy. Further, there is limited knowledge on the perpetrators of violence in post-war environments and their motivation,

particularly at the conclusion of the DD components and "reintegration" of former combatants. Notwithstanding this reactive disposition and the policy dimensions, there are literatures which seek to address the issues of how to deal with ex-combatants in post-war societies (Muggah 2009); Ozedem 2009; Humpherys and Weinstein, 2007); (Spear, 2006); Berdal and Ucko, 2009). This study aims to explore these significantly.

The topic of this research is important in understanding violence, DDRR, and ex-combatants in post-war Liberia, and how this has impacted on the country's reconstruction and development, including the risks of relapse to conflict. It addresses the underlying causes of violence linked to the processes of the DDRR of ex-combatants. The study is equally important regionally, continentally, and internationally because of the linkages and role of external actors in the Liberian conflict. The study notes that violence (settler wars) in Liberia pre-dates the foundation of the country as an independent republican state in 1847. The context in which violence occurred in pre-Liberia was sharply different from the nature of violence in the contemporary post-war Liberian state. Liberia is both an aberration and an archetype: in the African context, its political history is unique, yet its contemporary record is typical of other African states (Levitt, 2005:3). It does not have a colonial legacy, except for the quasi-colonial period in which the American Colonization Society (ACS), an American pseudo-humanitarian association governed by white American slave owners, ruled the dominion (1822-1847). In 1847, the settlers (black emigrants, re-captives) declared independence from the ACS thus marking the advent of African settler rule (Levitt, ibid). Therefore, it is important to interrogate such post-war violence and its manifestations.

At the regional level, Liberia has been described as the epicentre of conflict in the Mano River Union (MRU) comprising of Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, and Guinea (Sawyer, 2005: xi). An escalation in violence in Liberia could have great security impacts on the countries of the MRU. Liberia provided a source of recruits and resources that helped to prosecute the civil conflicts in Cote d' Ivoire and Sierra Leone, facilitated by the role of predatory leaders in the sub-region and the porous contiguous borders of the MRU countries. Continentally, the Liberian conflict witnessed the involvement of governments and leaders of ECOWAS, Libya, Cote d'Ivoire, and Burkina Faso.

This makes Liberia an important research focus. Finally, at the international level, Liberia accounted for one of the largest peacekeeping missions from 2003, with a deployment of 15, 000 troops and over 16 troop contributing nations. Foreign powers and individuals have huge business and economic interests in Liberia, particularly the United States of America which sometimes positions Liberia as its colony in Africa, and has provided political, economic and technical military assistance to the country. An attempt by the United States to deploy its military Africa Command (AFRICOM) structure in Liberia failed due to resistance from some African leaders, namely those of Nigeria, Libya and South Africa (Agoha, 2013:205).

The research focused on the most violent occurrence in Liberia, thought to be the handiwork of ex-combatants. This research takes as a starting point the uniqueness of Liberia in the following ways:

1. Liberia defies some discernible characteristics of a West African state, including the character of its citizens.

2. It adapted or copied the American system of government, but mutilated the system in its implementation to serve the interest of the capricious and patrimonial elites.

3. Further down the hinterland, cultural and traditional practices are expressed in masculinity, with the torture and brutality of the weak and vulnerable, particularly women and children.

Research Question

In understanding the DDRR of ex-combatants and the causes of violence, it is important to underscore the transition from civil war to peace, and how the legacies of war tend to linger after "peace" has been achieved. Insecurity and unresolved grievances mean that political elites as well as civil society remain polarized and that the basis for inclusive ideologies is weak. In turning from war to peace, protagonists in civil war face difficult challenges because the international system fails to adequately and consistently provide external security guarantees, protagonists face difficult dilemmas of uncertainty. Comprehensive peace agreements do not end conflicts, or even give peace a chance to unfold over time (Hoglund, 2008:8). Consequently, following the end

of the Liberian civil war in 2003, critical questions emerged for academics and policy makers seeking to secure sustainable peace: how can the international community assist Liberia wracked by internal war to transform in such a way that deep-rooted conflicts can be ameliorated through non-violent means? Finding ways to hinder demobilized combatants and soldiers from undermining the security of post-war Liberia has been identified as one of the main challenges facing successful peace implementation and peacebuilding. Despite this, there is limited or no theory explaining this problem at hand. As a result of the above, this thesis is based on the answering of the following research question:

What are the perceptions among ex-combatants about their re-engagement in violence in post-war Liberia?

Genesis of research focus

This research is a product of over ten years' experience working in a multi-dimensional peacekeeping/peacebuilding operation in Liberia, under the auspices of the United Nations. It is an attempt to document un-researched and/or limited aspects of Liberia's post-war challenges and problematic. My academic interest is in peace and conflict analysis, and this led me to embark on this research with focus on the topic: *"Violent Peace in Liberia: A Study of the Roles and Ambitions of Ex-Combatants".* The aim is to reveal aspects of the post-war problematic that have either been un-researched or under-researched. The research reflects a genuine desire to understand the dynamics of conflict, the behaviour of conflict actors, and the "bargaining game" and competition among different actors in the post-war setting. I personally became interested in the study of violence and DDRR when I had the opportunity to observe and report on DDRR activities in Liberia. My contact with ex-combatants was one of friendship and reminiscence. I had no formal background in DDRR and had not been part of any DDRR programming. Rather, I was a UN staff member deployed in the field to monitor and report on the processes of the DDRR. Later, under a UN assistance programme, I undertook a volunteer teaching assignment at the graduate school of the University of Liberia where I taught Peace and Conflict Studies as well as in

Africa in World Politics. Thus, my lens was one of seeking to understand how a group of men and women who experienced first-hand the taking up of arms for political, economic, and social causes, came to "reintegrate" after negotiating a cease-fire with their political opponents.

Aims and objectives of the study

This study aims to accomplish the following objectives:

1. To investigate perceptions about ex-combatants' re-engagement in violence in post-war Liberia;

2. To investigate the process of ex-combatant reintegration;

3. To explore the linkages between DDRR, violence, and ex-combatants in post-war environments through the analysis of data gained from the case study;

4. To develop an effective conceptual framework for the understanding of the phenomenon of violence in a post-conflict environment.

Main argument and rationale for the research

The central argument in this study is the understanding of "post-conflict development violence" and the role of ex-combatants. I use this phrase to distinguish such violence from perceptions of violence drawn from pre-war and war eras. It is also an effort to understand violence, and how its occurrence and reproduction could undermine development with risks of reverting to conflict in Liberia. I argue that the occurrence of violence in post war Liberia remains one of the greatest challenges to economic and political development. Since the establishment of democratic government in 2006, violence has become more pronounced and has reached new heights, always with the perception that such violence is being carried out by ex-combatants. Working as a staff of the United Nations, my lived experience led to my academic engagement with violence, DDRR and ex-combatants. Based on the stories I heard in Liberia, my reviews of the extant literature left me unsatisfied that the voice of the ex-combatant was adequately captured. For example, many researchers constructed identities that included an explicit degree of mistrust and negativity

of ex-combatants. Labels such as "spoilers" (Stedman, 1997), "belligerents" (Krampe, 2009), "obstacles" (Hauge & Thoresen, 2007), and "drug addicts" (Collier, 2007) were used by researchers and DDRR evaluators. In Liberia, ex-combatants were generally viewed as "uprooted urban youth with a history of unemployment, underemployment, and idleness (Boas & Hatloy, 2008), prone to criminal behaviour (Abdullah, 1998).

While violence is a common feature, its intensity, forms of organization and motives vary. Violence may be seen as critical security challenge in fragile environment such as in Liberia where there is lack of capacity (effectiveness), and willingness (will, legitimacy) to perform key government functions for the benefit of all (OECD,2008:14). Violence and insecurity in post-conflict environments may prove to be adaptive and often very resilient. Post-conflict situations may be characterized as "no peace, no war" (MacGinty 2008) contexts where the use of violence might have been reduced but is nevertheless an option or a strategy for some actors. In this study, the term violence will be used only for direct physical violence as defined by the World Health Organization "The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation" (WHO, 2002:5). Even when adopting a limited definition for this research focus, violence shows very different and manifold forms and expressions. Distinctions can be made according to criteria related to organization, relationship, space and goals, based on:

1. The level of organization of the perpetrators: individual versus collective violence;

2. The relationship between victim and perpetrator: intimate versus anonymous violence;

3. The space where violence happens: domestic/private versus public or urban versus rural violence;

4. The goals violence is used for: economic, social, political violence (WHO, 2002:7).

The emphasis in this study is on political and economic violence motivations in Liberia, and this forms an important part of the analytical framework in chapter three.

Stovel (2008:310) expressed concern that rebel groups are portrayed as terrorists, while Metsola (2006) suggests the reason why ex-combatants are viewed with a great deal of suspicion, rather than focusing on their positive potential, is fear that their organizational capacity, strategic knowledge, and military skills might be used against the ruling class, and this fear extends to the international community and donor countries. Therefore, due to these pervasive negative images, ex-combatants may potentially, as Gergen (2009:59) states, become "morally condemned by the research". Outside observers, under the guise of objectivity, appear to have depicted the ex-combatants as a potential threat to their nation's future security and peace. Although this may not be totally baseless in certain historical contexts, as has been the case with Liberia and its neighbours, my lived experience in Liberia suggested to me that this perspective is quite different from the way in which ex-combatants view themselves. Stovel (2008:307), for example, questioned the international peace brokers' claim of the reconciliation process in Sierra Leone as successful, while her in-depth interviews with the ex-combatants themselves revealed a contradictory view.

Every single phase of violence is different from the others yet carries within it some elements of the old. My task here is to discern continuities and ruptures in the functions of violence within the socio-historical context of this study. The success of the DDRR efforts has been mixed. While previous studies focused largely on procedural aspects of post-conflict reconstruction and development, this study shifts the focus to understanding how violence is linked to DDRR and its participants. It aims to explore "militarized" masculinity and its impact on violence. A multiplicity of political, social, historical and economic agendas must be explored to simultaneously understand the dynamics of factors that produce violence. The demands that result from having to cope with a post-war context are multifaceted and inherently contradictory. It therefore seems appropriate to posit that though violence is socially constructed, the state still possesses distinctly pragmatic and expedient ways of responding to radical and economic problematics of violence. Thus, it

should be noted that the adaptive and coping style of ex-combatants in the post-war era could be ventilated through violence and this has implications for peace and development. The study argues that ex-combatants' dissatisfaction with DDRR could worsen their economic conditions, create conditions of insecurity, and elevate the level of violence in post-war Liberia.

The war in Liberia was fought for 14 years and remains one of the most painful problems of Liberian society. For various reasons, mainly of humanitarian concerns, it has attracted the attention of other states and of major international organizations globally. The conflict has been the subject of many journalists' descriptions and academic studies. The latter mostly include historiographical or political science analysis. Some authors provided anthropological backgrounds and they suggest valuable insights into Liberian war ethnography. The study is done primarily in the multidisciplinary framework of political science, sociological, anthropological, historical, and analytical conflict studies. I do not place my analysis into any holistic theory of conflict nor do I find any useful scholarly results in costly and widely claimed war-torn society projects. As Valery Tishkove observed, the weakness of dominant conflict theories lies primarily in their ontological vision of groups as collective bodies with 'needs', 'will', and 'universal motivations', not as a situation, a feeling, and a speech act or a criminal action. One view of these meta-approaches is that their real intention is to formulate prescriptions rather than produce new knowledge (Tishkove, 2001:12).

As is the case with post-conflict problematics, most research undertakings deliberately ignore any analytical value and prefer to use a kind of proxy 'group research' for organizing the very process of post-conflict reconstruction and development. I cannot claim to provide a complete response to Liberia's post-war problematic, but my aspiration is to bring clarity, to make contributions to the literature on violence, DDRR of combatants, that are profoundly different from what has been written on Liberia. This, I hope, will stimulate the intellectual debate on the part of those who have already invested their sentiments, intellect, and career in study of the Liberian cause. My primary goal is to bring to the fore the direct voices of the participants (ex-combatants) in the crisis, give vent to 'their' (marginalized) versions of the events, and to

compare them with my own understanding of the story as recorded in my collected data and observations.

In spite of the growing academic debate on violence and DDRR, our knowledge of this area remains limited. We lack sufficient insight regarding the myriad of activities – violence – which actors use in their efforts to revive, modify, or undermine peace. In particular, we lack the analytical tools for a better understanding of a violently divided society, within the context of "peace'. From a scholar – practitioner lens, there is a preponderance of policy research and minimal academic inquiry into the violence continuum, and the implications for post-conflict Liberia. Further rationale for the study is how to make sense of violence in peace time: its productive, destructive, and reproductive nature. In addition, from a participant observer perspective, there is a motivation to document my experiences of over ten years in Liberia, from the transitional arrangement to democratic governance regime, particularly on how violence has manifested at different levels. Also, little research has yet been undertaken to identify the specific risk factors that might condition the onset and nature of post-conflict armed violence, whether or not it erupts into outright war. The research is also relevant in trying to understand public perceptions that the strategy and implementation of the DDRR programme has infused a new wave of violence in post-conflict Liberia. The question may be asked: why the focus on ex-combatants as the primary participants in the research and not other post-war elements/groups such members of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), and other security personnel, who were disbanded under the security sector reforms established by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). In the restructuring and security sector component, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) referred to the disbanded group as those who may have problems with their educational, professional, medical, and fitness qualifications, as well as prior history of human rights abuses. Therefore, the disbanded category have been included in this study not strictly as ex-combatants, but because they continue to show the traits of ex-combatants, and sometimes express their grievances for being disbanded through violent protests in seeking for recompense. (Article VII CPA 2003).

I noted that the ex-combatant dimension in this study is important because, following the failed DDRR of the first Liberian civil war (1989-1997),

ex-combatants were massively re-mobilized to fight in the wars of 1997-1999;1999-2003, and remain a source of security concern in the post-war era, including engaging in acts of destabilization within the sub-region (New Democrat, 2012). The threat posed by ex-combatants in post-war situation due to failed or poor reintegration is probably a key factor preventing the achievement of durable peace. There are several reasons why ex-combatants are viewed as a major source of insecurity in post-conflict societies. First, they are often known to have military "know-how"; second, the experience and shooting skills, third, they are the most feared in the society; and fourth, their capacity to re-group and resort to violence. Beyond overcoming the threat from spoilers, the demobilization of ex-combatants and their reintegration into civilian life is the single most important sub-goal of peace implementation (Stedman, 2003:109). Ex-combatants pose the greatest threat to post-conflict societies when they re-engage in violence as members of illegal armed groups either operating openly or discretely outside the confines of the law. These types of violence not only inflict the greatest loss of lives and property, but also have the potential to undermine the legitimacy of the peace that has been achieved. Given the harmful effect that ex-combatants' activities can have on post-conflict stability; the international community has increasingly emphasized the resort to disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation (DDRR) of ex-combatants, as a key component towards lasting peace. In addition, the concept of peacebuilding has gained important recognition as a tool for post-war reconstruction and a number of initiatives have been launched to systematically collect and analyse best practices on DDRR. These include the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS) and the Stockholm Initiatives on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (SIDDR).

This research seeks to understand the nature of violence in post-conflict state and how peace can be achieved. Previous research in the field has generally discussed violence from a broader perspective, sometimes alluding to a continuation of war mentality, without looking at the specificity of causal factors. The systematic and empirical analysis of incidents and perpetrators will bring rigour to the conclusions. In addition to the academic gains from this research, furthering our theoretical and empirical knowledge of violence in post-

war settings is imperative. A flawed understanding of the phenomenon can lead to ineffective implementation of post-war reconstruction and development. The aim is that this study will result in a theory explaining which combination of incentives and contextual factors explains the motivation to engage in violence. Finally, the research hopes to make a clear contribution to the literature on violence and the DDRR of ex-combatants in a post-conflict environment.

Thesis Structure

Chapter 1: is the introduction that provides a description of the context of violence in a post-war environment, and Liberia in particular. It focuses on ex-combatants as the perceived perpetrators of violence. The chapter also provides an overview of the research problems, the genesis of the research, its objectives and rationale. It introduces the analytical framework of the study. **Chapter 2**: looks at previous research in order to understand more about the factors that influence the dynamics of violence in post-war environment. It therefore focuses on the discussion of civil wars and post-war violence, their interpretation, and the linkages between civil wars and post-war violence, which has made violence an important academic area of study. In this particular case, it is violence that is thought to be perpetrated by elements that were part of the peace agreement that ended the war. **Chapter 3**: discusses the analytical framework and conceptualizes violence in post-conflict settings. It explains in a broader context political economy and neo-patrimonialism, and in specific terms, how this led to institutionalized patterns of governance and helped in facilitating the occurrence of violence in Liberia. Importantly, the chapter discussed the four analytical framework praxis: *Re-marginalization; Re-criminalization; Exploitation; and Economic Insecurity* of ex-combatants. **Chapter 4**: discusses the research methodology and the approaches adopted in the collection of data. **Chapter 5:** This is the Liberia Case Study chapter which focuses on its political history and how it produced violence. It examines the nature of the domestic political economy, the outcome of DDRR for the participants and how they have created conditions for violence and its reproduction. **Chapter 6**: is the empirical chapter which presents and analyses the research data. **Chapter 7**: is the conclusion. The chapter provides a summary of key research findings and issues for further research.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the objectives and rationale for the study. I have also introduced the research question which identified key objects of the study, and in offering answers to this question I hope to make an important contribution to the literature on ex-combatants and violence in post-war Liberia. The research question also determines the selection of the methodology used in this study. The background information provided here sets the stage for the discussion of other chapters of the research, and in particular, it has provided an insight into the next chapter on what has been previously done in this field of study.

Chapter Two: Civil Wars and Post-War Violence – Previous Research

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the concept of civil wars, specifically in relation to the Liberian civil conflicts and the actors in the wars. The chapter is important because it explains the context in which wars have occurred, their causes and interpretations, as well as the fact that the actors being researched on are the product of the civil wars. Specifically, it explains the linkages between civil wars and post-conflict violence, and what motivates actors to engage in violence, particularly when looking at the successive wars in Liberia (1989 – 2013). The material profit gained in these wars by the participants sustained their occurrence, and arguably was key in the motivation and action in post-war Liberia. In other words, the chapter provides an understanding of why ex-combatants may find it necessary to re-engage in violence if they look back on the war years and feel that the spoils of war are not forthcoming in the post war era despite promises of better reintegration opportunities made to them at the end of the war.

Explaining Wars and Civil Wars

I will use the terms civil wars and civil conflicts interchangeably. Broadly, I try to explain the nature of wars and how they affect or are linked to the continuation of post-war violence. The first section of the chapter attempts to explain and analyse the meaning of civil wars from different perspectives. I discuss the broad categorizations of civil wars and the debates that have informed the interpretations of wars, as well as the consequences of wars on individuals, groups, nationally, and continentally. In this section, I try to conceptualize civil war, its interpretations, and then link it with the occurrence of violence in post-war eras. The chapter further discusses the extent and reach of violence, peace agreements and actors in peace negotiations, and the implementation of peace agreements in post war era.

Carl von Clausewitz (1976) wrote that war is a 'remarkable trinity: composed of primordial violence, hatred and enmity, which are to be regarded

as a blind natural force; of the play of chance and probability within which the creative spirit is free to roam; and of its element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone'. Clausewitz allocated each of these 'dominant tendencies' to a different group of people. The passions of primordial violence he attributed to 'the people'. Creativity, imagination, strategy, improvisation and adaptability are the preserve of armies and their commanders. Reason and policy is the domain of government. But I raise the question about Clausewitz's notion of 'reason and policy' by the government. For instance, can the government be reasonable in its decisions and policies without them having some negative impact on the population? What constitutes reasonability and what type of policy should be of interest to the society? However, Clausewitz went on to argue that no explanation of war that relies on one of these parts of the trinity would make sense. Only in their combination could they have an explanation:

> "These three tendencies are like three different codes of law, deep-rooted in their subject and yet variable in their relationship to one another. A theory that ignores any one of them or seeks to fix an arbitrary relationship between them would conflict with reality to such an extent that for this reason it would be totally useless. The task therefore is to develop a theory that maintains a balance between these three tendencies, like an object suspended between three magnets (Clausewitz" (1976:89).

Peace researcher Quincy Wright noted that:

> To different people wars have different meanings. To some it is a plague which ought to be eliminated; to some, a mistake which should be avoided; to others, a crime which ought to be punished; to still others, it is an anachronism which no longer serves any purpose. On the other hand, there are some who take a more receptive attitude towards war and regard it as an adventure which may be interesting, an instrument which may be useful, a procedure which may be legitimate and appropriate, or a condition of existence for which one must be prepared (Wright, 1964).

If wars are to be understood and, ultimately, overcome, we must agree as to what they are. Wright considered a war to have taken place either when it is formally declared or when a certain number of troops were involved; he suggested 50,000 as a baseline. Lewis Richardson (1999), another pioneering peace researcher, sought to define wars by the number of deaths incurred.

Singer and Small (1982) have focused on a minimal number of 1,000 combat-related fatalities. Whatever the technicalities involved, most people might agree that war can be described in much the same way as a jurist's observation about pornography: "I may not be able to define it, but I know it when I see it" (Barash and Webel, 2009:15). Psychologically, the essence of war is found in the intensely hostile attitude among two or more contending groups. Economically, war often involves the forced diversion of major resources from civilian to military pursuits. Sociologically, it frequently results in rigid structuring of society, with prominence given to military functions (ibid). Yet, some influential Western philosophers, including Hobbes and Hegel, have at times expressed views that seem to deem war as not merely natural but beneficial to humanity because, in Hegel's words (which are also a critique of Immanuel Kant's path breaking essay "Perpetual Peace"), "war prevents a corruption of nations which a perpetual, let alone an eternal peace would produce", (Hegel, 1942). Although this view may be in disrepute today, throughout most of the civilized world, the fact is that wars have frequently shaken up the existing, and often unjust, socio-political order and have resulted in many changes, not all of them for the worse. Finally, within the liberal school, war is viewed as a deplorable interruption in the linear progression of our species to a better, more peaceful world. Many liberal views on the reasons for war emphasize the role of misperceptions and cognitive errors, rather than human iniquity on the part of political leaders who initiate wars. War in their view is a blunder, the consequence of human fallibility: if decision makers would only operate more carefully and thoughtfully, most wars would be prevented (Barash and Webel, 2009: 37).

Other writers have tried to understand war in different motivations for different classes of people. First, there was the 'craving for power which characterizes the governing classes in every nation. This group is supported in its hunger for power by another group 'whose aspirations are on purely mercenary, economic lines. A third group arises because man has within him a lust for hatred and destruction (Nathan and Norden, 1960). This is only really possible because of the interplay of these three groups. Yet, others think differently, and emphasize the interdependence of motives. According to Christopher Cramer, all human motivation can be divided into two broad

categories: those that conserve and unify, and those that destroy and kill. "these are, as you perceive, the well-known opposites, Love and Hate, transformed into theoretical entities; they are perhaps, another aspect of those eternal polarities, attraction and repulsion, which fall within your province' (Cramer, 2006:5). However, there is no neat distinction between these two categories such that just one is involved in the promotion of violence and war. But, opinion remains divided on the attribution of motives or causes to specific types of individual or group. The challenge in trying to explain and make sense of violence and war, and their relationship to profound societal changes at local, national, regional and global levels, is to steer between mystifying and over-rationalizing. 'To counter pose the eroticization and "romanticisation" of violence by the same means or by forms equally mystical is a dead end (Taussig, 2004).

I will now discuss the categories of civil war. Those interested in violence in developing countries have been particularly concerned with the categories of 'civil war' in the light of its proliferation and manifestations. Civil wars are grouped together into one category and studied separately from other conflicts. Yet there may be more variation within a group of civil wars than between some civil wars and other cases of violent social conflict. How then, are civil wars defined? What order of diversity is there within the category of civil wars? And what kinds of overlap might there be between civil wars and other commonly used categories of conflict? Christopher Cramer has posited three criteria for categorization of civil wars. First, conflicts must involve fighting between agents of or claimants to a state and organized non-state groups from within the same country but seeking to replace the government, to secure power in a region or even secession from the country, or to change government policy. Second, to be classified as a civil war, a conflict of this type must produce enough deaths to cross the casualty threshold. Third, at least 100 of these deaths must be on the government side (Cramer, 2006:62) However, some classification exercises will allow into the camp of civil wars those which foreign troops are involved, so long as the other main criteria are satisfied, but others will treat a case like this as a distinct category of 'international internal wars'. The other important dimension to the understanding of civil wars is the debate about rules of entry.

Nicholas Sambanis put together a definition of civil wars, adopting nine criteria as follows: (1) the war must take place within the territory of an internationally recognized state with a population of more than 500,000. (2) The parties to the conflict must be politically and militarily organized, with identifiable leadership and publicly stated objectives – this enables the exclusion of organized crime. (3) The government must be a principal combatant – or at least, the party representing the government internationally and claiming government power must be involved as a combatant. (4) The main rebel group(s) must be locally represented and composed of local recruits, though there may be international involvement in the war. (5) The war is deemed to begin in the first year that the conflict causes 500-1,000 deaths and the war is only classed as a war if cumulative deaths over the next two years exceed 1,000. (6) The civil war must involve sustained violence, with no single year having fewer than twenty-five deaths and no three-year period having less than 500 conflict-related deaths. (7) The weaker party must be able at all times to inflict at least 100 deaths on the stronger party, though this criterion should be adjustable according to the overall insecurity of the war. (8) The war ends if it is interrupted by a peace treaty, cease-fire or decisive military outcome producing two years or more of peace. (9) If new parties enter the war fighting over new issues, a new war is then begun (Sambanis 2002a).

These definitions and rules of entry may have left out a lot of issues and raised questions for further academic debate. Some criteria may apply while others will not due to the dynamics in contemporary civil wars. For instance many civil wars have displayed in recent years characteristics of non-violence. For instance, from 2010 to present, the Arab Spring non-violent uprising resulted in the ouster of dictatorships in Tunisia, Egypt, and in Burkina Faso where the population rejected the continuous repressive rule of Blaise Campaore who was forced out of power. There are also ongoing struggles by unarmed civilian population in Syria and other Middle Eastern Countries. Thus if the modes and causes of contemporary warfare often resemble non-violence, that is, if wars are defined as 'apolitical' or 'criminal', this is one way in which the analytical category of civil war is unrealistic and problematic. Every society has its own characteristic form of war. What we tend to perceive as war, what policy makers and military leaders define as war, is, in fact, a specific

phenomenon which took shape in Europe somewhere between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, although it has passed through several different phases since then (Kaldor, 2012:15). However, Sambanis's postulation seeks to find a definitive idea of the contours of a civil war, and it appears that the effort is to understand civil wars through statistical analysis.

The above criterion resembles Peter Wallensteen and Karen Axell's three classifications of armed conflict:

1. Minor armed conflict: where battle related deaths during the course of conflict are below 1000
2. Intermediate armed conflict: where there are more than 1000 battle-related deaths recorded during the course of the conflict, and where more than 25, but less than 1000, deaths have occurred during a particular year.
3. Wars: where there are more than 1000 battle-related deaths during the course of a particular year (Francis, 2006:71)

However, Francis underscores the problematic nature of this categorization, particularly in the context of wars in Africa. He argues that it is not only difficult to secure reliable statistics on battle-related casualties, but these 'civilian-based' warfares have also induced starvation, disease and appalling human misery, resulting in deaths. Furthering his argument, he notes that civil wars also constantly swing from 'low-to high-intensity' warfare. The low-intensity period may sometimes last two to three years with fewer than 25 battle-related deaths for a variety of reasons, including cease-fire, an ongoing peace process and a relapse into further war (Francis, 2006-71-72).

Mary Kaldor (2012) described the new type of organized violence that developed in the twentieth century, especially in Africa and Europe, as 'new wars'. She outlined some of the features of 'new wars' as described in most literature, as internal or civil wars or else 'low-intensity conflicts'. Although most of these wars are localized, they involve a myriad of transnational connections so that the distinctions between internal and external, between aggression and repression, or even between local and global are difficult to sustain. Some scholars describe the new wars as privatized or informal wars (Keen, 1995),

yet, while the privatization of violence is an important element of these wars, in practice, the distinction between what is private and what is public, state and non-state, informal and formal, political or economic motives cannot easily be applied. A more appropriate term is perhaps 'post-modern', which is used by several authors (Duffield, 1999), and it offers a way of distinguishing these wars from the wars which could be said to be characteristic of classical modernity. However, the term is also used to refer to virtual wars and wars in cyberspace (Gray, 1997). A more recent term used by Frank Hoffman (2011), which has gained currency, particularly in the military, is 'hybrid wars', which captures the blurring of public and private, state and non-state, formal and informal that is characteristics of new wars.

Interpretations of civil wars

The crisis in the 1990's, notably the resistance to US intervention in Somali in 1992-3, and the Rwandan genocide of 1994 appear to some writers to signify that Africa had turned its back on progress and was sinking into an anarchy marked by savagery and superstition. Richburg (1997) stated: 'Welcome to Liberia, scene of one of the wackiest, and most ruthless of Africa's uncivil wars'. Stephen Ellis (2006) provided an analytical perspective on a number of influential works as dominant purveyors of the point of view that the Liberian civil war represented some sort of chaos. Ellis examined the essay of Robert Kaplan published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1994 entitled "The Coming Anarchy' which began with a discussion of war in Sierra Leone and a brief mention of Liberia before going on to consider Turkey, Pakistan, and other parts of the world. Kaplan's argument was that in various parts of what used to be called the third world, vast population movements from the countryside to the city, caused partly by environmental degradation and high birth-rates, were resulting in the appearance of large numbers of desperate, deracinated, unemployable youths who were the driving force behind wars like those in West Africa. Kaplan suggested that it could be that wars like these could soon be breaking out in other parts of the world too, and that West Africa was ahead of the trend. The writing of Kaplan received political applause, particularly in the United States, and in the Western world in general. In France, an academic had argued in

reference to the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, that Western civilization was once more threatened by warlike and aggressive barbarism at its gate (Ellis, 2006).

Contribution to this debate also came from Samuel Huntington in his article in *Foreign Affairs,* the house journal of the Washington foreign policy establishment, entitled "The Clash of Civilizations", in which he argued that, all over the world, wars between ideological blocks were now giving way to wars between broadly defined cultural blocks or civilizations (Huntington, 1993:22-49). According to Ellis, academics who specialize in African studies, as well as African intellectuals, almost all reject these views, (e.g Nuruddin Farah, 1996:60-70). Paul Richards, author of a study of war which spread to Sierra Leone from Liberia in 1991, suggests that the work of Kaplan and Huntington amounts to a school of thought concerning wars in Africa, and perhaps some parts of the world, which he terms the *New Barbarism thesis* (Richards, 1996:xiii-xxix).

Richards refutes this assertion by demonstrating that the causes of the war in Sierra Leone stem more from a collapse of the patrimonial state erected in the late colonial times than they do from either environmental decay or a crisis of cultural identity. He argues passionately that war is always horrible, and that this is so whether it is fought with machetes and light machine-guns, in which case killing is at close quarter, or with computer-guided bombs. "'It makes no sense to call one kind of war "barbaric", when all that is meant is that it is cheap" (Richards, 1996: xxv). His argument is that war is war and that attempts to portray West African wars as unusually barbaric amount to no more than the revival of some old clichés about the Dark Continent (ibid). But, Richards too has been criticized by other African scholars who accuse him of overlooking empirical evidence, and idealizing the main rebel movement in Sierra Leone while ignoring its cultural origin and assigning single causes to events which have complex roots (Abdullah and Bangura1997).

There is no doubt that the Western press (Richburg and Kaplan are Western Journalists) has generally represented the Liberia war with 'bizarre documentary-style coverage from the "Heart of Darkness" rather than news of a serious threat to international peace and security (Ellis, 2006:21). According to Ellis, those who would argue simply that wars such as that in Liberia are

represented by fickle journalists as being more anarchic than is really the case are missing a number of important points. The observation that wars like that in Liberia result from the breakdown of a specific political order begs question about why such an order breaks down, and why the resulting conflict takes a certain pattern. He contends that some African academics who have themselves lived through recent civil wars in the continent have suggested that the disruption of whole societies as a result of massive failures of social engineering may be a cause of violence in the continent, and that at least some African wars have to be understood as complex social phenomena (Ellis, 2006). In reality, many Liberians and other West Africans consider the Liberian war to have been particularly horrible. Ellis has documented the comments of one survivor as follows:

> "In all frankness the Liberian civil and guerrilla war topped and surpassed {all other wars} in form and character, in intensity, in depravity, in savagery, in barbarism and in horror. {…..} As far as the men behind the war were concerned, one should be forewarned that the world could be breeding a new species of mankind with no contrite hearts, with no compassion, with no regard for law and order and whose ambitions in life have no bounds at the perils of others. It has started off in Liberia, but one should beware that there are many more Charles Taylors and Prince Johnsons, the new species of human kind, around not only in Liberia, but in other places, especially in Africa today" (Ellis, 2006:21-22).

I then ask the question: was there any religious dimension to the Liberian civil war? Stephen Ellis's book entitled "*The Mask of Anarchy: The Destruction of Liberia and the Religious Dimension of an African Civil War*" probably provides an answer. Some of the acts of the Liberian civil war, have been considered particularly atrocious, in the views of many Liberians this reflects known repertoires of spiritual symbols. Most notably these repertoires are those relating to religion. In this book, Ellis noted that many of the main protagonists in the war have claimed, some with obvious sincerity, to have been in direct communication with God at various stages of their bloody careers. This is not just a personal quirk, but is situated in a history in which religious belief has functioned as a mainstay of political and social order. Religion, per se, is not the focus of this study, but it is important to underscore its inevitable role in

most African wars, particularly when the breakdown of a given political order is rooted in religion.

Faced with a post-Cold War decline in superpower support, both rebels and governments have sought alternative sources of revenue to sustain their military campaigns. In addition to the traditional means of pillage and plunder, the trade in lucrative natural resources, diaspora remittances, and the capture of foreign aid have become increasingly important sources of combatant self-financing (Ballentine and Nitzschke. 2005). Facilitated by weakly regulated globalization and weak states in the developing world, combatants benefit from business deals with criminal networks, arms traffickers, and unscrupulous corporate entities, reaching well beyond the war zones to the world's commodity markets and major financial centres (Duffield 1999). Given the role of lucrative natural resources in fuelling war economies, the term "resource wars" (discussed in chapter three) has become popular among analysts and policy makers. Some even see these as a new type of armed conflict (Colliers 2000; Renner 2002). More broadly, however, attention on the economics of conflict has found expression in the concept of "war economies". The distinctive features of war economies include, but are not limited to the following:

1. They involve the destruction or circumvention of the formal economy and the growth of informal and black markets, effectively blurring the lines between the formal, informal, and criminal sectors and activities;

2. Pillage, predation, extortion, and deliberate violence against civilians are used by combatants to acquire control over lucrative assets, capture trade networks and diaspora remittances, and exploit labour;

3. War economies are highly decentralized and privatized, both in the means of coercion and in the means of production and exchange;

4. Combatants increasingly rely on the licit or illicit exploitation of/trade in lucrative natural resources where these assets obtain;

5. They thrive on cross-border trading networks, regional kin and ethnic groups, arms traffickers and mercenaries, as well as legally operating commercial entities, each of which may have a vested interest in the continuation of conflict and instability (Ballentine and Nitzschke, 2005:2).

Viewing intrastate conflicts from a political economy perspective can improve understanding of the key dynamics of many of today's civil wars. It can also lead to a more systematic understanding of how these dynamics impact on conflict resolution and post-conflict peacebuilding. As such, the political economy of armed conflict should be seen as an important addition to contemporary conflict analysis and policy development by those in governments, international organizations, donor agencies, NGOs and the private sector who are concerned with war and peace.

In his book, *Uniting Africa: Building Regional Peace and Security Systems,* David Francis (2006) discussed the diverse theoretical interpretations and labelling that different writers have been used to explain and describe wars and armed conflict in Africa, in particular in the post-Cold War conflicts. He described them as 'protracted social conflict'; 'asymmetrical warfare'; 'civilian-based civil wars'; 'international social conflicts'; 'regional security complex'; 'fire next door'; 'complex political emergencies'; 'new wars'; 'ethno-religious wars'; 'retreat from modernity'; 'greed and grievances'; 'guerrilla/insurgency warfare'; 'low-intensity conflict'; and unconventional warfare; and what Kaldor (2012) described as technology-intensive old wars, etc.. These interpretations are sometimes used interchangeably depending on the particular context. They also have much to do with the different strategies, tactics, and war weaponry used in order to prosecute the war or conflict. The extent and reach of the Liberian civil war sometimes defy specific categorization and interpretation, and have been viewed from different contexts by different writers. Regrettably, there has not been a single inquiry into the historical sources and interpretation of wars in the Republic of Liberia. Most of the literature fails to examine the dynamics of conflict in the pre-1980 period. As a result, there are few comprehensive, authoritative, and convincing 'hypotheses about the causes and interpretations of conflict in Liberia. As Michael Brown stated:

> "One of the keys to advancing knowledge in this area will be the production of detailed case studies carefully focused on proximate causes of internal conflict – more specifically, on the precise moments when political disputes become violent confrontation. Most case histories lack sharp focus……. In short much work needs to be done" (Brown, 1997:25).

Brown's comments have particular significance to the case of Liberia because very few African states have endured the same number of domestic wars, revolts, and uprisings or have a comparable authoritarian tradition. In the light of this, it is essential to examine all the micro and macro-wars that characterized the republic. Generally such an approach is important because "existing literature on internal conflict is weak when it comes to identifying the catalytic factors" or the triggers of internal conflict (ibid), and the root of socio-political and core institutional factors that create enabling environments for the triggers. Therefore, the analysis presented in this study attempts to fill this gap in the literature and perhaps will serve as a framework for the study of conflict in other states that have similar legacies of minority rule, ethnic conflict, and a patrimonial establishment.

I begin by examining Levitt's (2005) horizontal and vertical nexus. The horizontal syllogism derives from the historical, social, cultural, political, and economic processes that have shaped Liberia's socio-political landscape since its theoretical inception. Its vertical logic stems from the linear and chronological examination of the eighteen conflicts that have taken place in Liberia. Both modes are intimately intertwined and join to provide a conceptual framework for determining the sources and interpretations of wars in the country. Primary attention has been given to the study of 'indigenous-settler' warfare with occasional reference being made to 'inter-indigenous' and 'inter-settler' war. Thus, these wars represent 'all' wars that resulted in fatalities between 1822 and 2003, including the 1980 coup d'état against the William Tolbert regime and the "Great War". The wars have been interpreted and labelled in different terms as 'Water Battles'; 'Settler Wars'; 'Settler Fish men Conflict'; 'Settler Battles'; 'Government Indigenous Wars'; 'Reunited Kingdom Revolution'; 'Kru Confederacy-Government Wars'; and the Great Wars; 1989-2003, etc. (ibid).

A further interpretation of wars relates to the "just war theory". War has been a central feature of civilization throughout recorded time and it is hardly surprising, therefore, that a concern with, or anguish over its moral justifications should feature so prominently across cultures, in so many past and present theories of morality. The term "just war theory" is usually employed to denote that specific body of moral doctrine found within Christianity, even though it can

be presented with different theistic bases as well as in purely secular terms (Evans, 2005:1). It is Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) who is generally credited with the completion of just war theory's secularization in his comprehensive treatment of a natural law-based account of international law in *The Law of War and Peace* (Grotius, 1925). His emphasis against defence or threatened or actual attack as the just cause for war acquired refocused meaning and increased resonance in the 17th century with the development of the modern state and the international system of state from the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia (Evans, 2005:4). Just war theory is no more an 'apology' or 'excuse' than it is supposed to be a purely descriptive explanation of why war has actually broken out. This is because if we excuse our doing of X, we are in general giving reasons for doing X when in fact X is not something that we should have done. There may be mitigating reasons that reduce our culpability in having done X, but they do not fully justify it; that is, they do not show that we should have done, or at least permissibly did, X after all. Just war theory identifies the grounds on which we may justify waging war, the reasons which give us warrant – good, legitimizing reasons – for this act (Evans, 2005:7). This has been frequently invoked as an excuse for waging war, when in fact there was no justification for such. Therefore, the theory or principle can be misused, and the propensity for misuse cannot in itself be a reason for rejecting it.

The diverse theoretical interpretations and generations of conflict analysis underscore the multi-dimensional and multi-level nature of conflict and its causes in Africa. Any analysis of the causes of conflict in Africa should involve an exploration of the root causes, and secondary and tertiary causes, the historical legacies and particular conflict situations, and external factors (Francis, 2006). Francis argued persuasively that this analysis should be combined with an analysis of the structures that predispose communities to violent conflict, in particular, the perceptions and meanings attributed to these institutions, events and policies, and how these are mobilized to instigate conflict. In addition, analysis of the causes and structures should also include analysis of the actors, that is, individuals, groups, community incentives and motivations at local, national, regional and international levels, and the dynamics of conflict, that is the changing nature of conflict and its destructive process, and how this reshapes perceptions of causes of war, transforms

relations and serves as a trigger for new armed conflict, or creates opportunities for resolution of conflict. Francis concluded with two important elements relevant to conflict analysis; these are, the role played by external factors and the link between poverty, underdevelopment and conflict. He noted that external factors continue to play considerable and, sometimes, decisive roles in instigating violent conflict in Africa. The development paradigms prescribed for Africa, in particular the latest stage of neo-liberal development orthodoxy, the 'Washington Consensus' Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) have instigated or exacerbated conflicts in Africa. The imposing of SAPs and their negative effects sparked, and in some cases fuelled, conflicts and hastened the collapse of states in Sierra Leone, Liberia, DRC, Somalia and Cote d'Ivoire. The international economic environment has in most cases aggravated the problems of these weak economies in that unfavourable trade restrictions and lack of access to the world market for primary producers, fluctuating terms of trade, increasing debt burden and debt service obligations have all contributed to the poor performance and devastation of African economies. This has inevitably produced increasing poverty and depressed social and development indicators.

Thus, developmentalists see a positive correlation between conflict and the nature and dynamics of under-development, hence the only way to prevent and reduce armed conflict and its 'associated pathologies of crime and terrorism' is to respond with development programs to remedy the underdevelopment malaise (Francis, 2006:85). Arguments have been made that poverty may not necessarily be a direct cause of conflict, it may however increase its probability. This is why the eradication of poverty is an overriding goal of the international community, led by the UNDP, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. The magnitude and expansion of poverty in Africa and the grave threat it poses to social, political, and economic stability makes it one of the biggest challenges facing the region. Recent estimates put the number of poor people living in Sub-Saharan Africa at 250 million, which is around 45 percent of the region's population. And poverty continues to spread in Africa at an alarming rate because of virtual stagnation of per capita income growth and limited prospects for economic growth (Kankwenda, et.al 2000).

Causes of civil wars – "Greed and Grievance Perspective"

In his discourse of conflict analysis, David Francis (2006) identified distinct types of war and armed conflict within the African context. These include; Wars of national liberation; Cold wars and proxy wars; Secessionist wars; Inter-state and conventional wars; Identity-based wars; and Resource-based wars. Where then does the Liberian civil war fall? The Liberian civil war is a combination of proxy war, identity-based war, and resource-based war, and to this one may add, though not included in Francis's typology, intra-state wars. Former President Charles Taylor of Liberia's surrogate war in Sierra Leone through the RUF-backed rebels, (Francis) the Samuel Doe orchestrated ethnic animosity between his Khran ethnic group (Grand Gedeh County), the Gio/Mano (Nimba County), and the Mandingos (cut-across counties), are examples of proxy, identity and resource-based wars. The inclusion of intra-state war is important and provides further clarity. Intra-state war is often linked to identity-based war. Here, however, I provide a different explanation. Identity-based war relates to a situation where one ethnic group tries to destroy another ethnic group in the same country. This could potentially be genocide rather than civil war. On the other hand, armed insurrections, internal struggles for power, and popular uprisings are intra-state conflicts regardless of whether they count as civil wars, because they all occur within a state. Thus, intra-state war can occur any time two groups in the same country have irreconcilable goals.

In the early 1990s and 2000s new theories emerged that depicted African wars as "resource wars" and this was driven by the logic of predation, greed, and grievances. Some of the wars that devastated African and extractive economies in the global south were described as "paradox of plenty" or "resource curse" (Karl, 1997). Perhaps no other work has had more impact on the policy discourse on economic causes of civil war than the econometric studies by Paul Collier, and his introduction of the "greed or grievance" dichotomy. Among the many important findings, the most widely reported was that a moderate to high natural resource dependence of a country (measured in terms of primary commodity exports as part of GDP) is correlated with a higher risk of conflict. According to his controversial "greed thesis", economic motivations and opportunities ("loot-seeking") are more highly correlated with

the onset of conflict than ethnic, socio-economic, or political grievances ("justice-seeking"). This led to the hypothesis that resource wealth makes rebellion feasible by providing the opportunity and even the motivation for rebellion. As far as grievances are concerned, Collier asserts that they amount to little more than a rebel discourse used to mask and to justify their predatory activities among those whose support they seek (Collier and Hoeffler 2000; Collier 2000). The idea that civil war is driven by rebel greed was particularly appealing to some policy-makers, discouraged by the complexity and seeming intractability of "ethnic" and religious conflicts of the early 1990s. If many contemporary conflicts are driven by contests over economic resources, then "resource wars" should be more amenable to resolution than conflicts over such indivisible identity issues as ethnicity, religion, or ideology. The greed thesis shaped politics as well as policy, as corrupt and repressive leaders in conflict countries found in it a useful argument to deflect attention from their own wrong-doings by putting the blame for their countries' misery on "greedy rebels".

Proponents of the greed and grievance theories like Collier and Hoeffler are of the view that protagonists of war such as strong men, warlords, rebel forces and combat-mobilisable youths are driven by the enormous economic opportunities presented by lootable natural resources in "war economies" as opposed to what many previous analysts have identified as objective or genuine grievances – e.g. political exclusion, marginalization and repression, social and legal injustice, etc. However, natural resources do not always play a primary role in starting armed violence. Conflict erupts for a variety of inter-related reasons, but can be perpetuated by greed when a state is weak and unable to protect its porous borders from state and non-state armed combatants (Fearon, 2004; UN, 2001). Collier's greed and grievance thesis of lootable and non-lootable components is presented in table 1 below:

The types of resources and how "lootable" they are also shapes the nature of conflicts. Easily lootable resources – for example, minerals and diamonds – tend to encourage conflict for non-secessionist purposes, such as in Liberia, while in South Sudan, non-lootable resources – such as mineral ores and oil – tend to encourage secessionist conflicts (Ross, 2004).

	Separatist Conflicts	Non-Separatist Conflicts
Lootable Resources	**Burma**- *timber, gems, opium*	**Afghanistan** - *gems, opium* **Angola (UNITA)** – *diamonds* **Cambodia** – timber, gems **Colombia** – *opium, coca* **DRC** – *coltan, diamonds coffee* **Liberia** – *timber, diamonds, cocoa, coffee, marijuana, rubber, gold* **Peru** – *coca* **Sierra Leone** – *diamonds*
Unlootable Resources	**Angola (Cabinda) –** *oil* **Indonesia (Aceh) –** *natural gas* **Indonesia (West Papua) –** *copper, gold* **Papua New Guinea –** *copper, gold* **Sudan –** *oil*	**Angola (UNITA) –** *oil* **Colombia –** *oil, gas* **Congo Republic –** *oil* **DRC –** *copper, cobalt*

Table 1: Resource Wealth, Lootability, and Types of Conflict (adapted from Ballentine and Nitzschke, 2005).

GREED AND GRIEVANCE AND CONFLICT ANALYSIS

LOCAL, NATIONAL, REGIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL

AGENCY

MARKETS
REFUGEES
SUBSISTENCE
FARMERS

E.g. ECONOMIC
ACTORS
REBELS
MNC'S
MARKET

GREED/GRIEVANCE
OVERLAP
TRIANGLE

LIVELIHOODS
POWER
INEQUALITY
ENVIROMENTAL JUSTICE
TIMBER, OIL, FISH

CIVILIANS

OVERLAP
Greed & grievance

SUSTAINABLE
ENVIROMENTAL
MANAGEMENT
E.g. Land Tenure
Rights and
Government
Policy

MINERAL
METALS
DIAMONDS

NATURAL RESOURCE
GOVERNANCE
E.g. mineral rights

LAND
WATER

| Grievance | CONFLICT | Greed |

POPULATION
GROWTH
HUMAN
MOVEMENT

CLIMATE
CHANGE

ENVIROMENTAL
FACTORS

NATURAL RESOURCE
FACTORS/ENDOWMENTS

Lootable
Non/lootable

NATURE OF
THE STATE

IDENTITY

WEAK/
UNACCOUNTA-
BLE

SECURITY

DEVELOPMENT
GOVERNANCE

BRODER
POLICY

POLITICAL ECONOMY

35

Diagram 1: Greed and Grievance, and Conflict (adapted from Alida Kok, et.al 2009)

The diagram above explains the greed, grievances and conflict framework. The right side of the diagram focuses on natural resource factors and 'greed'. It highlights the importance of natural resource governance, the capacity of the state and the control of borders. The left side of the diagram highlights environmental factors and 'grievances'. Here, sustainable environmental management is central. The triangle indicates the overlap of the two factors, as the merging of greed and grievance. Factors such as timber, oil and fish relate to both greed and grievance. The triangle also contains concepts that apply to both greed and grievance in conflicts, such as livelihoods, power, inequality and environmental justice. Also in the overlap, the agency of refugees, subsistence farmers, armed factions and local, regional, and international markets, and MNC's are critical. Concerns about political and economic governance, displayed on the outer layer apply to all types of conflict. In general, the diagram considers that conflicts and the factors that may fuel them can play out at the local, national, regional and international levels. Essentially, the framework, as shown in the diagram above: *Greed and Grievance and Conflict Analysis*, acknowledges the distinctions between greed and grievance, while addressing the overlap of greed and grievance, which fuels conflict. This diagram is not exhaustive, but is an effort to explain the possible linkages of greed and grievance factors in most African civil wars.

However, among scholars - and not only those who distrust the reductionist tendencies of quantitative studies - there has been growing recognition of the methodological and analytical shortcomings of the greed thesis that renders Collier's findings and interpretations problematic (Francis 2006; Ballentine 2003; Ballentine and Nitzschke 2003; Berdal 2003 and 2004).

Leading this scholarly argument is David Francis, who sees Collier's "greed and grievances" thesis as an over-simplification of the causes of conflict in Africa. He commented extensively on the apparent gaps in Collier's postulation, and in particular, stressed that the popularization of the 'greed and grievance thesis is not helpful in conflict analysis in Africa.' Below are salient points of

Francis's argument and how they may fit into the Liberian situation, and conflicts elsewhere in Africa:

1. There is a neglect of the importance of fundamental grievances such as socio-economic inequality, political repression and social fractionalization of communities.

2. In the so-called proxy economies such as Sierra Leone, DRC and Angola, evidence shows the importance of grievance as the root cause of conflict rather than 'greed'.

3. Although greed plays a role in fuelling and prolonging wars in Africa to single it out is too simplistic, and no single interpretation can explain conflict situations in Africa.

4. Identity-based and resource-based analyses of conflict have demonstrated the greatest potential for spill-over of effects of civil wars or the regionalization of domestic armed conflicts.

5. No two conflicts are the same despite some commonalities, and there is a need to focus on a case-by-case understanding of conflict within the framework of identity and resource-based analysis (Francis, 2006).

The conflict in Liberia is often described as a 'resource war'. Looking more closely, however, one can find more differentiated reasons. During the dictatorship of President Samuel Doe, access to political decisions was monopolized by the clan of the President and its ethnic group. The exclusion, both socially and politically, from power due to ethnic considerations played a leading role in the cause of the conflict. After the overthrow of Doe, the conflict became increasingly 'commercialized' and criminalized by rival warlords who financed their activities through looting resources. The end of the conflict was characterized by more political activity when the rebel movements LURD and MODEL, and those parts of society and ethnic groups represented by them, again fought against the monopoly of power by Charles Taylor. This example illustrates how political and economic reasons for a conflict can be superimposed on each other and can take turns in the framework of one or more transformation processes.

The categories 'greed' and 'grievance' represent the difference between conflicts that are driven by profit from lootable resources and conflicts which can be traced back to political and social opposition. The dichotomy 'greed vs.

grievance' must not, however, be allowed to lead to reductionist attempts at finding an explanation for the conflict. Critics, for instance, blame the UN for having concentrated far too much on the 'greed' approach in the mid- 1990s in the framework of their efforts to bring peace to Sierra Leone and Angola, thus neglecting underlying socio-political causes for and the complexity of the conflicts. A differentiated analysis therefore has to ask questions beyond the immediately visible motives for a rebellion, questions about the condition of state structures at the time the conflict started and possible hidden reasons for conflict.

In the case of Liberia, the deepening of the crisis which then made it unique was founded in what I have referred to as three predatory factors: first, a patrimonial order established at the mid-nineteenth century which reposed considerable powers in the presidency and has been sustained in a neo-patrimonial order; second, presidential autocracy (partly derived from the constitution) which fostered violence; and third, brutal dictatorship whose excesses accelerated the disintegration of the Liberian social order. This occurred at a time when significant change in the global order provided opportunities for the emergence of a gangster regime that inflicted terror in Liberian society and ignited violent conflict in the entire Mano River basin area. Perceived to be presenting no threat to international peace, gangster rule gained international acquiescence and, with the support of the international community, was legalized through elections (of Taylor) in which ordinary Liberians were constrained to surrender their struggle for freedom and democracy in exchange for a period of peace. Such a trade-off brought neither peace nor unchallenged control by the government, instead it created conditions for continued violence not only in Liberia but also in the wider Mano River basin area (Sawyer, 2005). These tragic developments are readily visible and well known. For instance, Kamara (2003:1) argued that Liberia link to the conflict in Cote d'Ivoire shows the extent to which Liberian remains at the centre of regional instability.

Other writers have also criticized Collier's "greed and grievances" thesis. Ballentine and Sherman (2003.) point to a danger in inferring individual motivations from statistical correlations. The mere fact that combatants engage in predatory economic activities is seldom a reliable guide to their central dispositions. While some may participate in war economies to "do well out of war" others may do so out of the sheer need to survive, while still others may be

coerced for their labour and land. Furthermore, individual motivations may change over time as conflicts mutate. Conflicts that begin as predominantly "grievance"-based may over time be complemented and, for some, even surpassed by pecuniary motives. In fact, such mutation can be witnessed in the protracted conflicts of Colombia and Angola. Determining just which motivations matter where and when requires more careful categorization of different behaviours and empirical validation (Ballentine and Sherman 2003).

Much of the early research, and explicitly that of Collier, was overly "rebel centric", neglecting the role of the state both as an actor and institution in causing or prolonging conflict. The unexplored assumption was that "rebels - not state actors cause conflict", leading to a pro-state bias in analysis and policy action. Theories of rebellion thus provide only an incomplete picture of conflict onset. Neglecting an analysis of state behaviour may in fact legitimize repressive and corrupt state elites who may also profit from war at the expense of the population. Indeed, this state bias was evident in UN sanctions efforts to curtail the trade in conflict diamonds, which are narrowly defined as diamonds used by rebel movements or their allies to finance conflict aimed at undermining legitimate governments (United Nations 2001). Again, for some observers many of today's insurgencies, such as the so-called, "narco-guerrillas" in Colombia, have evolved into criminal enterprises and should be treated accordingly (Collier 2000). Yet, however much insurgency and criminality overlap in today's conflicts, they are not the same. Whereas criminal organizations employ violence in the sole pursuit of profit, experts agree that combatant groups engage in economic activities to pursue military and political goals (Gutiérrez Sanin 2003). Casting rebellion as a merely criminal rather than political activity may foreclose opportunities for diplomatic solutions. The opportunity structure for rebellion does not depend on the availability of resources per se. Rather, critical governance failures are the mediating variable. Systemic corruption and the inequitable distribution of resource rents, patrimonial rule, and the systematic exclusion of ethnic or other minority groups ("horizontal inequalities") can create conditions conducive to the onset of conflict (Steward 2003; Nafziger and Auvinen 2003). At the same time, the corrosive effects of resource rents – often called the resource curse – on the relative military, political, and economic strength of a state make rebellion more feasible (Ross 1999). The weaker the state, the more feasible becomes rebellion,

whether the goal is to overthrow a kleptocratic system or simply to get a piece of the pie.

While the availability of lucrative natural resources has important consequences for conflict dynamics, explanations of conflict should avoid "resource reductionist" models in favour of more comprehensive approaches that focus on the wider range of political and economic interactions that drive conflict. Indeed, qualitative studies suggest that economic motives of self- enrichment and economic opportunities for insurgent mobilization are not the sole or even primary cause of conflict. Rather, the outbreak of conflict tends to be triggered by the interaction of economic motives and opportunities with socio-cultural, political, and economic grievances (Ballentine and Sherman 2003). Broadly, three arguments have been put forward to further explain the causes of civil war, namely; the cultural argument, the economic argument, and the political-regime explanation (Woodward, 2007).

Cultural argument: For the proponents of this position, the root causes of civil war are cultural differences and especially political discrimination against minorities defined in cultural terms – leading some to adopt the general term 'grievance' for the cause. It is often summarized as 'ethnic conflict'. By this argument, cultural pluralism or divided societies are violence-prone due to long standing primordial identities (sometimes called 'ancient hatred') and recurring conflicts over status, treatment and rights between groups so identified (Peterson, 2002; Kaufman 2001; Gurr 2000). For some analysts, these identities are not given, but socially or politically constructed, and thus the source of the conflict is not different per se, but political leaders called 'ethnic entrepreneurs' who manipulate identities and feelings of discrimination by appeals to nationalism in ethnically heterogeneous societies for political gain (Gagnon 1994/95; Mansfield and Singer 1995).

Economic argument: Collier and his colleagues began their analysis with the motivation for rebels and the opportunities for their action. They argued that civil war is caused by 'greed' and the opportunity provided by war 'to loot', especially where huge profits could be made from natural resources like diamonds or timber, called 'resource predation'.

Political regime argument: In this framework, civil war is caused by authoritarian rule, or the absence of democracy. Public attention to this argument may well have more to do with its strong affinity to an equally public argument during the

1990's, that of democratic-peace theory in international relations, but its empirical base is the minorities-at-risk and Polity datasets developed at the University of Maryland by Ted Robert Gurr and associates (1993; 2000) and the political problems of culturally fragmented or polarized societies. Further argument is that 'partial democracies' and a particular sequence of democratization, not the process of democratic transition in general, are most prone to political instability and even violence (Goldstone et.al. 2005).

Finally, in spite of these criticisms, the greed versus grievance debate made important contributions to the study of civil war and to policy development. The quantitative studies undertaken by Collier and others have played an important role in advancing more systematic research and policy analysis on the much- neglected economic dimension of violence and civil wars. Importantly, they have established civil wars as a subject for economic research beyond the prior focus on measuring the costs of war and peace. According to Ballentine and Nitzschke (2005) by using the methods of rational choice in conflict analysis, both the functionalist and the greed models of civil war offer a powerful counter-argument to the "ancient hatred" explanations of conflict popular in both research and policy discourse in the mid-1990s. And the focus on the role of natural resource wealth rather than scarcity as a permissive cause of armed conflict provides an important new explanatory framework for studies of war and peace, and underscores the conflict prevention potential of development policies that target strategies of economic diversification.

Link between Civil Wars and Post-War Violence

This section discusses how violence in times of war-ended, is linked to post-war violence. Violence during civil war manifest in different forms. Research on civil war sometimes overlooks the issue of violence. Most studies have focused, explicitly or implicitly, on the causes of civil war (Skocpol 1979; Tilly 1978), civil war termination (Walter 1997; Licklider 1993), the political and social consequences of civil war (Rich and Stubbs 1997), the factors accounting for the success or failure of the belligerents (Race 1972; Leites and Wolf 1970), and the individual and group motivations underlying rebellion (Popkin 1979; Scott 1977). Violence is a key political resource in the conduct of civil wars. One of the major (if not the major) aspects of civil war, violence against (and between) *civilians*,

has been severely neglected. The centrality of violence in civil wars has been emphasized by observers and participants alike since Thucydides, who describes the civil war in Corcyra (Greece) as a situation in which "there was death in every shape and form.

In modern civilization, since about 1500, Quincy Wright (1942-1965), found there had been at least 284 wars and some 3,000 battles. He defined a battle as involving more than 2,000 casualties on land or more than 500 at sea; a war was a hostile encounter which involved more than 50,000 troops or which was legally declared as war (Van der Dennen 1981), but he warned that there were inadequate measures of human violence. According to Lewis Richardson, there were at least 59 million deaths from human violence between 1820 and 1946, of which fewer than 10 million were attributable to individual and small-group violence; the remainder occurred as a result of wars (Richardson, 1999). During civil wars, there are direct and indirect casualties. Direct casualties involve deaths recorded during fighting in the battle field with the use of weaponry and other lethal means. War kills indirectly, particularly by diseases among armed forces personnel as well as by starvation as a result of disrupted food production and distribution services. For example, more than eight million soldiers and one million civilians died during World War 1, with approximately 18 million additional people dying during the influenza epidemic of 1918. Historically, in fact, more soldiers died of diseases and of exposure than from enemy fire (Barash and Webel 2009:16).

According to Francis (2006), the widespread wars in Africa have led to forced migration and massive refugee flows, i.e. 'push-factor. Ethno-religious persecution, political oppression, the search for economic and employment opportunities (the 'pull-factor'), environmental degradation, and natural disasters such as flood, drought and famine have led to large-scale migrations. An estimated 13 million people are internally displaced in Africa, with 4 million in Sudan. Population movements and refugee flows have created insecurities and also threatened the peace and security of the continent. In several cases, it has led to violence and tension between communities and threatened the economic security of the recipient state, with a huge burden on domestic social services and infrastructure. Apart from the migration and environmental conditions occasioned by wars, at the domestic level, civil wars not only lead to deaths, destruction of

property, and looting, they are also sources of mass poverty, hunger, disease and suffering among the population. In some instances civil war produces fundamental social changes, which in turn erode the whole social context of religion and lead people to abandon their established religion and turn to new beliefs and rituals. The internationalization of civil wars with the involvement of different actors with different interests ranging from the support of an incumbent to protecting business interests, supply/sale of arms, exploitation of natural resources, protection of foreign nationals, expression of neo-colonial support, and the eventual multinational peacekeeping intervention, all lead to the degrading or erosion of national sovereignty.

The most important consequences of state failure and the resultant violent conflict can be seen in the toll they have taken on human beings, especially the magnitude of conflict-related deaths, injuries, and displacements. Though no scientific count has been taken, an estimated 200,000 people are said to have died, hundreds of thousands more were wounded, and about 1.8 million were displaced, more than half of whom were internally displaced in the Liberian civil war (Sawyer, 2005:42). When considered against the background of Liberia's total population of 2.6 million at the outset of the conflict in 1989, these figures paint a picture of immense loss. Human toll of such proportions can be staggering for any country. The sad fact is that several other African countries have experienced losses of human lives of comparable magnitude. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, nearly 4 million people, or 6 per cent of the population, died from war-affected causes between 1998 and 2004 (IRC 2004). Rwanda lost about 4 per cent of its population to genocide and war-related causes between 1994 and 1999. Two million Sudanese, accounting for 6 per cent of that country's population, have perished as a result of war since 1983; and over the last decade, Angola has lost about 12 per cent of its population to war-related causes (ibid). In the Sudan, particularly in Darfur, millions of displaced and prematurely deceased civilians have been casualties of a multisided civil war (ibid). The extraordinary horror and the impact of wars derive from their extraordinary violence and the scale and intensity of needless human sufferings that result.

A high level of displacement was also sustained in Liberia for several years. More than 40 per cent of Liberia's population was internally and externally displaced from 1991 to 1997. Hundreds of Liberians lived in refugee villages in

Guinea, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, and Nigeria. By 2003, more than 400,000 people had been displaced; 280,000 of these were refugees in neighbouring countries. At the same time, Liberia became host to Ivoirian refugees and continued to host Sierra Leone refugees (Sawyer, 2005:44).

A fundamental problem in the study of civil war violence is the dearth of systematic and comprehensive data. Although, I have indicated some data earlier, however in the case of Liberia there are missing data on the civil war, particularly those related to the exact numbers of deaths, displaced, ethnic and religious fractionalization of rebel groups etc. For these reasons, records of the wars were based on estimation, accounts for the difficulty in gathering such data. Competing sides have a vested interest in minimizing the atrocities they have committed or are committing, and inflating those committed by their adversary; civil wars tend to be decentralized processes often taking place in remote areas of poor countries where few means of communication are available even in times of peace; as a result, an important proportion of violence remains invisible and under-reported. The rural societies in which civil wars typically take place lack adequate "record-keeping" institutions even in times of peace. The obstruction of systematic investigation is reinforced by a number of additional factors once the war has ended. These range from the unwillingness of the war's winners to allow an investigation of the violence they are responsible for, to the reluctance of social and political actors on both sides to stir painful and potentially hazardous, memories (Fernández 1996). However, human rights organizations continue to strive in collecting information and publicizing human rights violations, as well as the "truth and reconciliation commissions" formed in a few countries after the end of the war, such as in Guatemala, El Salvador, South Africa, and in Liberia (ibid).

One feature that sets interstate and civil wars apart is that in the latter civilians are the primary and deliberate targets: at least eight out of ten people killed in contemporary civil wars have been civilians (Kriger 1992:1). What is more, violence in civil wars is frequently exercised between people who already know each other and have had a long record of peaceful interaction: neighbours, friends, even relatives. The great majority of civil wars are fought as "irregular" or "guerrilla" wars. Usually, there are two competing actors: insurgents and incumbents. On the one hand, incumbents tend to rely on regular armies which undertake large 'mopping-up' operations to eliminate pockets of insurgency.

Insurgents, on the other hand, shy away from direct confrontation and rely on ambush and attacks against isolated garrisons in order to set-up "liberated areas" or "bases" (Kalyvas, 2000:5).

Contrary to conventional war, civil war displays a 'triangular' character. This is a war that involves not just two (or more) competing actors, but also civilians. Civilian support (or collaboration) matters for the outcome of the conflict. Civil war is, hence, fundamentally different from conventional war in that it involves little military action between combatants, and much action, military or non-military, in which civilians play a prominent role. Although material and non-material benefits matter in initial stages of the war, once violence escalates individual survival becomes the main priority for most people irrespective of their political preferences. Most civilians will come to increasingly value their own survival and this consideration will weigh on the choices they will make. Nordstrom (1992:266) quotes a peasant from Mozambique: "The only ideology the *people* have is an anti-atrocity ideology." Likewise, as the war develops, violence becomes an increasingly important tool (often even the only one) in civil war; and as violence escalates, even political actors who initially emphasize selective incentives, be they material goods or ideological ones, also need to resort to violence in order to "match" their opponent's violence. In short, the central effect of civil war is the primacy of violence as a political resource, "the virtual equation of power and injury" (Berry, 1994: xix)).

Incumbents and insurgents rely on a variety of. In the course of civil wars, political actors tend to escalate the violence they use. They also switch from more indiscriminate to more selective violence. Political actors don't want to use violence in haphazard ways because doing so is counterproductive. They follow Machiavelli's recommendation that punishment "should be used with moderation, so as to avoid cause for hatred; for no ruler benefits by making himself odious" (Kalyvas, 2000:6-7). However, not all political actors behave this way, as some may become excessive in meting out punishment and ignore the potential consequences of their actions. There is an intersection between two key attributes of violence: its purpose, and its production. Mass political violence can be used to achieve primary compliance or extermination (physical or spatial); and it can be produced in a unilateral or a bilateral (in some cases multilateral) fashion.

Political actors may intend to govern the people against whom they are using violence, or they may not. In the second case, the purpose of violence is exhausted by its use, whereas in the first, it lies in the purposive creation of fear: violence is a means, not an end; a resource, not the final product. Violence is, then, a tool for shaping individual behaviour by attaching a cost to particular actions. This is often called "terror." (Kalyvas, 2000:3). The second distinction focuses on the production of violence: it may be provided unilaterally when only one actor uses violence, or it may be provided bilaterally, when two actors rely on violence. The intersection of the two attributes generates four categories of mass political violence: state terror, genocide and (ethnic) cleansing, 'reciprocal extermination', and civil war violence (ibid). The unilateral use of terror by the state to enforce compliance is known as state terror. Mitchell, et.al (1986:5) define it as government by intimidation, which "involves deliberate coercion and violence (or the threat thereof) directed at some victim, with the intention of inducing extreme fear in some target observers who identify with that victim in such a way that they perceive themselves as potential future victims. In this way, they are forced to consider altering their behaviour in some manner desired by the actor".

Every conflict has its own history, dynamics, and stakeholders. Yet, those seeking to end wars and avoid their recurrence need to ask several questions. Who are the key actors that participate in war economies?. I am discussing the economy because of the importance it holds for actors and how the resources of the economy serves as a motivation and incentive for war and peace. What motives do they have for their participation in war economies? What incentives do they have to seek peace? Who controls the means of violence? To adequately assess the different functions of war economies, Goodhand proposes a particularly useful taxonomy of "combat", "shadow", and "coping" economies (2004:155). While empirically overlapping, each of these economies encompasses a distinct set of actors, motivations, and economic activities that can have qualitatively different implications for conflict resolution and post-conflict peacebuilding. This is further explained in table 2 below. The combat economy is based on economic interactions that directly sustain actual combat. It is dominated by a variety of actors, including the security apparatus of the state (military, para-military groups, police) and rebel groups, as well as domestic and

foreign "conflict entrepreneurs" who supply the necessary weapons and military material. Generally, the combat economy serves to fund the war effort of these actors as well as to achieve military objectives (Brömmelhörster and Paes 2003). The preferred means of resource generation include predatory taxation of licit and illicit economic activities, extortion of local businesses, control over the exploitation of natural resources, imposition of "customs" in border areas or setting up roadblocks, sale of future resource exploitation rights to foreign companies, or the capture of foreign aid.

	The Combat Economy	The Shadow Economy	The Coping Economy
Who? *Key Actors*	Commanders, "conflict entrepreneurs", fighter, suppliers of weapons and materials.	Profiteers, transport sector, businessmen, drug traffickers, "downstream" actors (truck drivers, poppy farmers)	Poor families and communities
Why? *Motivations and incentives for War and Peace*	To fund the war efforts or achieve military objectives Peace may not be in their interest as it may lead to decreased power, status, and wealth Fighters may have an interest in peace if there are alternative sources of livelihoods available	To make a profit on the margins of a conflict. Peace could be in their interest if it encourages long-term investment and licit entrepreneurial activity Peace requires alternatives to the shadow economy; otherwise a criminalized war economy will become a criminalized peace economy	To cope and maintain asset bases through low-risk activities, or to survive through asset erosion Peace could enable families to move beyond subsistence

How? *Key Activities and Commodities*	Taxation of licit and illicit economic activities; money, arms, equipment, and mercenaries from external state and non-state supporters: economic blockages of dissenting areas; asset stripping and looting; aid manipulation.	Smuggling of high-value commodities; mass extraction of natural resources; Hawalla (currency order and exchange system); aid manipulation.	Employment of diverse livelihood strategies to spread risk; subsistence agriculture; petty trade and small businesses; on-farm and off-farm wage labour; labour migration and remittances; redistribution through family networks; humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance.

Table 2: Economies, Actors, Motives, and Activities during Armed Conflict (adapted from Ballentine and Nitzschke, 2005:8).

The shadow economy (sometimes called "black market economy") encompasses the broad range of informal economic relationships that fall outside state-regulated frameworks. Key actors are a range of less scrupulous "conflict profiteers", including mafias and criminals, who seek to benefit from the business opportunities that open up in highly unregulated and chaotic war situations. Profit margins are further widened under sanction regimes, where those with coercive power and the right connections can gain significantly from cross-border smuggling activities, such as in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, and the Balkans (Ballentine and Nitzschke, 2005:8).

Frequently, the shadow economy is already widespread before the outbreak of conflict and is a permissive factor for conflict when it contributes to violent state collapse or serves as a source of income to would-be-rebels. Once conflict erupts, shadow economies are easily captured by combatants and, thus, often become the basis for the combat economy. This was the case with the highly corrupted and informalised diamond industry in Sierra Leone, which provided easy loot for the rebels of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and their sponsor, Liberian warlord-turned-president, Charles Taylor (Goodhand 2004:9; Pugh, Cooper & Goodhand 2004). In Kosovo, the informal economy based on smuggling activities and diaspora remittances had long sustained Ibrahim Rugova's peaceful resistance against the regime in Belgrade. Equipped

with arms smuggled from neighbouring Albania, however, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) increasingly gained control over these economic activities to finance its armed rebellion (Goodhand 2004).

The coping economy comprises those numerous economic interactions during armed conflict that provide benefits to the civilian population, particularly the poor and most vulnerable. These functions are even more important to civilian livelihoods where the formal economy and traditional livelihoods are destroyed or rendered impossible to sustain (Mwanasali 2000; Collinson 2003). This was the case in eastern DRC, where swathes of arable land have been ruined by coltan exploitation and where a consolidation of large landholdings has occurred under cover of conflict. Often, coping economies are centred on lootable resources, such as coca and poppy cultivation in Colombia and Afghanistan, and gold and coltan in the DRC. The coping economy also includes subsistence agriculture, petty trade and cross-border smuggling, or diaspora remittances that help civilians and their families to survive. Essentially what I am explaining here is that, there are different sorts of actors in the war economy.

Finally, post-war contexts provoke vital questions about how to make society move on after years of destruction. In countries like Liberia and Sierra Leone, there have been discussions in policy and academic circles about how these countries should promote reconstruction of broken relations, of local communities, of families and individuals after years of suffering. How can former enemies learn to live together again? And how should war criminals be dealt with? These are questions that tend to be addressed by Peace Agreements.

Civil War Peace Agreements

Peace agreements are defined as "arrangements entered into by warring parties to explicitly regulate or resolve their basic incompatibility" (Wallensteen & Sollenberg, 1997). Bell distinguishes among three types of peace agreements: pre-negotiation, framework/substantive and implementation (2000:25). Following Galtung's distinction between 'negative' and 'positive' peace, where negative peace is the "absence of violence (and) war" and positive peace is the "integration of human society" (1996:31-32), a peace agreement can be considered 'successful' if it has been 'sustainable' or 'durable'. Emphasis can,

therefore, be placed on negative dimensions of peace, focusing on the conflict behaviour of belligerents in an effort to explain conditions under which violence can be terminated. It can also be placed on positive dimensions of peace, focusing beyond the absence of armed conflict and taking into account aspects such as the degree of democratization and the provision of public goods.

All too often in Africa, peace only represents the time between phases of violent conflict (Furley, 2006). Even much of the so-called "peacebuilding" activities, coined by the plethora of international aid donors sent in to "help" African countries re-establish some semblance of statehood and provide basic humanitarian needs, are narrowly defined and often do not attempt to significantly alter the economic, political, or social structures that produced the conflict in the first place (Talley-Kalokohg, 2008). During peace negotiations, the standing government and warring factions often commit similar errors, and sometimes violence continues despite the signing of these agreements.

Various theories have been put forward to explain the adoption of peace agreements. These include war fatigue, the search for durable peace, a declaration of a no winner and no loser outcome, military versus peace settlement victory, and recognition of the effects of war on the social, political and cultural life of the community (Pratt, 2009). The advent of peace is also associated with a process and culture of democratization. The Democratic Peace Theory – which suggests that "democracies do not fight each other" – emphasizes development and, specifically, improvements to socio-economic conditions of citizens (Xenias, 2005). It assumes that if there were more democracies, then there would be less conflict. A logical recast of the core argument of the Democratic Peace Theory would produce the following syllogism (ACCORD, 2009):

> ➢ Democracies do not engage in physical violence,
> ➢ Violence hinders development,
> ➢ Having more democratic states leads to enhanced economic development

The connection between peace and democracy is possible because democracy encourages the establishment of effective 'dialogic mechanisms' (Bohman, 1996:34). The notions of negotiation and mediation suggest that peace emanates from certain deliberate and deliberative processes (Lewicki & Litterer, 1985:7-16).

Managing the peace process, therefore, requires empowering the conflicting actors with appropriate skills and establishing deliberative structures that can help maintain enduring peace. The role of the mediators and negotiators, and the engagement between the mediators and the conflicting parties, require a high level of persuasion. However, persuasion occurs in varying degrees of competencies – the total lack of which often results in parties seeking other symbolic means to enhance their bargaining influence, such as resorting to the use of violence to secure re-negotiation. Democratization, therefore, is a process that commences with inclusive peace negotiations.

When adversaries in civil war sign a peace agreement, what can international actors do to prevent a recurrence of that war? This is a life or death question for millions of people. The two worst outbreaks of massive violence in the 1990s – Angola in 1993 and Rwanda in 1994 – followed the failure of peace agreements to end those wars. In both cases, the death and destruction were staggering: an estimated 350,000 dead in Angola and 800,000 dead in Rwanda (Stedman, 2002). War went on for eight years in Liberia and took over 200,000 lives because multiple peace agreements failed to end the civil war there (Sawyer, 2005). In 2000, two more countries found themselves back in war after the failure of peace accords – Angola and Sierra Leone. In all of these cases, international actors mediated the agreements and were given prominent roles in implementation. Why did they fail? What could they have done differently? Was implementation in these cases doomed by unworkable peace agreements? Was failure a question of unfulfilled mandates or mandates inappropriate to the task at hand? Or was failure caused by the lack of an appropriate strategy and/or the unwillingness to anticipate violent challenges and craft an effective response? How did these cases differ from successes such as in Namibia, El Salvador, or Mozambique? Were these successes the result of less challenging environments or did international actors do things differently?

Between late 1997 and early 2000, Stanford University's Centre for International Cooperation (CISAC) and the International Peace Academy (IPA) conducted research to better understand the determinants of successful peace implementation. The CISAC/IPA project on peace implementation focused on three primary issues:

1) An evaluation of international actors and their strategies of peace implementation;

2) An evaluation of various sub-goals of peace implementation (e.g., demobilization, disarmament, refugee repatriation, human rights, reconciliation etc.) and their relationship to overall implementation success;

3) A search for low-cost, possible high-payoff opportunities for linking short-term implementation success to long-term peacebuilding (Stedman, 2001).

The project studied every peace agreement concluded between 1980 and 1997, in which international actors were assigned a prominent role in implementation. The cases studied include:

1. Angola, 1992-93
2. Angola, 1994-98
3. Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1995-2000
4. Cambodia, 1991-93
5. El Salvador, 1993-95
6. Guatemala, 1992-98
7. Lebanon, 1991-2000
8. Liberia, 1990-99
9. Mozambique, 1992-94
10. Namibia, 1989
11. Nicaragua, 1989-91
12. Rwanda, 1993-94
13. Sierra Leone, 1998
14. Sri Lanka, 1987-88
15. Somalia, 1992-93
16. Zimbabwe, 1980

The study found that cases of peace implementation differ dramatically in terms of the difficulty of the implementation environment and of the willingness of international actors to provide resources and also that these differences are predictable before a peace operation begins. These findings mark a significant advance in the understanding of peace implementation in three fundamental ways. First, the CISAC-IPA results put to rest simplistic generalizations about peace operations based on one or only a few cases. Specifically, the results suggest that there is no reason to assume that actions and strategies that work in a more benign conflict environment such as Guatemala or Namibia will work in a much more demanding environment such as Bosnia, Sierra Leone or Liberia. Second, the results imply that implementation strategies must be designed based on the level of difficulty of the case. In certain limited situations, strategies that

derive from traditional peacekeeping (with its underlying emphasis on confidence building) can be effective. In more challenging situations, however, when predation co-exists with fear, confidence building will prove impossible, and implementers will need to compel and deter to ensure compliance with a peace agreement. Third, the results raise the fundamental issue of what economists refer to as "incentive compatibility" or what is commonly known as "political feasibility": that it must be in the self-interest of critical actors to implement the strategy (Stedman, 2001:4-5).

Following the peace-making process, durable peace is only guaranteed by a successful implementation of the peace agreement. Peace agreements are not necessarily rigid documents to which warring factions must legalistically adhere. Peace agreements often demonstrate certain values, grievances, negotiation capability and commitments of parties to peace. They are arrangements, therefore, to which individual parties seek to commit themselves with a view to realizing peace – even if, in some cases, their grievances may not have been met. Often resurgence of conflict may result, requiring re-negotiation processes. Also, a renewed armed conflict risks plunging a democratic state into anarchy, resulting in what has been termed 'the collapsed state' (Rotberg, 2003). Factors that may hinder the implementation of a peace agreement or the ability to re-negotiate include: the number of warring parties; the presence of a peace agreement signed by all parties before implementation; the likelihood of spoilers; whether or not the state has collapsed; the numbers of armed soldiers and warring factions; disposable natural resources; and the presence of hostile neighbouring states (Pratt, 2009).

There are conditions under which a peace agreement might succeed or fail. Important conditions for the implementation of peace agreements require attention on the environment surrounding implementation and to recognize that some environments are more conducive to implementation than others. Such a perspective also looks at the coalitions that support implementation and their willingness to invest resources. Therefore the following factors require consideration:

1. *The number of warring parties*: The difficulty of implementation increases when there are more than two warring parties (Munck and Kumar, 1995; Doyle and Sambanis, 2000). Strategies become less predictable, balances of power

become more tenuous, and alliances become more fluid. In Cambodia, for example, any action that the United Nations might have taken against the Khmer Rouge had to be weighed against the effects such action would have had on Funcinpec, which relied on the Khmer Rouge to balance against the State of Cambodia (Peou, 2002; Stedman, 1997). In cases where a proliferation of warring parties occurred, as in Somalia and Liberia, implementers constantly found it difficult to craft solutions that would address the concerns of all the warring factions. Where any factions found themselves excluded, the peace agreement faced their violent opposition.

2. ***The absence of a peace agreement signed by all major warring parties before intervention and with a minimum of coercion***: The United Nations has usually required a detailed peace agreement among the warring parties as a sign of their consent to a peace mission and as a precondition for its involvement. In the 1980s and 1990s, however, the United Nations intervened in many ongoing wars and, in several instances, either it or a regional organization or a state intervened in the hope of using force to compel a peace agreement: the UN in Somalia, ECOMOG in Liberia and Sierra Leone, NATO in Bosnia, and Syria in Lebanon. Intervention in the absence of a peace agreement likely will trigger violent opposition by parties who value the pre-intervention status quo. The absence of a peace agreement implies a lack of problem-solving, trust, and confidence-building among the warring factions, thus producing a more difficult implementation environment (Stedman, 2001).

3. ***The likelihood of spoilers***. The presence of spoilers in peace agreements poses daunting challenges to implementation (Stedman, 1997:74-48). Spoilers constitute a major challenge to peace processes. Spoilers come in different shapes and sizes – as official as well as unofficial, armed and unarmed, civilians and military, and naturally vary in their power and influence. They may be located at any of the number of points in the peace process. Additionally, the definition of spoilers will always be subjective to some degree, given that one person's spoiler may be another's hero. And precisely who a spoiler is may well depend on the context and the issue area. The key problem is that peace agreements may, and often do, end up entrenching inadvertently or otherwise, the power and influence of spoilers, all in the interest of fostering agreement and facilitating an end to hostilities in the short term. One critique of the spoiler concept, however, is that

spoilers are only recognized after the fact. This criticism can be addressed by attempting to gauge whether prospective implementers judged that they were likely to face violent challenges during implementation. A more sophisticated criticism of the spoiler concept is that potential spoilers are always present and whether an actor actually engages in spoiling behaviour depends on the existence of a special opportunity structure (Collier and Hoeffler, 2000).

4. *Collapsed State*: The lack of state institutions and governing capacity places great demands on peace implementers. In addition to bringing fighting to a close, the implementers must create and build up a modicum of state capacity in order for the peace to have a chance to sustain itself.

5. *Number of soldiers*: At some level, numbers matter. High numbers of soldiers pose greater demands for verification and monitoring and, hence, a greater potential for successful cheating. Moreover, greater numbers of soldiers require more personnel for monitoring and more resources for demobilization.

6. *Disposable natural resources:* If warring parties have access to disposable resources such as gems, minerals, or timber, implementation becomes more difficult. Such resources not only provide armies with a means for continued fighting, they also become the reward against which they weigh the benefits of peace (Berdal and Malone, 2000). A key difference between Mozambique and Angola is that, in the latter country, UNITA's access to diamonds emboldened their spoiler behaviour, whereas RENAMO's lack of access to such resources effectively limited the benefits of returning to war (Stedman, 1997).

7. *Hostile Neighbouring States or Networks*: Civil wars rarely take place in otherwise stable regions. As Peter Wallensteen and Margareta Sollenberg (1997) observed, many civil wars today intersect with regional conflicts and interstate competition. From this it would follow that the attitude of the surrounding states towards a peace agreement in a neighbour's civil war plays a key role in supporting or undermining the prospects of peace. Spoilers to a peace agreement, for example, are likely to be much stronger and more vocal if they are confident that they can count on neighbouring states for sanctuary, guns, fuel, and capital (Stedman, 1997:51). Likewise, in regions where weak states have little control over borders, well-organized private or semi-official networks can

allow neighbouring states to take advantage of such state decrepitude to support spoilers in the war-torn country.

The Liberian peace process was protracted, producing 17 peace agreements.

1. Banjul Communiqué, ECOWAS Plan, August 7, 1990
2. Bamako Ceasefire, November 28, 1990
3. Banjul Joint Statement, December 21, 1990
4. Lome Agreement, February 13, 1991
5. Yamoussoukro I Accord, June 30, 1991
6. Yamoussoukro II Accord, July 29, 1991
7. Yamoussoukro III Accord, September 17 1991
8. Yamoussoukro IV Accord, October 30, 1991
9. Geneva Ceasefire, July 17 1993
10. Cotonou Agreement, July 25 1993
11. Akosombo Agreement, September 12, 1994
12. Acceptance and Accession to Akosombo Agreement, December 21, 1994
13. Accra Clarification of Akosombo Agreement, December 21, 1994
14. Abuja Agreement (1), August 19, 1995
15. Supplement to Abuja Agreement (II), August 17, 1996
16. Ceasefire Agreement, June 17, 2003
17. Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), August 18, 2003 (TRC, 2009:126).

The last one which, signed in Accra, Ghana in 2013, ushered in democratic rule. But there have been disagreements by the former factional leaders, most of whom are serving in the government, and other members of the regime, over the interpretation and implementation of certain provisions in the agreements. This is causing deep division and bitter political rivalry among these actors. Ex-combatants had huge expectations from the peace agreement but this is not forthcoming as they continue to feel marginalized, as I shall show. For instance, the frequent suggestion by some Liberians in the media that former rebel leaders and their fighter should face prosecution in criminal courts has always evoked anger and reactions from actors in the civil war. Should this process be pushed forward and materialize, there will be resistance from the former fighters, potentially leading to widespread violence and a possible reversion to conflict. In the next section, I discussed DDRR in Africa and how this is included in peace agreement and how it is implemented, with particular reference to the Liberian Comprehensive Peace Agreement. This is important because the framing of DDRR programme in peace agreement is key to the success of failure of the process. A failed process would then create problems of ex-combatants vulnerability and risks to the population.

Context of Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration in Africa

At the end of the conflicts, DDRR becomes a strategy for executing peacekeeping operations, usually employed by the United Nations and the post-conflict government, in order to protect against a return to war. This entails the physical removal of the means of combat from ex-belligerents (weapons and ammunitions), disbanding of armed group militias and rehabilitating and reintegration of former fighters into the society, in order to prevent a possibility of a resurgence of armed conflict. Gerd Junne and Willemiin Verkoren have this to say about war economies: "The 'seductive tenacity of war economies' constitutes an important barrier to the success of the DDRR and of post-conflict development as a whole, and no strategy of DDRR can succeed without taking this aspect into account."(USIP Report 2002). As Richard Williamson, U.S Alternate Representative to the United Nations posited, in his statement at the United Nations Security Council Workshop on West Africa "On DDRR", it is critical to have a coordinated mechanism through which the host country, international community and the UN can address the financial and logistical issues related to DDRR activities and ensure follow up by donors on their commitments (Daboh, et.al 2010:13). However, the success and failure of DDRR programmes are determined by the willingness of the rest of the society to forgive ex-combatants for the violent acts they committed during the armed conflict, and support them in their transition from a life of war to a life of peace. Given the dynamics of DDRR, it is important to note that:

> There is no generic template of DDRR practice that can be superimposed on post-conflict scenarios throughout the world. DDRR processes must be carefully and sensitively custom designed for each scenario, by teams with intimate knowledge of the respective theatre, the players, the overall objectives of the peace process and the tolls available (UNAMSIL, 2003:4-12).

The above statement calls for a de-emphasis on the generalization of DDRR processes in the light of the fact that societies are dynamic and conflict may have occurred under different contexts that require extensive local knowledge and expertise in the design of DDRR programmes. DDRR in Africa has had mixed results. In total, since 1992, the UN has engaged in over twenty-four DDRR-

related processes, twenty-two of which are currently ongoing. Of these, only six are outside Africa, with those on the continent accounting for 81 percent of the UN involvement (Janzen, 2004). Some have been innovative and remarkably successful such as in Ethiopia, Eritrea, Angola and Uganda. Others however, have been glaringly ineffective, with the result that many ex-combatants have been unable to secure unemployment, or make a successful transition to civilian life, such as in the Republic of Sudan, following the signing of the CPA in 2005, as well as the unending war in Somalia.

The United Nations involvement in DDRR in Africa has been complemented by the African Union, regional economic and security groupings, support from the EU and Scandinavian states, as well as contributions from the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (MDRP). The MDRP was established in 2002 by over forty Western governments for the purpose of creating an overarching support for DDRR, focusing on the Great Lakes as well as West, Central, Southern, and Eastern Africa, managed by the World Bank (MDRP 2006). However, the MDRP ceased to exist in June 2009 after seven years of operation. In Africa, DDRR processes have typically been established within the context of peace processes. The circumstances leading up to the peace process and the dynamics during the peace talks often determine the scope, range, and sequencing of the DDRR process, as well as the distribution of resources. Three different scenarios have been identified below:

1. <u>DDRR as a result of peace secured by negotiated settlement between the conflicting parties, usually following pressure from an external party</u>. This scenario normally sees the DDRR decision being postponed until after the election of a post-war government, with armed groups being left to reside in assembly points. Examples include Zimbabwe (1979), Namibia (1988), and South Africa (1990's).

2. <u>DDRR as a result of peace settlements established by one party defeating others militarily</u>. In this situation, DDRR processes tend to be rapid and coercive in nature (particularly for the defeated party), and resources tend to be allocated in a biased fashion (usually in favour of the victor). Examples include Angola (2003), Rwanda (1994), Uganda (1986) and Ethiopia (1990's).

3. DDRR as a result of peace agreements due to external intervention, usually in the context of a mutually hurting stalemate. The external intervening powers (usually the UN), often take a leadership role in the DDRR process once a political agreement has been reached. Examples include Mozambique (1990's), Angola (1988), Sierra Leone, Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire (UN/OSAA, 2007).

It is important to note that peace processes may facilitate effective DDRR programmes in some contexts, but may also undermine the process if the reintegration of ex-combatants is not well implemented. Post-war governments usually face a competing array of developmental demands, and in such circumstances security may be temporarily relegated in priority, with serious adverse consequences (Obidegwu, 2004:25-27). It is imperative to understand these early challenges and manage them properly. Reintegration in Sierra Leone and Liberia remain far short of what is needed to ensure stability in the future (Ginifer, 2003; Africa Confidential; 2008). The challenges of DDRR in Africa are also manifested in Cote d'Ivoire where ex-combatants were paid US$900 for the surrender of weapons, causing agitation in Liberia among the ex-combatants who, understandably, wanted to withhold their guns and demand more money for them (Daboh et.al (2010:10). Therefore, the likelihood of crossing into Cote d'Ivoire for a weapon sale became very high. Although the amount was reduced to US$830, it was still high relative to the US$300 given in Liberia. As Ryan Nicolas stated, "this disparity may not only have significantly undermined Liberia's DDRR process by providing fighters extra incentives to hold to their weapons, but also may be contributing to the ongoing instability in Cote d'Ivoire by encouraging armed Liberian fighters to cross the border" (Nicols, 2009).

Peace agreements do not always contain clear DDRR provisions (UN Report, 2010:10). In Côte d'Ivoire, there were multiple agreements with conflicting provisions for DDRR. Likewise, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has multiple agreements providing legal frameworks that make for a complex scenario (Lusaka Agreement et.al 1999). In Darfur, while the 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement included DDRR provisions, the Agreement was not signed by all the protagonists of the conflict (UN Report, 2010). This precondition, which recommends that a negotiated peace agreement be signed, assumes that all warring parties are signatories to that peace agreement. However, in many peace

negotiations not all warring parties are included in the peace process. Moreover, the manipulation of gangs by political elites and the proliferation of various types of militias and armed groups may complicate even the identification of all parties to the conflict (ibid). Again, in Côte d'Ivoire militias were addressed through disarmament and dismantling of militias (DDM) programmes, however, the large numbers of people claiming to be members of militias complicated the process and highlighted the need to better define this group. In Sudan, the DDRR programme was launched only in February 2009, four years after the signing of the CPA. In Darfur, a comprehensive DDRR programme is unlikely to start in the near future unless a more inclusive peace agreement is signed by all the major armed groups operating in the region (ibid). In Liberia, many people that I talked to informally criticized the incomplete DDRR which limited the surrender of weapons, with allegations of continued circulations of arms and their use for violent criminal activities. On the other hand, the reintegration component was described by them, including the targeted beneficiaries, as a failure.

While trust of the parties to the conflict in the overall peace process is extremely difficult to evaluate, it is a key prerequisite for successful traditional DDRR, as demonstrated by many UN experiences in Africa. As DDRR is often one of the first provisions of a peace agreement to be implemented, it may start at a time when the parties are still unsure of the process. They may wish to hold on to the military means that brought them to the negotiating table, thus delaying the start of DDRR. At the same time, DDRR practitioners have understood that progress in DDRR can serve to foster trust between the parties. This can therefore lead to a vicious cycle where lack of trust delays DDRR and the lack of DDRR only increases the parties' mistrust in the peace process (UN Report, 2010:11).

The political will of the warring parties to engage in DDRR is crucial to a successful process. Nonetheless, in many cases, political will has been lacking. Accordingly, tackling the manipulation of gangs by elite members of society which complicates the definition of parties to the conflict, is a key aspect of developing a successful DDRR programme. For example, in Sierra Leone, despite the signature of the 1999 Lomé Peace Agreement, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) refused to fully enter the DDRR programme. Following a major crisis that threatened to completely derail the peace process in May 2000, a much

revamped international and regional political and military approach was launched. This resulted in the removal of the RUF's recalcitrant leader, Foday Sankoh, and the exertion of credible pressure on a key RUF backer, the former President of Liberia, Charles Taylor. As a result, the RUF finally entered the DDRR process in earnest in the second half of 2000 (UNDPKO, 2010:11-12). Without a minimum guarantee of security, armed groups and individuals are likely to continue to constitute a threat to peace and stability in post-war societies. Even where peacekeeping operations are deployed, as in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, DDRR processes have, at times, been hampered by insecurity. In Sudan, despite the presence of two peacekeeping missions, the security situation in some parts of the country remains unstable due to armed conflicts and banditry. In the DRC, continued fighting among armed groups, along with the vast size of the country and poor infrastructure, has made it difficult to provide a minimum guarantee of security, thus severely hampering DDRR efforts.

At the continental level, the AU considers DDRR to be an integral component of the efforts to promote peace, security and stability in Africa. In 2006, the AU's Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy (PCRD) called on the AU Commission to strengthen DDRR capacities on the continent by supporting Member States in the planning and implementation of comprehensive and well-blended Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) programmes. In 2011, the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) Roadmap also called on the AU Commission to engage and strengthen DDRR processes on the continent by integrating it into the entire peace process, from the initial peace negotiations through peacekeeping and follow-on peace building activities.

In response, the Peace and Security Department (PSD), in partnership with the World Bank Transitional Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (TDRP) and the United Nations (Department of Peacekeeping Operations-DPKO and UN Office to the AU, initiated, in February 2012, the AU DDR Capacity Programme (DDRCP). This was done by holding a Consultation Seminar on DDR with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RMs). The DDRCP's main purpose is to develop and strengthen African modalities in DDRR by exchanging the knowledge that already exists on the African continent and to reinforce DDRR

programmes that are being implemented by AU Member States and Missions. As such, PSD has developed a project document that sets out a three-year programme, to be implemented between 2013 and 2015, which will achieve the following objectives:

1. Institutionalize DDRR capacities within the AU;
2. Establish an AU DDRR Resource and Research Centre; and
3. AU engagement and assistance to DDRR activities of Member States.

Together, these three components will operationalize the ability of the AU to identify gaps and challenges in DDRR processes on the continent and respond to those needs by providing timely technical, political and/or resource assistance.

Conclusion

The chapter has provided insights into previous research in this field of study. It focused on the nature of civil war and post-war violence, in particular, the actors and their motivation to continue to perpetuate violence. It noted that conflict theory commonly assumes that when their demands are not met most of the actors who took part in conflicts also engage in violence in post-war environments, and therefore become active entrepreneurs of violence. This perspective will become clearer in the discussion in the next chapter which outlines the analytical framework.

Chapter Three: Analytical Framework

Introduction

This chapter aims to contribute to the literature by developing a four dimensional analytical framework which is then applied to the outcome of the reintegration of ex-combatants in Liberia. On the basis of the data collected in fieldwork, the analytical framework of the study identified four explanatory factors: *(a) re-marginalization (b) re-criminalization (c) exploitation, and (d) economic insecurity.* It reveals that while some of the factors and dynamics have caused the occurrence of violence, others merely facilitated it. I have described this as a situation of *triggers and enablers*. The interview exercise also explored the four factors of the analytical framework. A second set of interviews was conducted in 2016, in the counties outside Monrovia, among 10 ex-combatants. The four analytical factors were once again consistently mentioned by the interviewees. The entire data from the field was analysed using this four dimensional framework, but I focused greater attention on re-marginalization as this featured as the dominant factor in the interviews and focus-groups. The chapter also provides a broader conceptual debate on violence in post-conflict environments and the theoretical explanations of violence. It discusses the political economy and neo-patrimonialism in a general and specific context to Liberia and how this has shaped the occurrence of violence. This will be further elaborated in the case study chapter.

Explaining the process of marginalization

The analytical framework explains how political and economic marginalization influences the propensity for violence among ex-combatants. A marginalized community may be described as a group that is confined to the lower or peripheral edge of the society. Such a group is denied involvement in mainstream economic and political activities. Liberian ex-combatants are located in the periphery of the four research sites. Living in the periphery makes them likely to be irrelevant. This variation produces a structure of government power that underscores the distribution of public good nationally and locally. The

marginalized ex-combatants communities are impacted on the macro-level, where its members often lack access to affordable formal education, employment and other livelihood opportunities. At this level, they have been denied access to political structures and cannot participate in decision-making. No middle or low level ex-combatant is in the government. Their leaders and commanders are in the government representing their won interest only. Political weaknesses has reinforced their marginalization. At the micro-level, their marginalization has manifested in low income for those who are working in informal sectors and lack of occupational status.

The framework also explains certain characteristics within the post-conflict state. Liberian political landscape can be characterized by whether ex-combatant communities are "politically relevant" of "politically irrelevant". "Political relevance" is a function of a given group's importance in national level politics. On the other hand, groups characterized as "political irrelevance" are effectively excluded from the national level political agenda (Raleigh, 2010:2). A group's relevance, in turn dictates their political exclusion and discrimination, which are widely believed to underlie economic marginalization (ibid). In Liberia, ex-combatants are seem as politically irrelevant and may only be politically relevant only during elections when their votes are needed by the political class, and again abandoned after they emerge successful. This underlie the appetite for resort to violence in protest against exploitation and marginalization. Further, there are two main determinants of both political economic and political marginalization in this framework. They are client networks (ex-combatants) and the state capacity. These represents separate axes of vulnerability are difficult to distinguish in practice, as political marginalization begets economic marginalization. The actors within this framework are ex-combatants communities and the government of Liberia. While ex-combatants remain an important social and political unit demanding better economic livelihood and political inclusion, the state appears to lack the capacity to provide basic social services and to meet their demands, and therefore thriving in a patrimonial/neo-patrimonial systems discussed later in this chapter and 5.

While poverty is widespread and severe in Liberia, particularly among the peripheral communities, ex-combatants are disproportionately affected due to the dynamics of marginalization and vulnerability. Here, vulnerability is the degree or resilience against shock, or the likelihood that a shock will result in a decline in

well-being. Vulnerability may arise from an individual's inherent natural characteristics (such as ex-combatant), but it may also be the result of marginalization and stigmatization (Gloppen and Kanyongolo, 2007:261). Unfortunately, there are no legal basis for challenging political and economic marginalization in Liberia and therefore the victims are left to their faith. The pomp and pageantry that heralded the introduction of democracy in Liberia has diminished. The quality of governance has deteriorated; corruption is rife; and the political institutions are generally unresponsive to the concerns of the poor population including ex-combatants. Symptomatic of this state of affairs, during the Ebola crisis in 2014-2015 fighting over food supplies to the affected communities and looting of Ebola equipment's caused further spread of the virus and lead to more deaths.

Violence may therefore persists in politically irrelevant communities and beyond. African conflict literatures presents a compelling case that political exclusion alone may lead to increased conflict, but with many caveats (Raleigh 2010:10). It is becoming increasingly clear that marginalization, inequality and exclusion are motivations for conflicts, but do not entirely explain its occurrence (ibid). Raleigh further noted, it is a profound and repeated finding that the mere facts of poverty and inequality or even increase in these conditions do not lead to political and ethnic violence. Although, ex-combatants in Liberia are motivated to justify a violent campaign against the government any time they have the opportunity to level a significant threat. Therefore, part of a direct response of ex-combatants to marginalization by the elites seeking to retain monopoly on power and resources is the continuation of violence in Liberia. Further discussions on the four analytical framework factors have been made in this chapter with relevant questions posed for each factor which guided the research. I have also highlighted these questions in the methodology on chapter four.

Conceptualizing Violence in Post Conflict Settings

Violence in itself defies categorization. It can be everything and nothing; legitimate or illegitimate; visible or invisible; necessary or useless. Violence is a topic that has always been of interest to scholars, although there remain very different approaches to defining and understanding it. This chapter discusses the

key approaches with a view to identifying those most useful for understanding violence in countries like Liberia, and particularly in post-conflict contexts. All societies face the problem of violence. No society completely eliminates violence; at best it can be contained and managed. Violence manifests itself in many dimensions. It can be expressed in physical actions or through coercive threat of physical action. Both violent actions and coercion are elements of violence. The relationship between violent acts and coercion involves beliefs about the actions of others, and we pay considerable attention to whether threats of violence are credible and the conditions under which the use of physical violence will result in responses from other individuals or from the state. Violence may be the action of a single individual or the action of organized groups ranging from gangs to armies (Leander, 2004:1-3).

The primary concern in this study is with interpersonal violence: the use of violence or threats of violence by groups. Theoretically, I explore the roles of individuals/groups as social movements that use violence, and the state as an entity with the monopoly on the legitimate use of violence (Weber, 1947), as well as the nature, character, and motivation of such violence. Violence and coercive power are inherent elements of larger social groups (Earle, 1997:106). However, since the threat of violence may be used to limit the use of actual physical violence; there is no simple way to measure the level of violence in a society (ibid).

Doing research on violence requires an explicit focus on micro-level interactions. Behaviours such as killings, may be experienced by individuals, groups, and communities. Aggregate patterns tend to obscure these local dynamics. From a more local perspective, one can quickly see that observed patterns of violence are not necessarily a reflection of group strategies. Perpetrators make decisions about assassinations they wish to carry out, or government strongholds they would like to destroy. Actual killings and attacks, however, may not achieve the objectives. Issues of organization, that is, how groups translate strategies into actions, and their interactions – how those actions are received and responded by the civilians – must be entered into the equation. The common tendency to conflate observed violence with intention leads scholars to search only for plausible explanations of the strategic value of amputation,

massacre, and rape when such behaviour may or may not have been ordered, or even intended, by commanders (Weinstein, 2007:201).

An approach that captures micro-level interaction also requires an understanding of the context in which violence is observed. Thus, measuring violence necessitates capturing the dynamics of this interaction at the local level. This is a difficult task because perpetrators have strong incentives to misinterpret behaviour that leads to violence, and researchers must turn primarily to participant accounts, as records of violence are rarely kept. In studying the context of violence, it is useful to consider two different dimensions of violence. "Intensity" which refers to the level of violence (e.g. the number of killings, attacks, and incidents of coercion), the "character" of violence, (which measures the range of violent behaviours that groups exhibit and the identity of their targets) .In addition it is useful to investigate the organization of groups in specific conurbations, and temporal patterns of violence within the post-conflict state. The nature and conditions of violence in human society have been the subjects of numerous studies (Riches, 1986). However, there are a number of new wars (Kaldor, 2012) in which it is commonly said that violence took different forms.

This study challenges the automatic, simplistic linkages between 'increased environmental scarcity", "decreased economic activity", and "migration" that purportedly "weakens states" and "cause conflicts and violence (Homer-Dixon 1999:31). Rather, the study of contexts at local levels suggests that violence is a site-specific phenomenon rooted in local histories and social relations yet connected to larger processes of material transformation and power relations (Peluso and Watts, 2001:5). It could also be an instrument of state repression of political opponent and groups considered as spoilers. The forms of violence, who engages in them and their dynamics, are not obviously predictable, or uniform, and they are expanded and deepened analytically by conceptualizing violence. As Jean-Paul Dumont noted:

> "Violence is a habitus…….., at once structured and structuring: structured because the idea of violence results from historical events, stored as the memory of past deeds, of past encounters, of past frustrations; and structuring became the idea of violence informs human actions, determines the acceptability, even the banditry of violence, if not the ability to erase the scandal of its occurrence" (Dumont, 1992).

Violence against and between civilians is a defining feature of civil war. Levels of violence are central to the definition that distinguishes civil war from other forms of political instability, but analysts' attention has rarely been directed at understanding variation in the violence that accompanies civil war. King describes this variation: "Episodes of social violence", whether riots or atrocities committed during civil wars may be well patterned, but they do not occur uniformly across time or space. There are lulls and peaks. (King 2004:431-55). Patterns of killing, rape, and pillage are not the same across all armed groups, nor are strategies of violence consistent throughout every conflict. Yet this variation is often subsumed in the concept of civil war, or 'new wars'. Violence is better defined broadly to include patterns of rebel-civilian, rebel-rebel, and civilian-civilian interaction that involve coercion. This type of relationship exists in post-war Liberia. For instance, there were 199 cases of sexual and gender-based violence in Montserrado County (research site) in 2015 (SG's Report 2015:11). Also, the death of a commercial motorcyclist in Nimba County, alleged to be a ritualistic killing led to mass violent protest on 30 September 2015 against a perceived ineffectiveness of the police in addressing a series of suspected ritualistic killings. A crowd attacked a police station, freed detainees, burned homes and cars, and engaged in widespread looting. There were also incidents of vigilantism. For instance, on 19 August 2015, in Nimba County, mob armed with weapons fired on three suspected armed robbers of which two sustained injuries (SG's Report, 2015:5). The World Health Organization defines violence as:

> The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation (Krug, et.al 2002:5).

This associates intentionality with the committing of the act itself, irrespective of the outcome it produces. Excluded from the definition are unintentional incidents – such as most road traffic injuries and burns. The definition covers a broad range of outcomes – including psychological harm, deprivation and mal-development, and this perhaps reflects the need to include violence that does not necessarily result in injury or death, but that nonetheless places a substantial burden on

individuals, families, communities and health care systems worldwide. However, the above definition lacks rigor in the context of war–to-peace transition. But violence is a slippery concept – nonlinear, productive, destructive, and reproductive. Violence cannot be understood solely in terms of its physicality that is force, assault, or the infliction of pain alone. Violence also includes assault on the personhood, dignity, sense of worth or value of the victim (ibid). The social and cultural dimensions of violence are what give violence its power of meaning.

Explaining violence within the context of this study I present discerning features and support the views of Cramer (2006) in four ways: first, the institutional framework that may have regulated violence in the past or that may contain it in the future is no longer viable and has become anachronistic. This is in reference to the fact that in post-war situations, institutions have become weak and are unable to resolve minor disputes and this ultimately results in violence. Second, in transition, the stakes of violence are - precisely because of the open-ended features of change and institutionalized insecurity - more than usually intense. Here transition is characterized by war of position, not in the old military strategy of Gramscian political strategic sense, but in the sense of a scramble for social position in a social structure whose adhesive has not yet set. Third, the social and political conflict during major moments of transition is especially likely to be violent where there are histories of violence and ratchet mechanisms that introduce the means of violence and draw on what Tilly (1978) calls 'specialists in violence'. Fourth, the crisis of transition is more likely to be violent if – as is also normal in such protracted moments – there is no credible central authority that can impose a monopoly of the means of and exercise of force, which is common where the fiscal source of the monopoly of violence is weak. (Cramer, 2006:215).

The prevalence of urban violence, which is widespread in Monrovia, has seen the intensification of semblance of gang violence, drug-related violence, homicidal violence, criminal violence, assault, gender and sexual violence, rape, armed robbery, threats and kidnapping, mob violence, ritualistic violence, political and economic violence etc. All these forms of violence can be described under three broad categorizations, namely; self-directed violence, collective violence and interpersonal violence.

The World Bank distinguishes between self-directed violence, interpersonal violence, and collective violence. Interpersonal violence refers to

violence between individuals and is subdivided into family and intimate partner violence, and community violence, often carried out by agents of the state against civilians. The violence that occurs between family members and intimate partners, usually, though not always, takes place inside the home. This category includes child abuse and neglect, intimate partner violence and elder abuse. Community violence may be defined as: the instrumental use of violence by people who identify themselves as members of a group – whether this group is transitory or has a more permanent identity – against another group or set of individuals, in order to achieve political, economic or social objectives (Krug,et.al:2002:215).

However, the World Bank's view relates more to the explanation of the consequences of violence for public health rather than any in-depth analysis of violence within conflict studies. Post-war societies provide an environment for the manifestations of violence if peace agreements are not scrupulously implemented, particularly if major participants of the conflicts, such as ex-combatants, are dissatisfied with the outcome of the DDRR process. There is a presumption that there is a strong link between ex-combatant satisfaction and long-term peace in post-conflict states. This is because in some post-war states like Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire and to some extent Sierra Leone, where ex-combatants were not properly reintegrated, they constitute a potential threat to peace. Therefore, researchers seek to understand as much as possible about how DDRR programmes can be implemented to ensure the satisfaction of ex-combatants. This is not to say that understanding ex-combatant satisfaction with DDRR is the only or even the foremost mechanism deserving of study for those interested in post-war stability, as past work on power-sharing agreements and third-party security guarantees can well attest (Hartzell and Hoddie 2003; Walter 2002).Even a focus on ex-combatant satisfaction after DDRR only uncovers a part of the micro-level process, as successful reintegration of combatants also requires effort from households and communities. Focusing on the satisfaction of ex-combatants likewise uncovers only part of the process linking DDRR with long-term peace. Nonetheless, there is the assumption that ex-combatants who are satisfied with the DDRR process are apt to contribute to positive peace-building vis-à-vis their dissatisfied counterparts.

Though, used in its sociological context, social capital may prove useful in reintegration studies (Bowd, 2008). Putnam sees social capital as the reciprocity and trust that can develop through social interaction, especially in (formal or informal) groups and networks (Putnam, 2001). He notes that norms of reciprocity have value both for the people who take part in them (private returns), and in some instances, for society at large (public returns) through increased cooperation. The private returns include a greater likelihood that your friend, neighbour or former fellow combatant will come to your assistance in time of need (ibid). In this regard, high degrees of trust enable ex-combatants to cooperate and engage in commercial exchange without outside interference. To a large extent, this also depends on the types of activities of former fighting groups during the war, which may then mean that group of combatants enjoys high levels of social capital. Although more research is required to know how social capital is utilized by fighters after the war, nonetheless, this may constitute a major asset for ex-combatants as they are likely to increase their political and economic activities through this means.

Contextualizing Political Economy and Neo-Patrimonialism

I begin this section with a discourse on the broader meaning of political economy and then narrowed it to fit into my analysis of the political economy of Liberia. I think this is important in order to understand the evolution of the concept and how it has been applied in different situations overtime. There is a large body of literature that discusses developments in post-conflict settings. Interestingly, however, much of this literature takes the international actors in these settings as the starting point for analysis. It is striking how few of these assessments can help us with a comprehensive ordering of social world that we may find in a post-conflict situation. One strand in the literature is, however, a fortunate exception. Mats Berdal and Dominic Zaum have developed a political economy perspective on war and post-war situations. This approach espouses a distinct perspective on war: while much analysis on civil war has emphasized the chaotic and anarchic nature of war situations, a political economy perspective stresses that war entails the creation of an alternative system of power, protection and profit (Berdal and Zaum 2012; Keen 2000). Put differently, war allows for new social orders to be forged, where the weaker actors, such as civilian and low level combatants, can

be every bit as constrained and subject to formal and informal social control measures as they were in peace time. This is a perspective that brings one central feature of the war and post-war situation to the forefront, the issue of power.

Political economy explains how and why capitalism and markets are structured in ways that reflect various types of social power. There has been considerable debate about the difference between neo-classical economics and political economy. I make some clarity here with a view to placing each of the concepts in proper analytical perspective. The distinction between neo-classical economics and political economy is not hard-and-fast; as a rule, they cast light on somewhat different aspects of the joint processes of social production and reproduction. According to Ronnie Lipschutz, Neo-classical economics is a discipline and discourse that purports to explain how and why capitalism and "free" markets fulfil individual desires for goods, satisfaction, and freedom, doing so more effectively and efficiently than alternatives. As an analytical-ideological system, neo-classical economics, Lipschutz argues, rests on the proposition that: (1) people naturally "truck and barter" with each other for the things they want but cannot make themselves or do not possess, (2) money represents a form of stored "value" that makes exchange more efficient than simple barter, (3) exchange takes place most efficiently in unregulated markets where it is mediated by prices that are a function of the supply of and demand for scarce goods (anything without a price is either priceless or worthless), (4), people have preferences, and it is rational for them to calculate the lowest cost way to fulfil those preferences, and (5) any effort to manage or control production, exchange, or markets is "politics" which interferes with the efficient operation of the system (Lipschutz (2010:3).

Neoclassical economics cannot, however tell us why capitalist markets are organized as they are, who might have a hand in that process or organization, and how those arrangements benefit some and not others. Such points and questions are generally naturalized. Naturalized is used in this context to mean 'nature' or things we cannot control, but evolve naturally, and to ask about them is to enter the realm of politics. This is, then, where critical political economy comes in: it recognizes that there are no markets without politics. Indeed, markets are thoroughly political institutions that require authoritative intervention in the form of

rules and regulations in order to function. That means that they are neither neutral nor politically neutral (Polanyi, 2001:147). Viewed from a different angle, Robert Cox (1995) opines that critical political economy is concerned with the historically constituted framework of structures within which political and economic activities take place. It stands back from the apparent fixity of the present to ask how the existing structures came into being and how they may be changing. Political economy in its Marxian and critical form is concerned not so much with exchange, supply, demand, and price as with how markets and the general economy are structured and configured, why they have those particular forms, and what sources of power shaped them as they are. Thus, the organization of political economy is not always the obvious result of the deliberate and visible exercise of political and social power by certain parties. The beliefs, practices, and rules of society may be structured in ways that are acceptable broadly defined as "natural" and inviolable, even while offering preferential advantages and benefits to some individuals and groups. These "mentalities" constitutes what Antonio Gramsci called "hegemony', that is, the rhetorical and legal dominance in society of certain social elites and the acceptance of these mentalities as 'common sense" by the rest of the society (Gramsci, 1971; Rupert, 1995). Gramsci's assertion is germane in the context of Liberia where the minority Americo-Liberia elite has maintained dominance through the instrumentalities of an archaic constitution that nurtures an imperial presidency. But, on the contrary, these mentalities have been challenged at various times by the rest of the society, with negative consequences manifesting in violence and wars.

In an African political economy context, the term neo-patrimonial state has been introduced, and it is widely used to describe the real-world dynamics of domination. However, despite its extensive use, there is little consensus on its key features (Clapham, 1985; Theobald, 1982). The prefix "neo" designates divergent aberration from patrimonialism (Erdman and Engel, 2007:95-104) and, drawing on Weber's political sociology, neo-patrimonialism is a hybrid form of governance featuring patrimonial and bureaucratic patterns, since the latter are specifically modern and thus justify using the prefix (Weber, 1978:105). Neo-patrimonialism is arguably a feature that has characterized the contemporary states in Africa, and it is therefore important to explain this concept in its contemporary context. Thus, in neo-patrimonial states, patrimonial patterns are

dominant but bureaucratic elements exist. Patrimonial features clash with bureaucratic rationality, risking the bending, circumvention and violation of bureaucratic norms. Disciplinary action is oriented towards assuring personal loyalty and obedience first and foremost, and not administrative rationality (Gerdes, 2013:18). Patrimonialism is expressed in patterns of authority rather than the way of coming to power, and decentralized patrimonialism may be combined with legal-rational features of rules. Patrimonial staff may have appropriated wide-ranging powers and the neo-patrimonial president may be of rather symbolic importance. Further, high public sector salaries may indicate patrimonial (Therkildsen, 2005) as well as bureaucratic principles.

Modern theories of states and their formation generally include considerations of wars, regimes and democracy, and frequently adopt a political economy perspective that is useful for the analysis of both regimes and war economies. Applied to a re-emerging state like Liberia, state-building theory may provide interesting insights into democracy by focusing on broader societal processes underlying the creation and functioning of democratic state institutions. I discussed the political economy of Liberia as a means of understanding state formation. In particular, I introduced Max Weber's ideal-types of legitimate domination and discussed the term neo-patrimonialism, which is defined as governance arrangement characterized by patrimonial patterns clashing with relatively weaker but nonetheless enduring legal-rational ones (Weber, 1978). Here, the notion of domination is discussed in the context of the hegemonic rule and leadership of the Americo-Liberia elites, the economic predation, and financial recklessness that has characterized regimes in Liberia.

Drawing on Charles Tilly (1975) and others, I emphasized the frequently violent political competition that is intrinsically associated with competition over the economic resources that are needed for state-building. As proposed by Tilly, political economy in a wider sense, that is, the authoritative acquisition of values and authoritative re-distribution of values is an important concept for investigating the evolution of patterns of authority in general and of the state in particular (ibid). I then discuss the concept of neo-patrimonialism, an ideal-typical sub-type of traditional domination, evolved out of other (typically patriarchal) forms of authority when a holder of power succeeds in establishing personally loyal administrative staff able to enforce decisions.

Neo-patrimonialism is one of the central concepts in Francis Fukuyama's major study, *The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution.* Fukuyama based his analysis on the classic writings of Max Weber, and distinguishes neo-patrimonialism from modern state systems. He state that "Impersonal modern states" are difficult institutions to both establish and maintain, since neo-patrimonialism – recruitment based on kinship or personal reciprocity – is the natural form of social relationship to which human beings will revert in the absence of other norms and incentives". "The most universal form of human political form of interaction" "is a patron-client relationship in which a leader exchanges favours in return for support from a group of followers" (Fukuyama, 2011:450-453).

Francis (2006) discussed extensively the concept of patrimonialism and neo-patrimonialism in the context of African domestic politics, and how the patron-client system has defined the functioning of political regimes, and their consequences on the state and population. He argues that the nature of domestic politics or prebendal politics based on patron-clientelistic systems in much of Africa has been driven by informal networks through which state resources were appropriated to support and consolidate regimes in power and their followers. Political clientelism, as a system of governance, was a 'mechanism of exchange: by recognizing private interests and using the machinery of state to purvey private benefits to groups and individuals, in the process giving them vested – and purely instrumental – interest in the maintenance of the state itself (Francis, 2006:80). He then linked the politics of clientelism to patrimonialism and neo-patrimonialism, which are extensions of the patron-clientelistic nature of domestic politics in Africa. First, Francis contend that patrimonialism, as a basis for governance and exercise of political power, entailed the lack of distinction between public and private relationships and the general privatization and informalisation of political life. Patrimonialism involves a high degree of personalized rule, in which the 'strongmen', including the ruling and governing elites, are able to extract and redistribute patrimonial resources along regional, ethnic, religious and familial lines in order to consolidate political power and ensure regime survival (ibid, 81).

Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle, in their seminal study, *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transition in Contemporary*

Perspective also placed neo-patrimonialism in contemporary context at the centre of their analysis:

> "In neo-patrimonial political systems, an individual rules by dint of personal prestige and power; ordinary folk are treated as extension of the 'big man's household, with no rights or privileges other than those bestowed by the ruler. Authority is entirely personalized, shaped by the ruler's preferences rather than those bestowed by the laws. The ruler ensures the political stability of the regime and personal political survival by providing a zone of security in an uncertain environment and by selectively distributing favours and material benefits to loyal followers who are not citizens of the polity so much as the ruler's clients" (Bratton and Walle, 1997:61).

Indeed, neo-patrimonialism is a term that has been used for patrons using state resources in order to secure the loyalty of clients in the general population, and it is indicative of informal patron-client relationships that can reach from the very high up in state structures down to the individuals, including at small village levels. Neo-patrimonialism may underlay or supplant the bureaucratic structures of the state in that only those with connections have the real power. Further, it undermines political institutions and the rule of law, and it is a corrupt practice.

Contrasting patrimonialism and bureaucracies as modes of administration of power, the former is characterized by the absence of distinction between public and private, as well as the all-dominant importance of personal relations between ruler and staff (Weber, 1978:231-241). Reciprocal exchange of unequal goods creating personal ties is a principle universally found in rural dominated cultures. As intermediary staff are institutionalized, exchange takes place in the form of granting privileges in return for political loyalty (Gerdes, 2013). Exchange of values, regularly taking on the symbolically enriched material form of gifts, may appear as a totally voluntary act, yet traditional rules of reciprocity bind both parties (Mauss, 1954-10-12). Morally, the ruler is not free to reciprocate or not, leading to regularization of domination (Gerdes, 2013).

This is due to the gift having more than an economic quality, it remains linked to the giver, and exchange creates a "spiritual bond" with the receiver (Mauss, 1954:11). Reciprocal exchange has been considered the very foundation of the political pattern in Sub-Saharan Africa (Chabal, 2009; Bayart, 1993). These

discussions are useful for clarifying the notion of patrimonialism. The core characteristic of patrimonialism is the creation of legitimacy by establishing complex personal bonds of loyalty, making use of the traditional principles of reciprocal exchange of unequal values. This implies that there is no distinction between public and private, that the "authoritative allocation of values' (Easton, 1953) takes place through personal relations patterning the administration of power, and that clientelism is an integral feature of patrimonialism. Here, the patrimonial ruler seeks to integrate the whole populace into clientelistic networks expressing reciprocal relations (Reno, 1998). In explaining this further, William Reno noted that clientelism is a pyramidal system of exchange of unequal values. He noted that its basic units are personal dyadic relations. The values allocated by the higher ranking party are termed patronage. Patrimonialism further implies that there are no universal rights. Justice means treating persons differently according to social status rather than respecting their equal rights as citizens (Mungui-Pippidi, 2006). Here, I also explore the variants of patrimonialism in order to place the chapter is its proper analytical context. In pure patrimonialism, there is complete separation of functionary from the means of carrying out his functions (Weber, 1978:234).

According to Weber, the paramount ruler personally controls all economic opportunities, and private prerogatives are controlled and discretionarily allocated by him. Providing the means of administration both increases the need for the ruler to personally acquire patrimonial revenues and his ability to control patrimonial staff. This correlates with staff subsistence being assured by "living from the Lord's Table" or receiving discretionary "allowances, usually in kind from the lord's magazine treasury" (ibid, 235). In the "estate-type of patrimonialism", Weber asserts that the "administrative staff appropriate particular power and the corresponding economic assets", and have personal control of the means of administration. Individuals making up the patrimonial staff live by the appropriation of property income, fees or taxes" or from exploiting fiefs (ibid). Thus, whenever lower ranking holders of authority privately appropriate authority, patrimonial authority tends to disintegrate. Legitimacy is created through the exchange of rights to appropriation against loyalty, but it is compromised and opportunities of the ruler to impose his will are severely limited. Further, "feudal patrimonialism" and prebendal patrimonialism" are borderline cases but

nevertheless fall under the patrimonial paradigm (ibid, 255-262). Such decentralized patrimonialism and the associated weak legitimacy of the central ruler imply deficits in control. It is often, though not necessarily, spatially manifested and more pronounced in the peripheral politics (Gerder, 2013).

In the 1970s and 1980s, African countries experienced new civil wars and insurgencies. The outbreak of war in Sudan; the civil wars and liberation conflicts in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau; the wars of Liberation in Namibia and Zimbabwe; the guerrilla war in Uganda and the conflict between pro-and anti-apartheid groups in South Africa. During the 1990s, some of these wars continued and new ones appeared, many of them with significant religious dimensions. In a study of African insurgencies, Christopher Clapham distinguished between four main types of wars: (1) Liberation insurgencies aimed at achieving independence from colonial or minority rule; (2) Separatist insurgencies which represent the interest of ethnic groups or regions within an existing state and aim at achieving secession from or autonomy within the state, this will include the case of southern Sudan; (3) Reform insurgencies seeking radical reform of the state, the case of Rwanda may be seen as an example of this type; (4) Warlord insurgencies aim at changing the leadership of the state without necessarily wishing to create a new state radically different from the existing one. The latter is rather being directed towards creating a personal political fiefdom within the state, and cases of this would be Liberia, Sierra Leone and Congo (Clapham, 1998:6-7).

Re-marginalization, Re-criminalization, Exploitation and Economic Insecurity of Ex-combatants

In this section, I discuss the factors that can predispose ex-combatants to re-engaging in violence. Here, I will pose and test the research hypothesis: *"The more ex-combatants are re-marginalized, the more they are likely to engage in violence"*. I begin by presenting the primary nexus and the context-specific processes for analysis:

1. The Primary Nexus is envisioned as the point where there is a significant alignment of common processes, and the point at which the potential for violence is extremely high.

2. Context Specific Processes highlight the unique manner in which underlying risks factors interact to produce violence. These categories are not mutually exclusive, as an understanding of the first stage is essential for the second stage to be meaningful.

The primary nexus framework posits that ex-combatant violence can best be understood by analysing the interaction among four explanatory factors namely: *Re-marginalization, Re-criminalization, Exploitation, and Economic Insecurity (RREEI).* The context specific processes embody critical risk factors which are viewed as existing conditions that could potentially culminate in violence. These include, but are not limited to: economic decline, dilapidated health and education infrastructure, lack of legitimate and adept state apparatus, clientalism, nepotism, corruption, lack of a legitimate political system, lack of a functioning judicial system, disintegration of the social fabric of society, social exclusion, geo-political and regional instability, and class conflict (Sawyer, 2015:15-18; LPRS Report 2008). By using this analytical framework, the study strives to develop a better understanding of the types of re-marginalization, re-criminalization, exploitation and economic insecurity which makes ex-combatants likely to engage in violence. While the four explanatory factors are discussed here, I will limit my analysis and give greater focus to the discussion on re-marginalization which was a dominant expression among the research participants.

Re-marginalization: The process of re-marginalization is significant in understanding why ex-combatants have the motivation to resort to violence in post-war era. Recent research has shown that, while disarmament and demobilization appear to have solved some problems, at least temporarily, they also generate new ones (Call and Stanley 2003, Gamba 2003; Mehlum et.al, 2002). After ex-combatants have been disarmed and demobilized, they are released into societies that are often ill-equipped to receive them (Themmer, 2011:11). Not only do ex-combatants tend to lack employment and necessary skills (given the short period of their encampment) to compete on the labour market, more often they suffer from trauma and social stigmatization. Sukanya Podder's work highlights a pre-war agrarian crisis in some West African countries, where youth in rural areas were marginalized in a stifling social order. This meant

that 'in reintegrating successfully, returning youth ex-combatants needed alternatives to their erstwhile rural dependency and the exploitation due to stalled land reform measure of their labour by older land-owning patrons'(Podder, 2012:197). In turn, an anonymous urban life was deemed more attractive for many ex-combatants. Indeed, the promotion of a home community return could entail an unfortunate return to a pre-war status quo for them, which in turn might mean re-marginalization and a renewal of the seeds of unrest (Podder, 2012:199). If people are excluded from the political process of decision-making, they may, in the long run, seek to address the situation through violent means (Ohlson, 2008:136; Wallenstein, 2002).

Further, groups may seek empowerment through the use of arms if they have fears for their safety. Protection against physical abuse is a powerful incentive for ordinary civilians to join rebel movements (Themmer, 2011:15). Although repression in the form of state abuses decreases the probability of non-violent protest, it significantly increases the likelihood of rebellion and civil war (Regan and Norton (2005). A similar argument has been made by Sambanis (2002:229), who stated that an increase in a government's repression of nonviolent opposition will reduce nonviolent activities of an opposition group but increase its violent activities. Thus, any political re-marginalization of ex-combatants in a post-conflict society can be seen as based on patrimonialism that is rule founded on personal relations rather than rational bureaucratic principles (Themmer, 2011). When this happens, state resources are usually allocated to the political supporters of the ruling party, friends and family members, rather than on the basis of universal principles of need. I will return to re-marginalization of ex-combatants in communities later in this chapter.

Re-criminalization: The following questions were addressed to the participants and I have provided answers to them in the analysis.

1*. How are ex-combatants re-criminalized and by whom?*

2. Are ex-combatants the only group re-criminalized in their communities and why is this so?

3. Who re-recriminalizes ex-combatants?

4. How would you avoid being re-criminalized, specifically, what steps will you take to prevent this?

First deceit, that is, false promises and cheating by the leaders, forceful recruitment, plunders and pillage, maiming and killings characterized the first phase of ex-combatants criminalization. Second, re-criminalization occurs through rejection and stigmatization by communities. The insecurity of reintegration, both physical and socio-economic, combined with the perception of broken promises on the government side, a sense of being stigmatized by society and constant offers to return to criminal activities make for an extremely difficult and turbulent process (Derks, et.al 2011:48). The loss of identity by many ex-combatants after they quit a life of war adds to the problems, and this sense of rejection fosters a re-engagement in violence. Third, ex-combatants continue to face the excessive use of force by agents of the state.

Ex-combatants are re-criminalized through the availability of drugs and weak regulations to prosecute offenders. The use of drugs is identified as a major source of violence (LDEA 2015). Consuming drugs emboldens the users to engage in unplanned violent activities. Production, consumption, and trafficking in drugs are illegal in Liberia. Local information suggests that foreign nationals dominate the trade, including supplying cocaine to workers (predominantly ex-combatants) in the mining fields (Agoha, 2013-2016). According to the Director of Liberia's Drugs Enforcement Agency, Anthony Sour, the main challenges in fighting drugs problems are the lack of legal framework to address the issue and that "traffickers, users and other people take advantage of that weakness". Further, the government has not been in a position to finance all of its projects properly because of the war, and Liberia can only become drug-free if there are harsher penalties against drug offenders. Currently, a drug user can get bail for as little as US472 (ISS, 2012). The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) pinpoints some of the worst affected areas in and around Monrovia, the capital city. The communities in Liberia with the highest drug use include, Congo Town, New Kru Town, West Point, Paynesville, Montserrado Central (all sites of this research), Clara Town, and Chocolate City (UNODC 2012). Addiction is said to be linked to crime and violence. During the civil war, variations of drugs were consumed by militias and combatants, and were thought to be a type of "psychic and physical protection" against enemy bullets, and to make fighters brave and fearless" (ISS, 2012). This perception still prevails in post-conflict Liberia, possibly being the driving force for engaging in violent activities. However, it is difficult to

assess what role drugs play in increasing violence, as cultural, historical, political and economic factors are intertwined in a country still emerging from conflict. Poverty plays a role as the youth turn to illicit drugs and violent crimes for simple lack of economic opportunity.

Fourth, the regional context has brought a re-criminalizing effect on Liberia's ex-combatants (UNMIL 2014). Common security threats encountered by ex-combatants are the emerging criminal structures that regularly put them in contact with "job offers." As former combatants know how to use a weapon, they are seen as a useful asset for these groups. In the conflict in Cote d' Ivoire, Liberian ex-combatants were recruited by different actors. Thus, re-criminalization has taken two forms. First, many of the recruited ex-combatants received monetary rewards to fight following the electoral crisis in 2010/2011. When President Laurent Gbagbo was ousted, many of those who were fighting on his side fled back to Liberia with significant numbers of weapons. As their funding dried up, the acquired weapons became instruments for the perpetration of violence to sustain their high-profile life-style. Second, following renewed violence in Cote d'Ivoire after the ascendancy of President Alhassan Ouattara into office, again, Liberian ex-combatants became ready targets for recruitment for mercenary activities against the Ouattara government and international peacekeepers. In this connection, 18 Liberian fighters (ex-combatants) who engaged in several attacks in Cote d'Ivoire were arrested and tried in Liberian court for their involvement in killing of seven United Nations peacekeepers in Cote d'Ivoire in 2012. Of this number, 13 were convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment, while 5 were acquitted. There are concerns within Liberia that the process of re-criminalization of ex-combatants portends great dangers for the peace and stability of the country. The implication is that, although the DDRR had disarmed and demobilized ex-combatants, their engagement in insurgency and mercenarism at the regional level has effectively re-armed them, and it is highly unlikely that the Liberian government will embark on DDRR in its territory again. There is apprehension within Liberian society of the ongoing drawdown and eventual departure of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), fearing that the departure of the UN may lead to a resurgence of conflict in the light of the presence of active ex-combatants.

Finally, as written in its report of November 2013, the United Nations Panel of Experts for Liberia during its investigation found that hundreds of former combatants, some of them armed, were active in the Gola forest bordering Liberia and Sierra Leone where they are illegally mining gold and engaging in other illicit activities, including drugs and weapons smuggling (UN Panel of Experts Report, 2013:18). The report further stated that these groups of ex-combatants operating outside of any State authority have also initiated cross-border armed skirmishes. For instance, the Panel received information from Sierra Leone that on 11 October 2013, men armed with artisanal hunting shotguns and operating on the Sierra Leone-Liberia border ambushed Sierra Leonean forest rangers in the Gola Forest, seriously injuring one of the rangers. The Panel also documented evidence of former Liberian fighters who were recruited to fight for the Government in Mali in 2013. One of them, a former fighter for Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) rebel group, provided information on how he, along with others from the Liberia United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), and the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) rebel groups, had travelled to Sierra Leone, onwards to Guinea and then to Bamako, where they were paid and equipped before fighting on behalf of the government. Finally, it seemed that ex-combatants feel that they have been singled out within the communities for re-criminalization by the state, their leaders who seek to advance their own political and economic interests, and by external actors who use them to fight in civil wars at the sub-regional level.

Exploitation: The following questions were addressed to the participants and I have provided answers to them in the analysis.

1. *Who are those exploiting ex-combatants?*

2. *Why are ex-combatants exploited and how?*

3. *Are ex-combatants happy about being exploited and what can you do to avoid being exploited?*

Ex-combatant exploitation occurred during the DDRR and after. But of much concern is the nature of their exploitation in post-war Liberia. The exploitation is linked to the actions of individuals, agencies, multinational corporations, international organizations, and political groups, etc. Foreign concessions whose

operations are mainly in the area of palm oil and rubber plantations, mining, construction and oil exploration, have employed large numbers of ex-combatants as unskilled and contract workers. They are paid low wages; far below the minimum wage recommended by the International labour Organization (ILO). The agreements which the government signed with concessions granting them operating rights, largely excluded the participation of host local communities (inclusive of ex-combatants). As a result, they are denied benefits accruing from corporate social responsibility, and workers remain marginalized and exploited. National labour laws are ineffective to compel concessions to apply appropriate wage remunerations and working conditions. Sometimes, officials of government receive bribes from concessions to the detriment of the predominant ex-combatant workers.

This has led to massive exploitation of community members and ex-combatants. This state of affairs has always led to violence, spearheaded by ex-combatants in an attempt to get their demands addressed by the concessionaire and the government. This type of violence has often led to the destruction of properties, injuries, and the disruption of operations of the company concerned. For instance, in 2007, a Belgian Manager of the Liberia Agricultural Company (LAC) was killed by workers who were protesting low wages and lack of social benefits (UN Report 2007). In July 2014, there was exchange of gun fire between the national police and workers who were protesting against a foreign mining company – Arcelor Mittal - over poor working conditions and lack of social development in communities within the concession area. Six police officers sustained gunshot wounds. Only those with skills in the use of weapons could carry out this shooting and this was widely attributed to ex-combatants among the workers. Also there have been concerns of forced labour within concessions which is frowned on by the ILO. Workers are exploited in construction, agriculture, and sometimes the use of child labour occurs. But because of the weaknesses of national justice institutions, these activities remain unchecked (Agoha, 2014/ 2015).

After the civil war in Liberia, there was a burgeoning of private security companies. Since the end of the civil war in 2003, the Liberian security industry has considerably expanded in size. Its total revenues reportedly doubled between 2004 and 2011. This would make it one of the fastest growing segments in the

Liberian economy. Today, an estimated 87 private security companies are active in the country, employing about 7,000 individuals, all of whom are Liberians, mostly male. The number of private guards outstrips that of soldiers (2,000) and police officers (4,000). The services of security companies predominantly consist in unarmed and static perimeter protection, mostly in urban environments and particularly the capital city of Monrovia (Von Boemcken, 2012:2)

Most are owned by top and mid-level rebel commanders and they have employed former combatants who provide security to government institutions, international organizations and agencies, business entities, multinational corporation/concession, and residential houses. This is the minimum the society can afford them after their participation in civil conflict and after what many Liberians described as failed reintegration process. These groups who harbour anti-government sentiments see themselves as being exploited given the low level of salaries they receive which range from US$100. 00 to US$150.00 per month, and sometimes they are owed arrears for several months (Agoha 2012-2014). They are highly vulnerable and often, they have used violence to express resentment of exploitation. For instance, in 2010, personnel of a private security – INTERCOM – deployed at various installations of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), embarked on a violent protest against the organization for what they perceived as the inability of the UN leadership to intervene on their behalf and address the low wages paid to them by the management of INTERCOM. This incident happened upon the realization that UN pays to the company (INTERCOM) a high amount estimated at between US$500.00 to US$1,000.00 per worker. While in turn, INTERCOM pay them the range stated above. The violence led to the destruction of UN properties and also significant injuries to its staff members (UNMIL Report, 2010).

In Liberia, most ex-combatants have transformed into commercial motorcyclists and they operate under an umbrella union (President LMTU, 2013). This probably cuts across countries of the Mano River Union as former fighters use this means to generate income for their livelihood in the absence of sustainable reintegration. These groups are also known to be very vulnerable because of their poor economic status and exposure to harassment by the police due to their frequent engagement in civil disobedience, such as riots, protests, and blockade of roads to express their anger and frustration towards the

government. In addition, they provide other services such as being "rented" or "recruited" for political activities, as spoilers, and are also known to engage in drug trafficking and armed robbery amongst others. In the light of all these, including the risk they pose to road users due to high rate of accidents, the government has issued operational guidelines for the motorcyclists, which includes; complying within designated areas, wearing reflective vests and helmets, registration and license of motorcycles, and night-time curfew from 10pm to 6am etc. In addition, the government has imposed various fines and taxes on them to ensure that operational standards are met. But this has always been resisted by the motorcyclists who see themselves as being exploited and this has led to frequent violent clashes with the police who try to enforce the regulations (UNMIL 2015). They also extend their frustration and anger to members of the public through mob justice, particularly when any of their members is attacked (Agoha, 2014).

Key (civil) war actors are likely to have controlled, participated or enjoyed the benefits stemming from the war economy (Spear, 2006; Ballentine and Nitzschke 2005). They are also likely to transform and continue dominating a range of economic sectors, especially those with high profit margins, in the years after conflict (Torjesen, 2013a). The evolving patterns of domination, monopolization or open competition in the economy will matter for low-level ex-combatants as they seek to enter into mainstream economic activity (Torjesen 2013b). These considerations, in addition to formal economic assessments of growth, employment prospects and livelihood options, need to be factored in when planning economic reintegration.

Finally, it is clear that ex-combatants have remained victims of exploitation in the communities and in the wider society, and this is manifested in different forms in the activities they are engaged in. Although ex-combatants may lack the power to effect any change that can have positive impact on their lives, they have the capacity to pursue a course of action (violent orientation) to demonstrate disapproval of their continued exploitation, as shown above.

Economic Insecurity: The following questions were addressed to the participants and I have provided answers to them in my analysis.

1. *Why are ex-combatants economically insecure?*

*2. Who created these conditions of insecurity?*

3. How can ex-combatants avoid being economically insecure? What will you do?

One of the main benefits of participating in war is the opportunity for economic gain. Some scholars argue that the central aim of rebellion is economic profit, especially through the illegal taxation of natural resources for export (Collier, 2000:839, 852). Even though other factors may explain the outbreak of violence, economic considerations may become more important with time. In some civil wars, an economic interest in continuing the war at a profitable level may replace defeating the enemy as the main objective (Berdal and Malone, 2000:2, 6). Taking part in war can also be profitable for the individual combatants. Being a combatant ensures a certain income either in the form of a salary or from looting. The use of violence may also be a way to gain access to land, water and mineral resources by forcing original owner's way (Berdal, 1996; 16-17; Kees, 2000:23-25, 29-31.

There is a lack of economic security which is linked increasingly to the issue of the sustainability of DDRR and wider stabilization efforts. There appear to be deep-rooted assumptions that in post-conflict settings, economic recovery will occur, providing absorption capacity for former combatants and other war affected people. Yet, evidence for this is severely limited. Ex-combatants have alleged economic insecurity due to their poor living conditions and that of their families, without any prospects that these conditions will improve in the medium to long term. They have attributed their impoverishment to the actions of the state, either as a deliberate neglect of their communities or as a specific action targeted on ex-combatants for their roles in the civil wars.
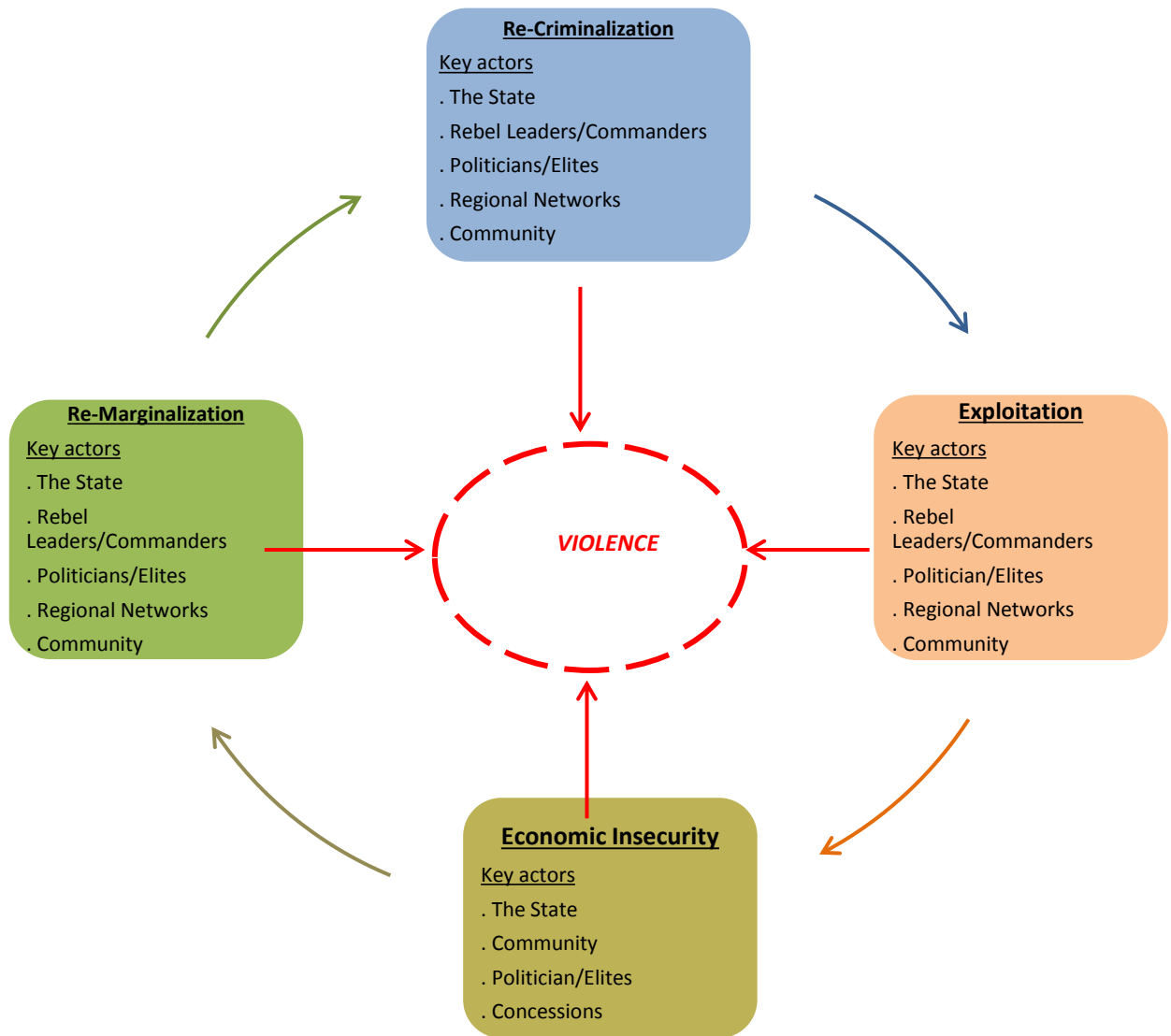
Figure 3: A circle of analytical framework with key driving agencies / institutions - by the author, 2014.
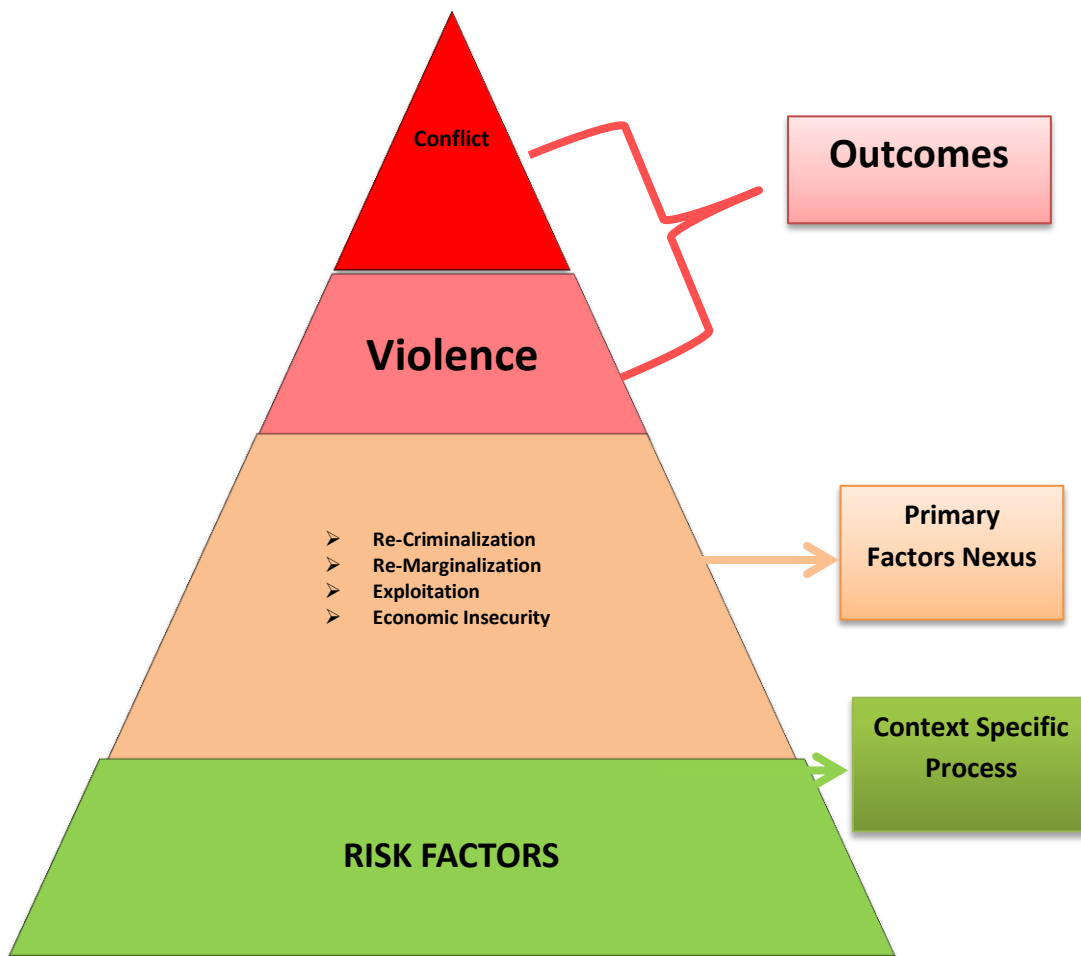
Figure 4: A pyramid of analytical framework - by the author, 2014

In fig 3 above, the analytical framework circle explains the key actors that induce or facilitate the quadripartite of *re-criminalization, re-marginalization, exploitation, and economic insecurity*. Former rebel leaders and commanders' decisions to sponsor ex-combatant violence may, in fact, be the function of their relative position in the larger political and economic network. The willingness of rebel leaders and commanders to remobilize and re-criminalize ex-combatants through their involvement in violence can be viewed through the lens of brokerage. According to this perspective, rebel leaders and commanders are most disposed to violence when they establish themselves as brokers – who distribute economic resources between governing elites and ex-combatant communities – in post-civil war societies. Post-war societies are often characterized by weak bureaucracies, judiciary, police, armed forces and the legislature. Such institutional shortcomings

compel the governing elite to outsource different state functions to influential private persons, or brokers, e.g. former rebel leaders and commanders. By offering these services to former fighters, political elites are now subject to the whims and caprices of the influential brokers, who re-criminalize ex-combatants by using them to create and sustain violence as well as by their exploitation due to their weak position. For the governing elites there are clear benefits for such outsourcing. Brokers controlling informal networks can, for instance, be used to engage in dubious activities that governing elites wish to remain undetected, such as intimidation of political rivals or illegal economic activities (Utas 2012).

In the post-conflict state such as Liberia, key actors are known as being culpable for the re-marginalization, re-criminalization, exploitation, and economic insecurity of ex-combatants. Their actions drive ex-combatants to engage in violence which then has greater negative ramifications for the society, and threaten the nascent democracy. In fig 4 above, a threshold is attained when the risk factors at the base (content-specific process), interact with the primary factors to produce violence and conflict at the apex. The risk factors are usually the underlying causes of wars which remain unaddressed by the political and ruling elites in peace time. They may remain latent for a longer period of time until there is a trigger. Therefore, in a highly elitist and neo-patrimonial society like Liberia, the continued display of the primary factors may inevitably lead to violence, and a worst case scenario will be a relapse to conflict.

Re-marginalization of Ex-combatant Communities

In most post-conflict societies like Liberia, former combatants demand attention on issues that specifically affect them especially when they feel that they have not benefitted from the peace agreement that ended the war or from the reintegration processes. Liberia ex-combatants feel re-marginalized from local and national development benefits and particularly vulnerable to economic difficulties. Re-marginalization of ex-combatants has negative effects on them and the cohesion and stability of the society in which they live (Columbia University, 2014). The phrase "marginalization" was frequently mentioned during face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions with ex-combatants, and often accentuated by stories of how they suffered from the first phase of marginalization that led to the civil war. Yet, they have not been recognized as "liberators and "agents of peace"

in ending the war. There are gaps in research and policy identifying and understanding ex-combatants re-marginalization in Liberia. In seeking to address these gaps, the study asked the following questions on ex-combatants re-marginalization:
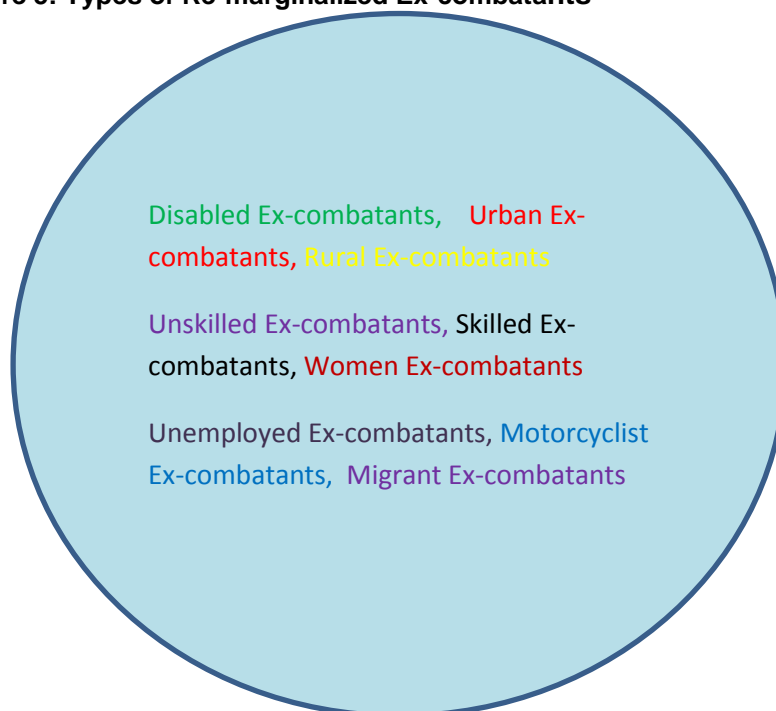
> Why are ex-combatants re-marginalized and by who?
> Did ex-combatants receive reintegration benefits?
> Are ex-combatants' communities represented at all levels of government?
> To what extent can re-marginalization lead them to engage in violence?
> What are the community's perceptions about ex-combatants re-marginalization?
> What policy/framework exists to support ex-combatants' livelihood and prevent their re-marginalization and resort to violent?
> Can political and economic empowerment prevent the re-marginalization of ex-combatants?
> Which other groups apart from ex-combatants feel that they are re-marginalized (e.g. members of the ex-Armed Forces of Liberia, widows of ex-security personnel, unemployed youth, commercial motorcyclists, etc.)?
> How do ex-combatants respond to their re-marginalization?
> What are the implications of ex-combatants re-marginalization?

Looking at the fieldwork data, the respondents feel that they are re-marginalized because they belong to a particular group, referred to as "fighters", and consequently are excluded from society and the benefits accruing to that society. Their views probably reflect Catherine Bolten's (2012) assertion that in the aftermath of the war, ex-combatants embraced their status as "war affected" victims and "beneficiaries of reintegration, further alienating themselves from civilians as they navigated foreign, rather than local models of peacebuilding. (Re)-marginalization can be understood as persistent inequality and adversity resulting from discrimination, social stigma and stereotypes. Understanding the nature and depth of re-marginalization is the first step toward combatting it (NDI undated). The notion of "nothing about us without us," a view held by many ex-combatants, remains prevalent in Liberia. Opportunities exist in Liberia for engaging ex-combatants into productive activities, particularly with huge international support to the country in post-war reconstruction and peace

consolidation. Unfortunately, it appears that DDRR implementing agencies were not able to identify appropriate interventions in which ex-combatants can enrol, and participate for their economic livelihood. There was a clear indication during the fieldwork that ex-combatants are likely to react violently depending on the extent of their re-marginalization. Also there are no clear policies/framework that target ex-combatants. Therefore, increase in research on the visibility of the issues involved in their re-marginalization is necessary for a better understanding of issues for institutional action. Ultimately, efforts to recognize and include them in the political process and address the economic inequities associated with re-marginalization may discourage their resort to violence. The occasional protests associated with other groups such as members of the ex-Armed Forces of Liberia, widows of ex-security personnel, unemployed youth, commercial motorcyclists, etc.) also give an indication that they feel a sense of marginalization. In the figure below, I have identified types of re-marginalized ex-combatants. This typology was derived from my extensive interactions with these groups during the course of my field work (formal and informal) across the country.

Figure 5: Types of Re-marginalized Ex-combatants

Disabled Ex-combatants, Urban Ex-combatants, Rural Ex-combatants

Unskilled Ex-combatants, Skilled Ex-combatants, Women Ex-combatants

Unemployed Ex-combatants, Motorcyclist Ex-combatants, Migrant Ex-combatants

Source: The typology is based on the author's research across the country

Each group of ex-combatants experiences re-marginalization differently, and aims to ensure how they can overcome this. Disabled ex-combatants feel re-marginalized due to their incapacitation and not receiving any support from the state, with many relying on street begging. Rural and Urban ex-combatants struggle to contend with officials of the government in seeking for inclusion in the political process and befitting from state resources. Skilled and unskilled ex-combatants engage in frequent labour disputes with concessions, sometimes leading to violence as the government is unable to provide employment for this category. Motorcyclist ex-combatants have gained notoriety for violently challenging state security when their interests are infringed upon by the latter. Migrant or migratory ex-combatants have fought in the civil wars in Cote d'Ivoire and probably in other places where war is still ongoing in Africa, such as in Mali. Many who fought in Cote d'Ivoire returned home feeling re-marginalized because financial promises made by the protagonists in the war were not fully met. A known Liberia fighter, Joseph Marzah, (aka Zigzag) of the Independent Patriotic Front (NPFL) of Charles Taylor, and a recruiter of ex-combatants for the Cote d'Ivoire war, informed me in 2012 that most of the attacks in the west of Cote d'Ivoire were carried out by dissatisfied ex-combatants who did not receive the financial promise made to them. Their frustration has been exacerbated by their re-marginalization in Liberia for participating in the Ivoirian civil war. Members of the re-marginalized ex-combatants experience re-marginalization in different ways, but share common hurdles, that is, to be recognized, participate in political processes, and their economic empowerment. They, however, pursue these agenda in different ways – from subtle persuasion to violent inclination. Also some of these groups have different ways of coping, and may have different financial, social and cultural capital that is likely not to make them engage in acts of confrontation with state security or in violence. In addition to limitation of the explanatory factors to re-marginalization, the study also limited focus on categories of violence to the discussion of political and economic violence. This is discussed in the Liberia case study in chapter five.

In addition to examining the research hypothesis, I have also asked the following question: *If ex-combatants are no longer re-marginalized, re-criminalized, exploited, and made economically insecure would that stop them from re-engaging in violence?*

It will be difficult to provide evidence to show that violence will stop in Liberia if these explanatory factors are met. For instance, previous research on ex-combatants re-engaging in violence in a post-democratic dispensation is lacking as this is the first time that Liberia has elected a President through constitutional means and it is attempting to hand over to another democratically elected President in 2018. There are other reasons why it is difficult to determine whether violence by ex-combatants will stop or not.

Liberian society is inherently violent as demonstrated by the deadly conflicts that have characterized the country since 1822 to 1847, when it was declared a Republic, and beyond. In other words, violence runs deep in the social fabric of the society. In his seminal work entitled "The Evolution of Deadly Conflict in Liberia: From 'Paternaltariansm' to State Collapse", Jeremy Levitt discussed the nature and dimensions of violent conflicts, including settler vs. indigenous conflict; tribal conflicts, and the "Great Wars" 1989-2003. In his conclusion, he noted that the Great Wars brought about an era of state disintegration, brutality and egregious and wanton destruction of life and properties that few states and peoples have experienced (Levitt, 2005:245). Many of the causes of the wars remain largely unaddressed today, and this remains a potential source of violence.

Ex-combatants have become a category of spoilers in Liberia because of their exclusion from the political processes as many continue to rely on violence to push for recognition and political inclusion in the government and the decision-making processes, not necessarily as active participants, but for their voices to be heard. Violence appears to be a profitable venture for ex-combatants, and its perpetuation could create opportunities for looting. In addition, within the communities, ex-combatants arguably have access to weapons (I can confirm the availability of locally made short guns), and also they have the advantage of knowing how to use the weapons more than any other category because of their war experiences.

Violence may not stop because the huge expectation of ex-combatants from the reintegration process was not delivered to them (though this should be a continuous process) as the government has inevitably terminated the reintegration process. It is not likely that the government will meet the expectations of ex-combatants given the prevailing economic conditions in the

country, exacerbated by the global economic meltdown. The reconstruction of the post-Ebola economy has been a daunting challenge to the regime, and corruption remains at its peak, impeding the mobilization of resources for genuine national development. Ex-combatants do not feel that the government has the capacity to meet all their demands given the political rivalry and divisions that exist among the political actors. Less or no attention is given to the ex-combatants among the larger members of the society. Entrenched acts of nepotism and mismanagement of the country's resources remain impediments to the improvement of human conditions.

Divergent views exist in Liberia on what should be done for ex-combatants. There is a strong perception in some communities that ex-combatants do not deserve to be given special treatment because of the atrocities they committed during the war. 8. Rebel leaders and commanders who serve as brokers between ex-combatants and the government may want to maintain the status quo for the ex-combatants so that their profiteering channels are sustained.
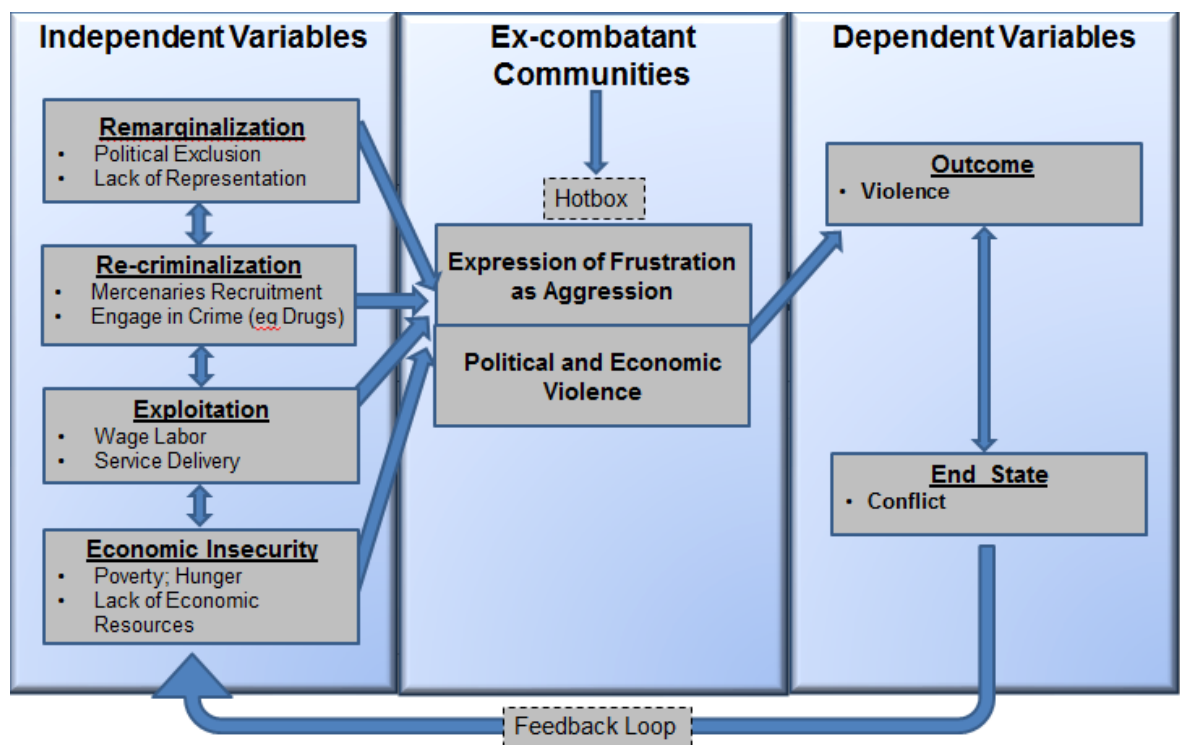

Figure 6: Description of the linkages between the variables and how they interact to generate violence involving ex-combatants. By author 2016.

From figure 6 above, the independent variables converge at the combustible box which is followed by the expression of frustration and aggression by ex-combatants leading to the pursuit of political and economic violence. Although, all ex-combatants appear to suffer from the four dimensional factors, however, depending on their type as indicated in figure 5 above, they may pursue different interests. But the key factor uniting all Liberian ex-combatants, irrespective of their type and the factional groups they belong to, is that they feel re-marginalized. In the same manner, they have formed a united front to overturn their re-marginalization, ostensibly through the pursuit of political and economic violence. Figure 6 also notes that the end state of the violence that has been generated may in the medium to long term lead to conflict if not well managed. I have discussed in detail the nature of political and economic violence in chapter five – the case study.

Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed the four dimensional analytical framework factors and how they have impacted on ex-combatants livelihood, and subsequently became triggers for the engagement in violent activities. The discussion focused more broadly on the re-marginalization component which was the dominant feature throughout the research. I also discussed the conceptual parameters of violence in a post-conflict setting with a contextual linkage to the nature of the political economy, and in the case of Liberia, its neo-patrimonial appendages.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter, I outlined the processes undertaken to identify, approach, recruit and collect information from the participants in the research. It also includes the strategies adopted in the collection of data that enabled the organization of the work into a cohesive and conceptual product. In addition, the research methodology explains how the research question/or hypothesis have been addressed and the rationale behind this particular method and the materials used. It highlighted the four analytical framework factors and the questions asked under each factor. Finally, the choice of this approach/method provides enough information for the study to be replicated in a similar way and in another situation.

Methodological approach

The methodological approach adopted in the study is qualitative research. This determined the methodological design, the research strategy, and implementation of the field study. Methodological awareness involves a commitment to revealing as much as possible of the procedure and evidence that have led to a particular conclusion; always open to the possibility that the conclusion may need to be revised in the light of new evidence (Silverman, 2005:209). The strategy adopted involved the triangulation of data, defined in social science as the mixing of data or methods in qualitative research to increase the credibility and validity of the results (Olsen, 2004:1). It is not aimed merely at validation but at deepening and widening the researcher's understanding of the subject being studied. Triangulation has been criticized on several grounds, especially from writers aligned with constructionism who noted a tendency of triangulation subscribing to a naïve realism that implies that there can be a single definitive account of the social world (Bryman, 2001). But other writers working within the constructionist framework do not deny the potential of triangulation; instead they depict its utility in terms of adding a sense of richness and complexity to an inquiry (Bryman). Data collection techniques included the use of semi-structured interviews, focus group study, participant observation, and a cross-sectional telephone survey where appropriate.

The use of in-depth face-to-face interview method in study of this nature is that it will allow a deeper, more unique understanding of the conceptual processes examined in the research: ex-combatants, violence, DDRR, peacebuilding and transformation, as well as the key actors being studied. Through in-depth interview, qualitative researchers try to understand the meaning people make of their lives from their own perspectives. The method also takes seriously the notion that people are experts on their own experience and so are best able to report how they experienced a particular event or phenomenon.

As Brenner, Brown and Canter (1985:3) argued:

> "Probably the central value of the interview as a research procedure is that it allows both parties to explore the meaning of the questions and answers involved. There is an implicit, or explicit sharing and/or negotiation of understanding in the interview situation which is not so central, and often not present in other research procedures. Any misunderstandings on the part of the interviewer or the interviewee can be checked immediately in a way that is just not possible when questionnaires are being completed, or tests are being performed".

The study recognizes the advantage of focus groups in relation to the benefits of group interaction, such as the extent to which the cross-flow of communication sparks ideas that would emerge as easily in one-to-one interview. It is based on the premise that hearing others talk about their experiences in a supportive environment may enable participants to respond by sharing their own experiences. This is particularly important in trying to elicit a broader dimension of a group view on violence, and the DDRR of ex-combatants in post-conflict Liberia. Johnson (1996) argues from a realist perspective that focus groups have considerable potential to raise consciousness and empower participants. Focus group discussions are good at revealing, not only what the participants think, but why they have the political attitude or preferences that they have (Kitzinger and Barbour, 1999:5; Tursunovic, 2002:14).

Observational studies formed part of the data collection techniques used in this study. The study considered participant observation as a very effective way of finding out what people do in particular contexts, the routines and interactional patterns of their everyday lives. The choice of participant observation was therefore necessary for this study in order to enable me document my experiences. Residing and working in Liberia since 2004, I

understand the nuance of what is occurring. I first established rapport with the respondent's overtime, and this provided a good level of trust in me which I thought led them to open up and describe their true feelings, thoughts, and intentions. Throughout the observation, I took notes on what I have seen, what the observed events mean and this helped in answering the research questions during subsequent data analysis.

In this study, telephone interviews proved to be very useful. They share many of the advantages of face-to-face interviewing with good response rate, correction of obvious misunderstandings, and the effective use of probes, etc. Though rapport was initially difficult to achieve, it was compensated by evidence of smaller interviewer effects and a lower tendency towards socially desirable responses (Robson, 2002:282). The lack of visual cues tend to cause disconnect and some problems of interpretation. The major advantage however, particularly if the sample is geographically dispersed, is the lower cost in terms of time, effort and money. Telephone interviewing can be safer as well; you won't get physically attacked over the phone by angry respondent. Telephone interviews afforded greater anonymity and privacy than in a face to face interview. It encouraged those interviewed to be more forthcoming about sensitive matters such as being exposed to violence or being victims of crime (Acierno, et.al 2003; Shannon, et.al 2007). Many interviews occurred over the span of days, weeks and months. The interviews elicited information from respondents to illustrate the nature of violence and their perpetrators in post-conflict Liberia. While some respondents were willing to be mentioned in the research, others were either indifferent or refused to be named.

I used four explanatory factors namely: *Re-marginalization, Re-criminalization, Exploitation, and Economic Insecurity (RREEI),* for the analytical framework. For each of the four factors, I asked questions and responses have been provided in chapter three. The questions for each are listed below:

Re-marginalization

➢ Why are ex-combatants re-marginalized and by who?
➢ Did ex-combatants receive reintegration benefits?
➢ Are ex-combatants' communities represented at all levels of government?

- ➢ To what extent can re-marginalization lead them to engage in violence?
- ➢ What are the community's perceptions about ex-combatants re-marginalization?
- ➢ What policy/framework exists to support ex-combatants' livelihood and prevent their re-marginalization and resort to violent?
- ➢ Can political and economic empowerment prevent the re-marginalization of ex-combatants?
- ➢ Which other groups apart from ex-combatants feel that they are re-marginalized (e.g. members of the ex-Armed Forces of Liberia, widows of ex-security personnel, unemployed youth, commercial motorcyclists, etc.)?
- ➢ How do ex-combatants respond to their re-marginalization?
- ➢ What are the implications of ex-combatants re-marginalization?

Re-criminalization

- ➢ *How are ex-combatants re-criminalized and by whom?*
- ➢ *Are ex-combatants the only group re-criminalized in their communities and why is this so?*
- ➢ *Who re-recriminalizes ex-combatants?*
- ➢ *How would you avoid being re-criminalized, specifically, what steps will you take to prevent this?*

Exploitation

- ➢ *Who are those exploiting ex-combatants?*
- ➢ *Why are ex-combatants exploited and how?*
- ➢ *Are ex-combatants happy about being exploited and what can you do to avoid being exploited?*

Economic Insecurity
- ➢ *Why are ex-combatants economically insecure?*
- ➢ *Who created these conditions of insecurity?*
- ➢ *How can ex-combatants avoid being economically insecure? What will you do?*

In exploring these analytical factors, I drew three main scenarios from post-war experiences which are sketched as follows:

1. If the political economy is negative as demonstrated in chapter five (and affects the ex-combatants), then the state is not likely to have the resources to initiate policies that will improve their conditions.

2. If the state is recording a positive political economy (medium to long term), there is a likelihood of minimal improvement in the conditions of ex-combatants. The problem here is that, as the state provides some support, there is likely going to be higher expectations from the ex-combatants given the perception of huge corruption in the government and their non-inclusion in the decisions that affects their lives.

3. If the escalation of violence inflicts higher costs (in terms of fatalities, resources, loss of political assets and infrastructures etc), this might lead to a further negative political economy, which may then create conditions of mass violent protests, and if not well managed could degenerate into conflict. These three scenarios or phases could be seen as a continuum and in a dynamic mode. Thus, my assessment of the political economy of Liberia is important is evaluating the response of then state to the perceived marginalization of ex-combatants.

I reviewed literatures, documents and records relevant to the study. I also gained knowledge in my personal and official interactions and discussions with officials of aid agencies, women groups, local and traditional leader's, officials of the government, academics, ex-combatants leaders, and youth groups. Some national staff members of the United Nations (male and female) who spoke to me informally on conditions of anonymity gave account of their experiences as combatants/ex-combatants and their transformation into civilian life. These individuals are few of the lucky ones that gained employment into the United Nations as private security guards or drivers, and later rose to higher positions as Administrative Assistants and National Professional Officers after they obtained diplomas or University degrees. Quantitative measures of issues such as age, gender, graphs, and measurements formed part of the context for testimonies.

In September 2004, I arrived at the Roberts International Airport, Liberia just a year after the civil war ended in 2003, and with others, driven in a United Nations vehicle to the Transit Camp residence in the capital Monrovia to assume

my position as a Political Affairs Officer in the Organization. During the long distance drive of about 150km from the airport, the driver was intermittently stopped on the dilapidated road by a group of youth carrying weapons (AK-47s), painted their faces with assortment of colors, and wearing women's wig and dresses. Disarmament has not been done in Liberia and seeing these seeing people with weapons in bizarre costumes was terrifying. They collected money and asked questions in the Liberian colloquial English demanding to know the names and countries of origin of the occupants in the vehicle. I was frightened and hearing that I am a Nigerian, they shook my hands, praising my country for helping to bring peace to Liberia. Then, my fears temporarily disappeared and as we left the scene, I inquired from the driver who these individuals are. He informed me that they are combatants from different rebel groups that fought in the war, noting that we will be meeting them as we drive along and this was true as we met over 50 check points controlled by combatants.

I thought that these encounter could be a source of information for my personal and official undertakings. In this regard, I put up the courage to pass on some comments and questions to the combatants who were rather not aggressive, such as, "well done for providing security along the road". "My friend what is your name"?, "how old are you", "I like your uniform and hair" and I will end by saying "I am your friend from Nigeria". This was the beginning of my interaction with individuals who later came to be known as ex-combatants. While living in the Transit Camp for a year, with the help of a house-keeper I only know as JOHN, I invited some ex-combatants living in the neighborhood to know more about them. I offered some drinks as it is the practice in Liberia when you invite someone for discussion. They were happy and asked questions such as: "how long will you be in Liberia", "what exactly will you be doing", " so who are we going to hand over our weapons over to, the United Nations or the Government of Liberia", and "what will be given to us in return". Complicated aspects of the Liberian English were explained to me by the house-keeper. I met these ex-combatants occasionally when I have the time.

Assuming duties as a Political Affairs Officer, my first task was to join colleagues from the DDRR and Human Rights sections to monitor and report on the process of disarmament at the various cantonments located across Liberia. Beginning from the disarmament and demobilization and culminating in the longer

process of reintegration provided me an opportunity to think about the nature of the Liberian civil war and the "world view" of ex-combatants and their reintegration into civilian life. I document each moment of my encounter and interaction with ex-combatants either in form of a UN report or for my personal use. The information documented also served as references for the many presentations that I make at conferences and workshops I attended, some of which were published. In 2006 when I took up a volunteer teaching appointment at the Graduate School of International Affairs, University of Liberia, I became deeply involved in the understanding of ex-combatants, their roles and the challenges that they face in post-war Liberia. Many of them were my students who were privileged to get sponsorships and pursue a degree programme. The stories of these student ex-combatants and about their colleagues who remain idle, were quite revealing to me and it was at this point that decided to undertake a doctoral degree study in order to conduct further research on them.

Prior to the commencement of the fieldwork, I engaged two undergraduate research assistants (male and female), who are also national staff at United Nations. I organized two days' training for the on basic research ethics; key principles and concepts underpinning the study; and the application of research tools. Issues of confidentiality, anonymity and providing containment were also discussed. As all the research assistants had prior experience in survey administration and focus group discussions, less time was devoted to testing the tools for local relevance, language usage, and cultural sensitivity.

The primary participants (ex-combatants) in the research were identified, approached, and recruited through:

Identification: (1) Documented reports and data on ex-combatants from the Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration, and Rehabilitation (DDRR) process were reviewed to obtain their social profiling, that is, their names, age, location, the vocational training they underwent, if any. This record was accessible at the office of the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (NCDDRR); (2) an informal association of ex-combatants who were easily identified as members of the motorcycle taxi union; (3) traditional leaders and members of local communities where ex-combatants are resettled or "reintegrated"; and (4) through their former leaders.

Approached: (1) through community structures; (2) the leaders of their association; (3) former rebel leaders who have formed political parties, either out of or currently in government; (4) through my personal contacts and work as a staff member of the United Nations Mission in Liberia. I also approached known and influential ex-combatants individually and in a friendly manner. The process proved successful in view of my previous interactions with them on different subjects.

Recruitment: I wrote a letter explaining the intent of the research and channelled it through the community structures and the leadership of the association of ex-combatants requesting their members to participate in the research. They were also recruited through community leaders and elders, as well as through their former factional leaders. Modest incentives, such as the offer of soft drinks were made to facilitate group discussions, as is the usual custom in Liberia. Those who needed privacy were offered a token amount to cover the cost of transportation to a designated location for interview with me.

Ex-combatants as Special Category in the Research

Different assumptions have been held about ex-combatants. The category 'ex-combatants' is a social construct, with a meaning distinct from the individual former fighters encapsulated within it. In this regard, analysis regarding the category necessarily entails 'sorting out the structures of signification' that produce the category, particularly because those structures tend to be presented not as construction but as fixed and natural, as 'background information before the thing itself is directly examined (Geertz, 1993). Through DDRR, modern perceptions about 'African conflict' that is, what it is, why it occurs, and what can be done about it, and 'African fighters' are produced and reproduced in ways that reinforce the idea of Africa as 'the exotic other'(Utas, 2011).

Such ideas are not just to be found in journalism and films about African fighters, but are also embedded in DDRR programme frameworks and evaluations, and in policy and academic literature on DDRR. During conflict, combatants are portrayed as acting out tribal, ethnic, and irrational animosity and barbarity; conflicts are apolitical, formless, and a regression from civilized order (Allen, 1999). After conflict, ex-combatants are said to threaten the state due to primordial, underlying behaviour patterns such that it is natural, normal, and

expected for them to turn to crime or violence. Crime and violence are even said to 'give new justification' to their post-conflict lives (Mashike, 2004). The IDDRS claim that 'idle former combatants are a real security threat' and argue that the ex-combatant threat results ' because of their lack of skills or assets, their tendency to rely on violence to get what they want, and their ignorance of or disrespect for local cultures, leaders and social habits' (IDDRS, 2006).

Further, various literatures converge to present ideas about ex-combatants after conflict. Greed-based narrative hypothesis, as discussed in chapter two, that natural resource predation will drive ex-combatants' behaviour after war, just as it is argued to have done during war, will lead them to engage in banditry, criminality or violence if their economic aspirations are unmet (Collier, 1999). Literature on 'new wars' suggests that ex-combatants of today are fundamentally distinct from the veterans of 'old wars' (Kaldor 2012). In addition, studies on regional dimensions of conflict suggest that ex-combatants are mercenary by nature and will migrate across state borders in search of new opportunities to make war. Discourse of 'New Barbarism', as discussed earlier, in academic and policy accounts of conflict, constructs contemporary civil wars as apolitical and combatants as angry and irrationally violent.

Again, in Robert Kaplan's (1994) article, 'The Coming Anarchy', he asserts that unemployed youth in African states are 'loose molecules in a very unstable social fluid'. In fact, literatures of New Barbarism suggest that unemployed youth are a 'triple threat': they threaten the state *before conflict* breaks out (the number of young men in a state is one of Collier's original proxies for determining the likelihood of war occurrence), *during conflict* (their anger is said to explain why the conflict is so violent), and *after conflict* (their dissatisfaction is said to increase the likelihood of war occurrence) (McMullin, 2013). Africa's youth culture is portrayed not as a source of human capital, where young people are building blocks of peace and reconstruction after war, but as a security threat. These divergent views about African youth and ex-combatants have elicited debate and criticisms, some of which have sought to recapture the political motivation and ideology of violent armed movements, and to challenge the idea that conflict actors in the global South are significantly different from those in other states. The debate is relevant to reintegration since it is often suggested that ex-combatants have been socialized into violent networks that are difficult for them to transcend

in the post-conflict period. But the debate's tendency to naturalize violent penchant among ex-combatants problematically implies that transcending such networks is impossible. It also means that little attention has been paid to the way in which such debates have shaped assumptions about ex-combatants after war and during the reintegration process.

Disarming ex-combatants and then reintegrating them into a society flooded with weapons, particularly after they have formally severed their existing military and social networks through DDRR, will likely make the DDRR participants unsatisfied with DDRR overall. This is because disarmed ex-combatants may still worry about the security of themselves, their families and their property. Sometimes, the security situation becomes so dire that disarmed individuals become willing to expend their resources (if any) on re-armament. Such situations occurred in Liberia after the first civil war, the second and the third, in which many combatants failed to disarm fearing the outbreak of a fourth war.

Scholars recognize the importance of security concerns facing ex-combatants, and have sought ways to explain how individuals can be disarmed while still feeling secure in order to establish long-term peace. One of the foremost solutions to this dilemma is the introduction of external security guarantors. As Walter (1999) explains, warring factions have a difficult time credibly committing to DDRR unless a third-party can guarantee the security of those who disarm. Civil war settlements hold stronger when agreements are enforced by third parties (Walter and Snyder 2007; Brancati and Snyder 2012). This is because third parties can "guarantee that groups will be protected, terms will be fulfilled, and promises will be kept" (Walter 1999). DDRR participants should be more satisfied if external security guarantors are present in their area of reintegration. However, respondents in the study stated that the presence of external security guarantors in Liberia did not have substantive impact on the DDRR, and therefore, neither did it ensure their reintegration nor provide them security. Third parties were criticized by participants in this research for entrusting DDRR implementation to national stakeholders who mismanaged the process to their own benefits, although third parties were also criticized for implementing a short-term reintegration process.

Ex-combatants, especially when they are young, may have become a 'lost generation'(Dzinesa 2008), having been deprived of education, employment and training during conflict periods, suffering from war trauma, becoming addicted to alcohol and drugs (highly typical of Liberian ex-combatants), and dependent on weapons and violence as the only means to make their way in the world. When they lose their military livelihood, they are likely to experience difficulties in adapting to civilian life. Male ex-combatants may engage in anti-social behaviour within their families and communities, contributing to an increase in economic and social - especially sexual – violence, an issue that is widespread in Liberia.

Ex-combatants are also vulnerable to war-related mental trauma. Their mental health problems are exacerbated by the social and psychological stressors associated with reintegration in post-war contexts (Bandeira, 2008). In addition, a hyper-masculine culture often prevails in time of war. Combatants subscribe to a mode of masculinity that is imbued with a sense of manly physical strength, personal invulnerability, and high levels of conquest desensitized to violence (Dzinesa, 2008). These battlefield dispositions, along with psychological distress, can lead to ex-combatants engaging in various forms of violence during war to peace transition.

Liberian ex-combatants are faced with inevitable psychological challenges as they grapple with the violence of the past. These challenges include anger, coping with the symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), such as nightmares and flashbacks, relationship difficulties, mistrust, difficulties with adjusting to family life, stress and depression. Against this backdrop, war traumatized and highly militarized ex-combatants can be a threat to their receiving communities. In Liberia's case, the impact has included violent attitudes and crime. Most ex-combatants lacked official psychological rehabilitation programmes and given the high cost of professional and clinical psychological support, most ex-fighters resorted to either traditional help or peer support, often with adverse results. Others took refuge in alcohol, which often compounds the situation and disposes them to violence. In addition, the reintegration programmes did not include proper counselling mechanisms to transform violent wartime masculine identities. In this context, political violence and disturbances were recorded in Monrovia, during the presidential elections 2005 and 2011 respectively, in which ex-combatants participated with hyper-masculine vigilance.

Women were also victims of violent act including rape. It is against this backdrop that male war veterans can be perceived to play the role of perpetrators of violence. Conversely, unsuccessfully reintegrated male ex-combatants who felt frustrated by their failure to fulfil the masculine role of provider for their families were prone to committing violence and abusing alcohol.

Sample Groups

This study is based on the interviews with ex-combatants conducted in Monrovia (Monserrado County), in which a total of 60 ex-combatants at five research sites were interviewed using a semi-structured format. Focus group discussions were carried out in the five locations and 175 people participated, about 90 percent of who are ex-combatants. The remaining 10 percent may have been ex-combatants who could not provide much detail about their identity. In order to compare what ex-combatants say about themselves and their conditions in the post-conflict era, I also took time to interview some members of communities where these ex-combatants reside, as well as individuals who have links to them, such as their former commanders, rebel leaders etc. Their perceptions about ex-combatants and the roles they play also provided useful information to the research. All the participants were identified through purposive sampling. Such sampling is essentially strategic and entails an attempt to establish a good correspondence between research questions and sampling. In other words, the researcher samples on the basis of wanting to interview people who are relevant to the research questions (Bryman, 2008:458). Sampling is an important aspect of life in general and enquiry in particular. As much as you might want to, you cannot study everyone everywhere doing everything. Your choices – whom to look at or talk with, where, when, about what, and why – all place limits on the conclusions you can draw and on how confident you and others feel about them. Sampling may look easy. Much qualitative research examines a single "case", some phenomenon embedded in a single social setting. But settings have sub-settings, e.g. (schools have classrooms, classrooms have cliques, cliques have individuals), so deciding where to look is not easy. In addition, within any case, social phenomena proliferate (science lessons, teacher questioning techniques, student unruliness, use of innovations); they too, must be sampled (Miles and Huberman, 1994:27). We make judgments about people, places and

things on the basis of fragmentary evidence. In this study, purposive sampling was adopted because it illustrates some features or processes that are of interest to me and would help to achieve the needs of the study. I thought critically about the parameters of the population being studied before choosing the sample case. Other things that I took into consideration include: setting the boundaries of the research, adopting the case that would be studied within the limits of time and means, ensuring that there was a direct connection to the research questions. As Denzin and Lincoln (2000:370) put it: "many qualitative researchers employ……purposive, and not random sampling methods. They seek out groups, settings, and individuals where……the processes being studied are most likely to occur. In other words, qualitative samples tend to be purposive, rather than random (Kuzel, 1992; Morse, 1989). That tendency is partly because the initial definition of the universe is more limited (e.g., arrest-making in an urban precinct), and partly because social processes have a logic and a coherence that random sampling can reduce to interpretable sawdust (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The ex-combatant sample group comprised people from various factional rebel groups in Liberia, namely; LURD, MODEL, NPFL, INPFL, ULIMO-J, ULIMO-K, LPC, Lofa Defense Forces, GOL etc. The full meanings of these have been explained in the list of acronyms in the study.

Research Sites

Beall et al. (2010) focus on the changing locations of violence, introducing the term 'civic conflict' for urbanized forms of collective violence. This spatial shift of violence is highly relevant for post-war Liberia because its wars (1989-2013) led to rapid urbanization and or concentration as people sought refuge where arguably there is minimal security guarantee. But while cities like Monrovia may be a safe haven during war, this seems to change after the end of the war due to the activities of the various actors who harbour grievances related to the poor implementation of the peace agreement and this frequently results in violent protests. Other reasons that could trigger violence relate to the absence in the urban slums of state institutions responsible for providing social services and security of the population. This provides opportunities for violence and organized crime to thrive. There is high risk of firearms circulation that does not necessarily increase violence but constitutes a problem, given the lack of functioning state

and non-state mechanisms of violence control and sanctioning Panel of Experts (2013). Violence is an important push factor for rapid urbanization, creating the risk of changing patterns of violence and continuous high levels of violence after the end of war and armed conflict (Kurtenbach and Wulf 2012:21).

Since an overwhelming majority of ex-combatants including those who graduated from reintegration training programmes have been living in urban and semi-urban areas, particularly within Montserrado County (Monrovia), the economic rehabilitation of ex-combatants appeared to be 'urban centric'. Two dimensions of urban centric in this study are related to political and economic motivations. Economically, Montserrado County is the major economic hub in the country. Major industrial corridors such as Cemenco, Coca Cola, National Port, Club Beer Bottling Company, etc. are located in this area. Since economic opportunities are more available in Montserrado, this is a lucrative destination from the employment and business point of view. Therefore, the urban and semi-urban areas are seen as places of opportunity. Politically, the focus group study found that most of the ex-combatants did not wish to return to the village for a host of political reasons, but perhaps most importantly because of the gains of participation in political activities. Politically, in urban Montserrado, ex-combatants are easily available for political recruitments and mobilization during elections to lead campaigns, as tools used in intimidating political opponents for fees, serving as security/bodyguards to big politicians, and getting the overall benefits accruing from political participation. The city spaces could also help them to conceal their past identity and create a new civilian identity. Rural–urban migration is growing at an unprecedented rate in Liberia. This new trajectory of internal migration has caused the agricultural sector which use to be the backbone of Liberia's economy to suffer deeply from shortages of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled labour. Liberia use to be described as the "grain coast" of West Africa, and one of its regional hubs, Lofa County, was known as the "food basket of Liberia; it still holds that title but with limited engagement in grain (mainly rice) production.

My official travels have also taken me outside of Monrovia covering the 15 counties of Liberia. I have visited hotspots in these areas where I interacted and held discussions with ex-combatants seeking to know why they prefer the local environment and what they are doing for a living. During these visits and interaction with them, I played the role of a peace builder/peace makers, seeking

to know more about their post-war economic conditions and make recommendations to the United Nations. Their perceptions about my roles were positive as they indicated that they will provide frank and honest perspectives of their activities in their responses to my questions. However, there are some discernible differences between local and urban/semi-urban ex-combatants. While local ex-combatants are somehow contented with their engagement in illegal rubber tapping and diamond/gold mining, including serving as unskilled workers in Iron Ore mining companies, urban/semi-urban respondents mostly feel marginalized and make various demands of the political regime. They also seek to engage in self-employment when they have the funding, such as commercial motorcyclists, brick making, mechanics etc. Whenever the government brings out policies they deem as repressive to the conduct of their private businesses, they often react violently. Local ex-combatants enjoy relative freedom and have less interference in their activities due to the absence of decentralized power at the local level. As one police officer disclosed to me during a field assessment to Lofa County in 2013, "ex-combatants who engage in drug trade (reference to marijuana) are armed and we don't have weapons to confront and arrest them. We fear for our lives and allow them to go away". But Monrovia being the seat of government there is minimum security coverage supported by the presence of the United Nations troops which often intervenes to control violent activities by ex-combatants and other disgruntled groups.

Therefore, the limitation of my research sites to Monrovia does not indicate a lack of knowledge of hotspots in other parts of the country and the activities of ex-combatants in these areas. Rather, through my field assessment activities, I have good knowledge of hotspots around the country harbouring ex-combatants, and I have demonstrated in chapter five how ex-combatants working in concessions engage in violence when their demands are not met. In fact, there is stiff competition among ex-combatants to survive in hotspots in the counties, and only the very strong ex-combatants can withstand such tough conditions, while overly ambitious ex-combatants now constitute political and economic migrants into the city to join others elevating the risks in the research sites. Consequently, the limitations in this study necessitate a focus on Monrovia, but this does not preclude making references to the situation of ex-combatants in other hotspots.

Specifically, the focus on Monrovia City for the research is derived from the following factors:

i. Monrovia is a macrocosm of the entire Liberia. It hosts members of all the 15 ethnic groups and members of all different rebel/factional groups that participated in the civil conflict. In fact, according to the 2008 population census, Monrovia (Monserrado) is the largest County with 1.4 million people.

ii. Monrovia is both the political and economic nerve-centre of Liberia, with the presence of officials of government, aid agencies, members of the international community, multi-national corporations, as well as an assortment of civil society groups, which provided a broad spectrum of participants interviewed in the research.

iii. Monrovia hosts the largest number of ex-combatants in Liberia, estimated at over 15,000. This figure was provided by a former rebel leader who is also an official of government, and not happy with the conditions of ex-combatants in Liberia. Two factors account for the large concentration in Monrovia. First, at the end of the civil war, combatants of the two rebel groups (MODEL and LURD) that captured Monrovia remained in the city to loot the spoils of war and to retain power at the centre. Second, many of them migrated from rural Liberian counties to Monrovia City in search of livelihood opportunities.

iv. Monrovia was the last theatre of war in 2003. For this reason, ex-combatants of different rebel/factional groups remained in Monrovia seeking to advance their wellbeing. In addition, they prefer to remain close to their leaders who are serving in the government, and expect financial support from them.

v. There is a collection of identity found within ex-combatant communities. This is not only a product of the previous war; it is just as much, a result of social interaction in post-war setting. Former fighters fraternize with each other, as well as with other war-affected groups, and factional identities are often reinforced in these locations.

vi. I have made extensive field visits to Liberia's rural counties where I interacted and interviewed ex-combatants at different times. Many of them have linked their activities to the support they receive from their former leaders and commanders who are based in Monrovia. Ex-combatants who remain in other parts of the

country, particularly in the rural areas, are engaged in illegal mining, rubber tapping, drugs trade and other activities. A few are employed by foreign construction companies on a temporary basis. Given the foregoing, I consider Monrovia City appropriate for the research. Accordingly, five locations/settlements in Monrovia that host large numbers of people, particularly ex-combatants, were identified. They include: **Montserrado Central; New Kru Town; West Point Community; Paynesville Town; and Congo Town.** It was also necessary to conduct research in Monrovia due to the fact that officials of the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (NCDDR), officials of government and other organizations that fall into the category of samples are located here.

vii. Finally, the incidence of violence appears to be high in the selected locations. This will be explained in more detail in the Liberia case chapter. Below is the map of Monrovia showing the five research sites.

Figure 7: Map of Monrovia indicating the five sites 2014 (author)

Data Collection

The research data were collected from interviews conducted with ex-combatants and from the focus group discussions. Data collection was carried out in three phases. The first phase involved the preliminary fieldwork accomplished in three months (August to October 2012). During the first phase, through the help of my research assistants, important contacts were established with those who could provide access to the research participants, such as community and community and opinion leaders, commanders, factional group leaders, youth and or ex-combatant leaders. During this process, I identified ex-combatants settlement patterns and potential sites that contained enough ex-combatant population. From this, I observed that there was a mix of ex-combatant population from various factional groups residing in a particular location. The Liberian civil war was so complex, occurring at different times with different factional groups, for different motivation, to the extent that fighters easily switched allegiance depending on interests. The first phase also served to locate the national archive in Liberia (though destroyed by the war), university libraries, relevant agencies and government institutions.

The second phase of fieldwork/data collection which lasted from (November to December 2012) focused on the consolidation and initial registration and classification of data. The knowledge previously gained about data locations facilitated effective collection of demographic and social background data between and within the key areas identified. During this phase, a total of forty ex-combatants were interviewed. No female ex-combatant was interviewed, apparently due to social stigma. Each interview lasted for between 10-15 minutes. Ex-combatants' leaders selected those who were interviewed. However, in some instances, self-selection was made through volunteering. An average of thirty five people participated in focus group discussions in each of the five sites (total 175) and only ten females were in attendance. Other identified participants were interviewed in the research with a representative number of men and women. A total of 10 people were interviewed by means of telephone due to unavailability or logistical difficulties for face-to face interview. Notes were taken during all the interviews with the permission of the interviewee in conformity with the researcher's ethics commitment. Women, particularly the illiterate groups were not forthcoming and this can largely be attributed to the long-time

marginalization of women in Liberian society. Before the interview, I introduced myself and stated the aims of the research to the participants, thus gaining a significant degree of trust that facilitated the interview process. In addition, the topic of my research appeared to be very attractive as it received wide acceptance from the respondents.

In the third phase (April 2014), I interviewed an additional 10 ex-combatants at the University of Liberia. During the period of my (volunteer) teaching at the graduate school of the University of Liberia (2006-2012), under a Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations Mission and the University, I established contacts among the students, both at individual and group levels, as well as with the faculty. This long-time acquaintance facilitated my interview process, as many students who participated in the war volunteered to share their war-time and post-war experiences with me. Another 10 ex-combatants were interviewed among members of the commercial motorcyclists union. Overall, a total of 60 ex-combatants (21.43%) were interviewed face-to-face while a total of 10 non-ex-combatants (3.6%) were interviewed by telephone. The latter were not available for face-to-face interview and they include: senior officials of government, some of whom I taught at the University of Liberia graduate school, and high-level commanders/leaders of rebel groups. The responses of these informants were very useful to the study. An average of 35 people (14.3%) participated in focus group discussions in each of the five sites (total 175 – 71.4%) and only ten (5.7%) females were in attendance. A total of 235 (95.9%) were male respondents. Some of the interviewees also took part in the focus group.

There were few women involved in the study. This was evident in the number (10 females) out of 175 persons who participated in the focus group. Although I interviewed a few female ex-combatants who are working in international organizations, their perceptions were quite different, perhaps because they are employed and earning a living. The low participation of females in the study is not surprising. In Liberia, social roles are designated for women and performing other roles aside from these is seen as inappropriate, and sometimes could lead to community sanctions spearheaded by their male counterparts. Indeed, fundamental challenge can be seen in the tri-system of customary, Islamic, and statutory laws that define the rights and duties of women,

which carries discriminatory provisions, particularly in the area of family law where, under customary and Islamic laws, rights of inheritance are biased against women and, in certain circumstances, women themselves are considered to be inheritable property or disposable with abandon through perfunctory divorce proceedings (Sawyer, 2005:152). In Liberia, gender-based inequality forms a continuum that begins with denying girls their rights and advantaging boys, thus setting the social path to gender-based violence and institutionalized oppression (ibid).

Ethical Considerations

Groups were diversified based on gender, age, and ethnicity. I promised confidentiality and anonymity of respondents, and also reiterated this at the beginning of each interview session, but as is the common practice in Liberia, people were quick at mentioning their names with pride, and explain what they do for a living, although as expected, no one said in the public domain that he or she engages in violence as an occupation. All focus group members have no problem if their names are made public; for them it is "recognition" that they have expressed their views and concerns over their plight and for the wider readers of this study to appreciate their problems. But, I also recognize that there is still an ethical responsibility on me to protect their identity.

Prior to engaging in the interview process, I discussed the ethical issues of this study with both the community representatives and with the participants themselves. The study was endorsed by the community leaders with the condition that the community receive a written summary so that the knowledge and understanding gained could be shared with the communities. Ethical concerns assume a more urgent and stark form in social research. Foremost are the ethical issues which consider the effects of research on a vulnerable population after a civil war. The sensitive task of conducting research in a violently divided society requires responsibility (Smyth and Robinson, 2001:5). The principle that research in violent societies must at least do no harm to participants (Anderson, 1999) and at the most have a beneficial effect for those participating is an aspiration that is challenging to realize.

There is a distinction between *moral* concerns in research, defined as "acting in accordance with accepted notions of rights and wrongs, and *ethical* concerns, which generally concern conformity to a code or set of principles established by professional organizations" (Fontes, 1998:53-61). Therefore, as a researcher, I am morally obligated to think deeply about ethical issues. I discussed these with senior researchers and my supervisor in order to keep my moral thinking towards those I am researching, and the environment in which they live. More importantly, I was sensitive about how I appeared to them.

Researchers have ethical responsibilities to anticipate the impact of the study on those studied and to ensure that at the very least the benefits of investigations outweigh any possible negative effects that they might have. Research can do harm, and researchers must recognize this and avoid or minimize that harm. Furthermore, researchers have the responsibility to take steps to secure resources to deal with any negative impact of their research on those researched, so that they are not left to deal with the impact of the research without support and resources (Smyth and Robinson, 2001:208). During the study, I did not withhold any information likely to affect the respondent's willingness to participate, since doing so would remove from the subject an important means of protecting their interests.

I followed the University of Bradford Code of Ethics as it pertains to academic research. I adhered to the principles of informed consent, in which the participants agreed to take part in the research on the basis of their knowledge of what the study is about. The 'non-negotiable' values of 'honesty, fairness, respects for persons and beneficence' were observed (Solties, 1989:129). In practical terms, this means for example, not harming the institution or the persons one is researching, if possible leaving them in a better rather that a worse condition, protecting their identities in disseminating the research, obtaining permission to view and film activities, record interviews, and to use documents owned by others. Specifically, I adhered to the following in my research:

1. Kept all names and information confidential, and did not use any identifying names in written and recorded material. All the information was securely stored, locked in filing cabinet/safe in a strong fireproof box not accessible to anyone other than myself and will remain there between five to ten years before it can be destroyed. Additional s was adopted in the use of computer files, anonymised,

protected with password and kept as a backup copy. Since web technology is constantly evolving, and in conducting research online, I was very cautious when exchanging confidential information electronically to prevent others from tapping into the data that I thought was properly protected;

2. Gave priority to protecting the safety, security, and privacy of the interviewee at all times, by ensuring that information about them is kept confidential and protected;

3. Remained sensitive to the interviewee and stopped the interview when it appeared necessary and when it was requested by the interviewee, and refrained from pushing the interviewee to talk about what they will not;

4. Did not raise the expectations of the interviewees or make promises that I may not fulfil;

5. Reported the data with as much accuracy as possible and honour the voice, i.e. the story as given by the interviewee, subject only to changes to preserve confidentiality;

6. Maintained contact with my supervisors as the research progressed. In addition, my supervisor asked questions about difficulties, problems, and my personal safety.

I avoided undue intrusion into the participants' private and personal domain. As Cassell (1982:7-31) argued, people can feel wronged without being harmed by research, they may feel that they have been treated as objects of measurement without respect for their individual values and sense of privacy. I strived to conform to the ethical standards of the society in which I was conducting the research. In particular, I ensured that I understood, and was well informed about appropriate legislation of the country and how the legislation might affect the conduct of the research. In this instance, I have the advantage of having resided in the country of research for over ten years, and, as a Political Affairs Officer at the United Nations, I had covered proceedings in the parliament for over three years and have continued to follow events in the lower and upper houses of the parliament.

As would be expected, researchers employed in the public sector tend to have less autonomy over what they do or how their data are utilized. Rules of Secrecy may apply, and pressure may be exerted to withhold or delay the publications of certain findings (SRA, 2003:16). As this is academic research, the

Rules of Secrecy will not apply and findings will be disseminated to the wider academic community and other interested audiences. I made sure that I left the research field in a state which permits further access by researchers in the future. In the course of my research, I ensured that I did not withhold information which may be of potential service to the advancement of knowledge. Sometimes, cross-culture problems can be an obstacle in terms of the way a researcher is expected to appear in the society and among participants. I did not have any problem with this because, apart from learning much about the culture of Liberia over time, I come from the same sub-region which has abundant cultural similarities.

During the field research, I avoided asking sensitive questions. Respondents sometimes misreport on sensitive topics such as drug use, sexual violence, criminal violence etc., in order to avoid painful feelings of embarrassment in the interview situation or repercussions from third parties (Hoglinger, 2008). As a consequence of under reporting socially undesirable activities and attitude, survey estimates are often erroneous, more specifically distorted by bias. Sometimes when researchers ask sensitive questions, respondents may ignore the question, provide either untrue or incomplete responses, or even terminate the survey. I was aware of all these issues, and at the beginning, I tried to build rapport with respondents.

In addition, the Code of Ethics requires me to consider my own safety. While it has to be acknowledged that risk is a part of everyday life, it is also certainly the case that some research activities may place the researcher in the field in some degree of extra risk of physical and or mental harm (SRA, 2003:25). Research that entails direct contact with the public such as qualitative study, presents a potential risk. Therefore, I ensured my safety at all times, by maintaining awareness of this type of risk and striving to eliminate the dangers arising from the research, by using local knowledge to avoid places and people which present any threat to my safety. I had very good support structures and networks in the country related to my work.

Limitations of the Study

When I thought of researching on Liberia for a Doctoral degree, I was aware of the complex nature of the Liberian society and sought from the outset to

integrate myself in order to gain more information for the study. Notwithstanding this approach, I recognize that there may be some limitations to the study as some important information that could have enriched the research may be missed. The research faced some challenges which are linked to the problems encountered by researchers when faced with frustrated and dissatisfied people who are being recruited as research informants. A number of participants or people who lived through the Liberian civil war are still dealing with an unpleasant past that they wish would disappear and never be discussed. Many of the war-affected persons have not come to terms with their marginalization and neglect. There are those who refused to discuss their experiences even with the promise of confidentially and anonymity. Perpetrators might still be in shock at their abrupt role and status reversal, disgusted even at the researcher wanting to evoke memories of their past acts of decadence or leadership failures (Dolo, 2003). In this connection, they prefer to insulate themselves from the consequences of revealing information that would make them culpable. Liberia has very weak national surveillance systems to track and record various types of violence indicators, and there are extremely poor reporting rates and a lack of human and technological capacity to centralize and analyse data. Reliable time-series data on violent crime and victimization are especially scarce, particularly in urban slums, and shanty towns. Criminal justice statistics are especially weak owing to uneven reporting rates and uneven investment in record-keeping and related practices (Muggah, 2007:5). As a result, information on the extent of violence and the surrounding circumstances is scarce.

Conclusion

In the foregoing chapter, the research design described entails a qualitative approach. The quantitative process was also applied in the study to put some incidents in context. The chapter describes the rationale behind the methodological approach, identifies the sample group in the research, including the research sites and outlines the structure of the study. This then provides the basis for the discussion in chapter in chapter five beginning with an attempt to first understand the political and economic history of Liberia and how this has produced violence. Two considerations have been taken into account for selection of the case study. First, that violence pre-dates the foundation of Liberia

as a Republican State, and second, the new forms of violence in the post-war democratic era are manifestly huge and the risk of conflict recurrence remains high. The is particularly of concern in the light of the often cited statistic which indicates that countries emerging from war have a fifty percent risk of sliding back within the next five years (Collier, et.al 2003). Although, this view is seen as too pessimistic and has attracted debate among researchers, the risk nevertheless, is still likely to be in the order of 20-25 percent (Small Arm Survey, 2008:58).

Chapter Five:
Ex-combatants and Violence in Post-War Society: The Liberian Case

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an analysis to the Liberian case. This begins with a historical overview of the political and economic history of Liberia and how this has produced series of violent conflicts. The chapter is not focused on the Liberian conflict as such, as most of this has been discussed in the introduction on chapter one and in chapter two on the causes of civil wars, their interpretations, and the processes of termination of civil wars. In this chapter, I provided an analysis of the DDRR and the outcome of the programme for the participants, which then underpins the justification for the research question. I also discussed the DDRR model theoretically and then applied it to the Liberian situations. Further, to develop and advance theory, I discussed how the current situation of ex-combatants have led them to engaging in political and economic violence, as the dominant violent category, thus providing answers to the research question posed in chapter one. I then explained how national and international actors are managing these violence, including through the peacebuilding initiatives. The chapter is also analyzed in the light of the four overarching framework factors. I found that ex-combatants in the research sites and all over the country display the same characteristics and respond aggressively to issues that affects their livelihood.

Political history of Liberia and how this produced violence

The republic of Liberia lies from 4^0 20' N to 8^0 30' N of the Equator. It is situated at the south-western corner of the great western bulge of West Africa, bordered on the northwest by Sierra Leone and the southeast by Cote d'Ivoire; the Republic of Guinea lies to its north. With a maximum breath of 280 kilometres between Buchanan and Nimba, and boasting a 595km (370 miles) coastline along the Atlantic Ocean, the country covers an area of about 111, 370 square kilometres about (43,000 square miles). The low coastal marshy plains are backed by a rolling plateau broken by mineral-bearing hills and a rocky array of mountain ranges within the Guinea highlands. Much of the hinterland is rugged

and densely forested with at least nine river basins draining northeast-southwest into the Atlantic Ocean.

The capital, Monrovia, is the seat of the central Government, and the country is further divided into 15 administrative divisions known as Counties. Liberia's topography features coastal lagoons and mangrove marshlands, rainforest, and mountainous plateaus. The rainforests occupy 27 percent of the land and are cultivated for agriculture, and the mountains (including Mount Nimba and Putu Mountain) are home to mineral resources – especially iron ore, gold and diamonds. Liberia also has significant hydro resources, including the Cavalla River, the St. John River, and the St. Paul River, which offer the potential for hydroelectricity. Liberia remains one of the poorest nations in the world as it recovers from decades of civil war. Both a challenge and an opportunity, more than 50 percent of its population comprises young adults between 15 and 34 years of age. While this population is highly urbanized, high population growth and urbanization exert pressure on available resources (basic services, infrastructure, and jobs).

Figure 8: Map of the Republic of Liberia

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The national census, conducted in 2008, put the population of Liberia at 3.5 million. While overall population density is still relatively low, population growth rates are high. The population grew at an average rate of 3.3 percent annually between 1962 and 1974, and 3.4 percent during 1974 and 1984. Between 1984 and 2008, average growth was 2.1 percent, reflecting the population exodus and losses during the civil war (AfL, 2013:16). Some of the indigenous tribes are believed to have migrated from ancient Mali, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Burkina Faso between the 13th and 15th centuries. However, before the arrival of these tribes, oral history indicates that some other tribes lived in parts of the land such as the Baabo and Blewe in Maryland County who were so called by the Grebo; the Khran also speak of another tribe whose language they learned and spoke on arrival (Guannu, 1982:12). The majority of the tribes are the Kpelle, Kissi, Gola, Grebo, Kru, Khran, Mandingo, Bassa, Belle, Lorma, Mano, Gio etc. There are 16 officially recognized tribes in addition to the emancipated slaves, or Americo-Liberians, who had settled in Liberia in 1822.
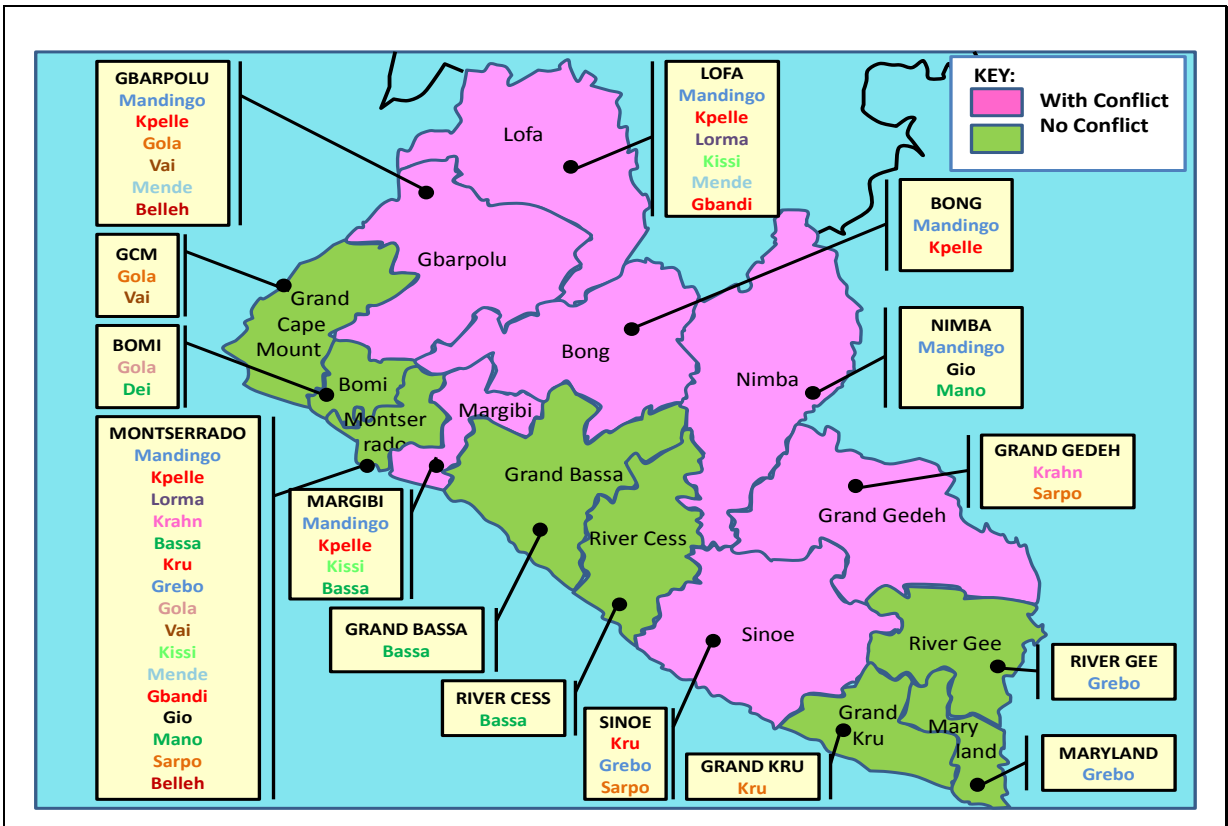
Figure 9: Map showing the distribution of major Liberia ethnic and language groups.

The Americo-Liberians became the ruling elite and monopolized the national economy from 1847-1980. They labelled the indigenous majority as being unready to assimilate into their slave inherited culture. This recurring practice was designed to develop an anti-indigenous sentiment. The Americo-Liberians built the requisite social, cultural, and economic structures to support their oppression of the indigenous population. They evoked their cultural superiority with great pride and disdain, although they failed to recognize the contradictions of their sentiments. That is to say, the culture that they hold as a badge of honour was a product of slavery and repression, and it could not possibly be used to achieve the freedoms that they purportedly sought in Liberia. Indeed, overtime, it was proved that their chauvinism did not have any validity. Against this background, the public policy of the regime designed to support its prejudices may be problematic and open to a series of predictions. If the ruling elite developed a public policy that produced maximum hostility, but worse, if they use a large group of dependent people to prove their theory of superiority, by denying them citizenship, equal opportunity for education, good quality healthcare, roads to get their produce to the markets, and enlisting the population in the military and using them as drivers and servants, this treatment would lead to retaliatory acts of vengeance (Dolo, 2007:6). The majority (indigenous), estimated at 95 percent of the population was subjugated by the minority (Americo-Liberian) estimated at less than 5 percent of the population, which turned out to be a recipe for disaster. The indigenous people were set up in permanent opposition against the Americo-Liberians. It is important to state that not all Americo-Liberians were privileged to enjoy the fruits of their monopoly of power. Discrimination also existed among them on the basis of skin colour and other factors.

Government failures and violent conflict have their most destructive impact on society when they erode the sense of shared community (Sawyer, 2005:50). Townships or villages are the most basic form of human association, such that "local institutions are to liberty what primary schools are to science" (Tocqueville, 1969:61).

On the other hand, the indigenous population was not cohesive in their relations amongst themselves. Animosity existed between and among them. The existence of "shared understanding" is fundamental to any group of people that can be called a community (Sawyer, 2005). This relates to the existence of a

common sense of justice (fairness) and values of trust and reciprocity among them. Dolo (2007) argued that the cultural composition of the indigenous people, coming from a single cultural source, ethnically, although not linguistically and religiously, but being relegated to second class citizens or lower in their own country was just enough to bring them to a tipping point – wanting to assert themselves politically, although they lacked the basic framework to accomplish this goal. Positioning its culture and language as superior to that of the indigenous majority spurred ill feelings and resentment. Consequently, the massively disruptive political and social convulsions that occurred in 1980 were predictable. The desperate desire for the population to improve the quality of their life impelled a disruptive force. With a landscape dominated by authoritarian rulers, Liberians were enmeshed in powerful political, social and economic systems that were impervious to change. Leaders held no regard for the welfare of citizens or their participation in the nation's politics. Citizens bore their suffering and discrimination and nervously waited for change. At that time, it was a rarity to see Liberians coming together to challenge the oppressive system in which they were situated, since indeed, many of them were beneficiaries of the Americo-Liberia regime, and have accepted their names to gain entry into the University of Liberia, a premier institution, exclusively for the Americo-Liberians. Then came a change, the advent of social movements. The social movements reflect, in complex and conflicting ways, the collective national effort to articulate the goals of resistance and oppression. The term social movement is used here to describe individuals acting collectively with some degree of organization and continuity and at least partially outside the normal governmental processes and institutions to effect societal change (Goodwin and Jasper, 2003). In the general context of the country, the study of social movements in Liberia is illustrative of some of the underlying issues, problems, and debates that constitute the backdrop of contemporary social and political activism in the post-war era (Dolo, 2007:59). Analysis of social movements in Liberia presupposes some shared context and concerns among institutions pursuing democratic changes in the governance of the state. However, contrary to popular opinion, social movements in Liberia are not uniform and homogenous in their characteristics and approaches to activism. But social movements are similar in that they share many of the same political and historical factors that overwhelmed the state and added to the core factors

that plunged it into civil war. These include, the opposition to the True Whig Party (TWP), hegemony of the Americo-Liberians; the quest for freedom of the indigenous majority from tyranny; the use of the University of Liberia and its students as the centre of political mobilization and member recruitment; their flawed embrace of the despotic regimes of Samuel Doe and Charles Taylor; and their inability to engage the nation on how to address ethnic bigotry (ibid, 60).

Political Economy of Liberia

In chapter three, I discussed the general context of political economy, patrimonialism and neo-patrimonialism. In this section, I will focus on the political economy of Liberia, again highlighting the role of its elite leadership in applying patrimonialism and neo-patrimonialism in governance, and how this has generated discontentment among the population, particularly the youth. Liberia's political history and political economy also fits appropriately in Reno's concept of warlord politics, attempting to establish an ideal-type of illegitimate domination. According to Reno, the warlord seeks to reduce the number of those benefitting from rule to an absolute minimum. Exclusion from patronage networks is classically associated with a loss of legitimacy. In warlord politics, exclusion is intended to increase the relative value of the spoils of power by causing greater scarcity, optimizing the cost-benefit ration of patronage. Consequently, he argued, decreasing levels of patronage can be reconciled with maintenance of a ruling network:

> "To make patronage work as a means of political control, the ruler must prevent all individuals from gaining unregulated access to markets. A [warlord] ruler thus logically seeks to make life less secure and more impoverished for subjects. That is a [warlord] ruler will minimize his provision of public goods to a population. Removing public goods like security or economic stability, that are otherwise enjoyed by all, irrespective of their economic or political stations, is done to encourage individuals to seek the ruler's personal favour to secure exception from these conditions" (Reno, 2000:46-47).

Thus, by withdrawing security and economic opportunities, social and material capacities for resistance are weakened. As internal sources of economic

accumulation and opportunities for social organization are destroyed, insurgents face tremendous difficulties unless they can find external backers. Other warlord techniques include fuelling of conflict between domestic groups and thus reducing security, deliberate destruction of sources of income, and filling security forces with vulnerable strangers without ties to the populace in terms of culture, ethnicity and religion (Weber, 1978). In order to prevent military staff from overthrowing the ruler, the security apparatus is fragmented and its different segments compete for the ruler's favours. Ideally, staff are tied to the ruler purely by economic incentives and motivation. Warlord techniques may stabilize rule for a considerable time. However, destruction of economic opportunities implies that there is little potential for revenue generation and growth, and that warlord rule will encounter financial problems.

How and why did the political history and political economy of Liberia create the conditions for perennial violence, its reproduction and war? It is extremely difficult to discuss the Liberian state by adopting a single analytical approach. Therefore, in my analysis, I have explored different perspectives aimed at understanding the political and economic trajectory of Liberia and how this has shaped post-war development. Patrimonialism and neo-patrimonialism have been dominant features in the governance of Liberia since the Republic was founded in 1847, and ruled by the hegemonic Americo-Liberian elites. This system of rule has been sustained through the co-optation of the weaker and less educated indigenous population as its followers. In fact, the system of patrimonial governance had, over the years, moulded and incorporated indigenous governance institutions that were a mixture of lineage-based institutions and other clientele arrangements organized around specific principles and dominated by the oligarchy (Liebenow, 1987; Sawyer, 1992).The end state is the institutionalization of patrimonialism, which when challenged attract heavy punishment from governing elites. The consequences are, as David Francis (2006) noted, patrimonialism and the rentier mentality in much of Africa has created widespread impoverishment, dilapidated social services and infrastructure, poor educational systems and badly managed economies, and the marginalization and exclusion of the majority of the populace from the political and economic processes in the country. Settler patrimonial order in Liberia was of a distinct character. In a sense, the ideology of patrimony that underpinned the

oligarchy was based on a conception of patrimony rooted in settler history, a history that perceives Liberia as the patrimony of black African settlers. Transforming that sense of heritage to cover a more inclusive policy was its historic challenge. As a patrimonial order, the protection of the patrimony, no matter how narrowly or broadly defined by its leaders over the years was the motive force of its history.

Patrimonial regimes in Liberia have survived through the support of Western governments and the Bretton Woods institutions, with the later giving out financial packages with conditionalities to support the functioning of the system. In Liberia, when the governing elite falls out of favour and goes against the whims and caprices of the West, internal crisis sets in and the regime is threatened and finally shown the way out of office in a rather violent means. In other words, even if one accepts the view that the roots of the Liberian tragedy lie wholly in the sustained crises of leadership and embraces the "bad man" theory of history, one must still see such crisis through the prism of history and, at least, as a project of many accomplices, internal and foreign, wittingly and unwittingly (Sawyer, 2005:2). For instance, it is not possible to speak of the 1980-85 bloodletting in Liberia without mentioning the post-coup military and economic support given by the United States that bolstered the confidence and capacity of the Liberian leadership to rampage against real and perceived enemies during the years immediately before the ending of the Cold War – or the abrupt withdrawal of that support on the eve of the fall of the Berlin Wall. One could not explain Charles Taylor's plunder without the subplot of his escape from a U.S prison and his relationship with influential African leaders, European business interest and numerous others (ibid).

Neo-patrimonial politics, to some extent, explain the ethnicisation and militarisation of politics in Africa. Mass politics are reconstructed along clientelistic and ethnic relationships, with the increasing propensity to use state-sponsored violence and repression as a means to extract legitimacy from the governed. The militarization of political and socio-economic relations amongst competing elites creates the impetus for the social mobilization of ethnic identities (Francis, 2006: 82). Neo-patrimonial economy has therefore become the driving force in politics and political life. A decade of intermittent violence characterized the period of

Samuel Doe's rule. The military regime came under siege immediately by successive violent purge within its ranks and evolved into an ethnic-based dictatorship of monstrous proportion (Sawyer, 1987, Dunn and Tarr 1988; Liebenow 1987). After settling in as a military leader and purging the military of his opponents, Samuel Doe began to lay the foundations for a new patrimonial order, with a predominantly indigenous constituency resting on his Khran ethnic foundations, and in a way try to replicate settler patrimonial order. He built a multi-ethnic political support base, drawing largely from the ranks of professionals and political operatives who had felt under-appreciated by the deposed William Tolbert government, and he allowed his closest associates to draw from the public treasure and accumulate wealth as best they could. For himself, he appropriated the timber industry of the country and took charge of the accounts of the forest resource establishment. He promulgated decrees stifling freedom of the press and association, and he issued orders banning individuals from participation in public affairs. One such order declared Conmany Wesseh, then a student leader, now a Senator, a dangerous person, a confusionist, and a threat to public peace, and directed the public to stay clear of him (Doe 1980). However, the plunder, pillage and carnage that characterized Doe's rule seemed legendary at that time, but later paled when compared to the excesses of Charles Taylor's regime. Doe's mode of control of Liberia came close to classical warlordism as seen in imperial China (Sheridan 1966; Pye 1971). The violence applied to remove the dictatorship of Samuel Doe, which went beyond excising its essential core, was driven mainly by greed for power and wealth (Sawyer, 2005). It is not possible to understand the nature of armed groups that perpetrated such violence without understanding the transformation of the Liberian military and its role as the core instrument of violent conflict. The Liberian military was constituted as a part of the patron-client network that was an important instrument of state consolidation. Its rank and file was drawn from indigenous lineage and was linked to the Monrovia oligarchy through indigenous governance arrangements. Most soldiers had grown up in the traditions of their indigenous communities, experienced the rites of passage required in these communities, and remained active members of their local communities while in the military. For all practical purposes, the Liberian military was itself a patrimonial organization linked to the Monrovia-based ruling oligarchy as well as to the indigenous social order (ibid).

Charles Taylor was the sole and undisputed leader of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). He made decisions alone, and his strategy of imposing terror, as observed by those who broke away from his organization as well as his loyal functionaries, reflected remarkable entrepreneurship. Young fighters were encouraged to rival each other with more gruesome killings to demonstrate battle prowess and loyalty to him. Charles Taylor used armed bandits extensively as state security to carry out both legal and illicit economic transactions, thereby using the Liberian state as an instrument for both criminal and legal purposes. The plunder of the natural resources of Liberia and Sierra Leone by Liberian armed gangs and their leaders became legendary and is well documented. It is estimated that between 1990 and 1994, more than $500 million was accrued annually by leaders of armed groups and their associates from exports of timber, rubber, diamonds, and other natural resources. Charles Taylor is reported to have gained $75 million annually (Caine 1999; Reno 2000). It is estimated that if the pace of indiscriminate logging allowed by Taylor had continued, just half of Liberia's rainforest would have disappeared in five years (Global Witness 2001). In 1999, deals agreed between Charles Taylor and the Oriental Timber Company, an Indonesian establishment with a notorious environmental record, brokered by a shadowy Dutch businessman granted that company logging concession rights close to half of Liberia's rain forest (ibid). In 2000 and 2001, investigations by the Committee on Sanctions of the United Nations Security Council revealed that the President of Liberia was engaged in illicit economic activities.

The report uncovered links between the President of Liberia and an assortment of underworld figures of Ukrainian, Dutch, Lebanese, and Italian origins, among others, in gun-running and smuggling of Sierra Leone diamonds (UN Security Council 2001). Those who did business with the Taylor regime included such diverse groups and individuals as DeBeers, Al-Qaida, and Christian fundamentalist evangelist Pat Robertson. All these operated in the same market and under the same rules (Washington Post, 2002). Monopolies dominated the economic strategies of the Liberian government and Taylor, and the personal stakes of the President and his circle of friends, families, and advisers were indistinguishable from those of the state. All these developments seems to suggest that a combination of the quest for power, greed through the acquisition of wealth, international economic conspiracy to loot and Liberia's

enormous resources, as well as grievances (ethnic or religious hatred, political repression, political exclusion, and economic inequality) were the causes of the Liberian civil war. The above explanation contrasts with Paul Collier's explanation of the cause of civil war that relied more on his econometric model, an approach which I thought seems unilinear, as it may have missed out other factors that cause war.

Liberia also continues to suffer from the politics of dependency. Liberia has got a lifelong paradox yet to be unbroken. The paradox is this: providence is so kind to the country – adorning this oldest African republic with vast natural resources – yet it continues to be stuck at the bottom of the world's human development index ranking 177 out of 188 countries (UNDP, 2015). The outbreak of the Ebola Virus Diseases (EVD) has certainly foregrounded not only the reality of Liberia's non-existent health system, but the failure of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's government to contain Ebola is emblematic of much larger problems of governance, leadership and mistrust. Indeed, Ebola has emerged from the nexus of the overlapping problems. The Ebola crisis has also shone a spotlight on the faults of the international development system that has propped up Sirleaf's political leadership. In many ways, one could argue that Ebola serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of ignoring nepotism and cronyism in countries where a government that is friendly to Western government is in place. Further in this chapter, I discussed how the Ebola virus prompted violence in one of the research sites. Liberia is one of the most dependent countries in the world: 73 percent of its gross national income comes from aid agencies and Monrovia, its capital city, is crawling with aid agencies. There are literally hundreds of international NGOs with offices in the city, and in addition to the $800 million the country receives in foreign assistance each year, the United Nations spends an additional $500 million annually on maintaining a peacekeeping force (The Analyst, 2014).

Consequently, the aid community has created a mentality that Liberia cannot act on its own. As a result of this mentality, Liberian leaders have chosen to wait for the slow moving bureaucracies that have occupied it for decades to wake from the inertia of the well-fed aid system. All these have negative manifestations: severe infrastructure blockages, drug use and trafficking, rampant corruption, and economic malfeasance, a demographically-skewed population

with tens of thousands of "futureless youth" accentuate the level of insecurity and the attendant high profile violence that accompanies it. The crippling consequences of dysfunctional governance are experienced in all areas of life in Liberia. The deepening patron-client system in Liberia reflects increasing anguish over the misuse of public resources, widening poverty, despite renewed economic growth, and unremitting physical insecurity. Therefore, the personalization of office and the commandeering of state resources in Liberia by the privileged elite have ensured the effective establishment of the neo-patrimonial state. The entrenched and pervasive nature of elite leadership in the country, and how patron-client attitudes are exhibited, are woven into what Ken Post and Michael Vickers described as a "conglomerate society", that is, a nation composed of cultural sections defined by ethnicity, language, region and cultural practices (Post and Vickers, 1973). Liberia's post-war development has been characterized by anti-development indicators: a burgeoning corruption cartel principally through the award of dubious contracts; patronage and entrenched nepotism (e.g Global Witness Report, 2016). Individual and group continue to illegally exploit the country's rich natural resources for their private use. This inevitably creates fertile grounds for the occurrence of violence, its re-production, and the potential for re-lapse into war. Below is a graphic illustration of Liberia's political landscape:

Fig 10: Circles of Liberia's Political Setting
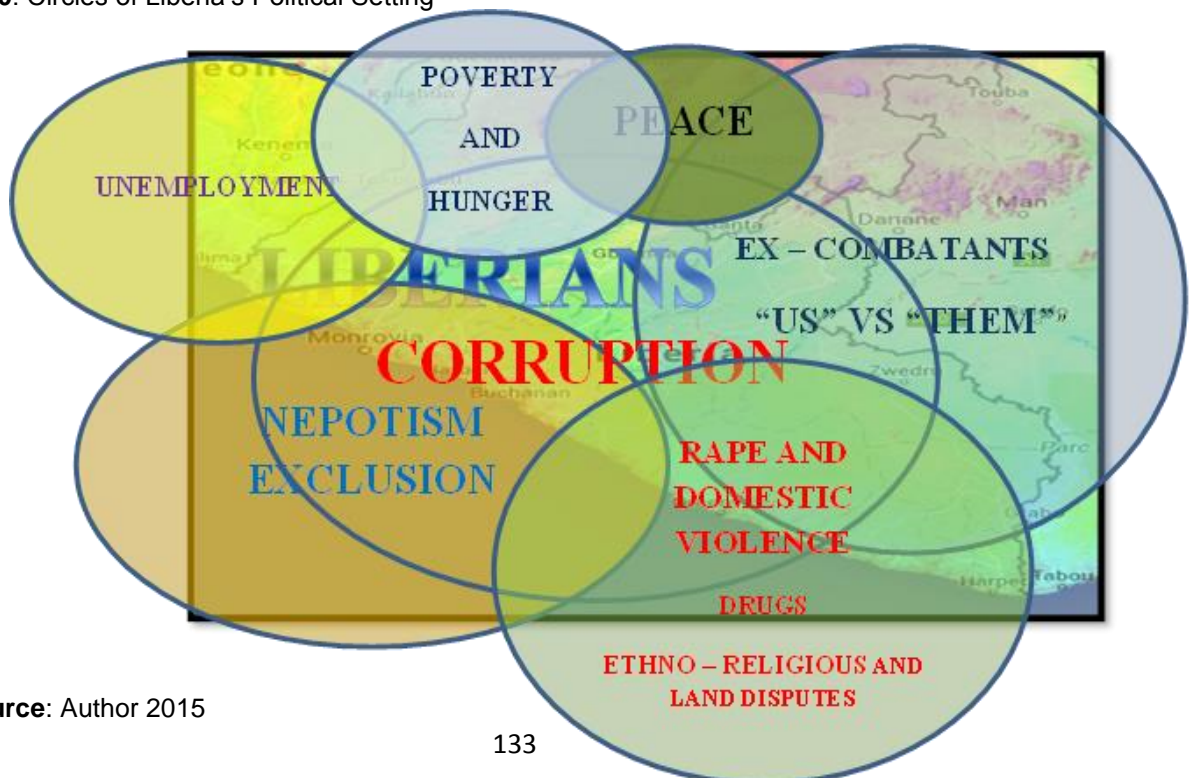
Source: Author 2015

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Fig. 10 above is my perspective on the current political landscape in Liberia. The various debilitating factors are superimposed on the map of Liberia, signifying a nation that is susceptible to collapse. The weight imposed on it by these interlocking problems could potentially lead to a crisis situation. At the centre of it is widespread and endemic corruption which has permeated the fabric of the society. According to an official of government whom I spoke to on condition of anonymity, corruption is now a way of life for Liberians as little or nothing can be done about it. The other major challenge has to do with the position of ex-combatants who see themselves as a group competing/fighting against the rest of the society. The Peace is given a little space in the diagram indicating the continued fragility of the state.

Further, the deep culture of politics of personal advantage is anchored in the exclusive patronage network. President Sirleaf has in the past traced Liberia's particularly pervasive form of patronage to former President William Tubman's (Americo-Liberia) rule. The reality is little different today, deep into President Sirleaf's second term. The political culture effectively stifles the meaningful development of party politics. It also leaves all political actors suspicious of each other, as alliances are not reliably based on substantive platforms, and neo-patrimonialism and clientelism become the order of the day. The underlying causes of war have not been sufficiently addressed as the TRC recommendations for prosecution remain in limbo. Violence has continued in new forms and dimensions. The relative balance of power of various protagonists in peace/democracy, the nature of elites who organize and wield power, the nature and capabilities of former rebel groups and ex-combatants remain incoherent and disagreement has always been a source of tension.

DDRR and the Outcome for the Ex-combatants

The disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation, and reintegration (DDRR) programme has become an integral element of national and international programming in countries transitioning from conflict. Despite attracting a high level of attention and resources, the extent to which DDRR has been an effective tool to achieve security and development goals in Liberia remain a challenge. The impact of DDRR on a micro-level – that is, on the lives of individual ex-combatants – is extremely poor. One problem is that it is difficult to measure the

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'successes of DDRR, especially the reintegration component, which resists precision in both definition and evaluation. It is similarly problematic to establish causality between particular outcomes and DDRR in the context of a complex, multi-dimensional peacekeeping operation in Liberia. The evaluative focus of DDRR has been on the achievement of programmatic targets, that is, the number of DDRR participants, the number of guns collected or the actions of elite spoilers, and elections. There was no concerted effort to examine how DDRR plays out on the ground, which will support future programming to be formulated and implemented more effectively, thus improving outcomes and mitigating unintended and harmful consequences. Ironically, as of November 2006, two years after the DD components formally ended in Liberia, and the year of the inauguration of the democratically elected president, over 40,000 registered (about the same figure are unregistered) ex-combatants still have no access to reintegration programmes (Jennings, 2008).

The basic ingredients for the success of a DDRR programme are (1) political will, (2) careful preparation based on rapid assessment of the opportunity structure and a profiling of ex-combatants and their families, including classifying ex-combatants according to their characteristics, needs, and desired way of earning a livelihood (mode of subsistence), (3) transparent and effective institutional arrangements, minimizing transaction costs and corruption while maximizing benefits to ex-combatants, with a simple monitoring feedback system to ensure flexible but accountable implementation (to both donors and the community), and (4) timely and adequate funding (Colleta, et.al 1996). Unfortunately, all these were lacking in the Liberian DDRR. When a country is moving from war to peace, demobilization and reintegration issues should be addressed at the earliest stage of the peace negotiation process. Strong political will and leadership, expressed in terms of commitment, realism and pragmatism, are critical. In conflict environments, DDRR programmes are highly political, as they directly affect a party's ability to pursue its interest through coercive means and its ability to defend itself. For instance, at the Sierra Leone peace negotiations in mid-1999, disarmament and demobilization issues were neglected until very late in the negotiation process, and then they were treated in a cursory manner. This failure contributed to the establishment of technically unreasonable deadlines in the peace accord implementation schedule, ultimately undermining

confidence in the process. The ensuing unwillingness of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and other national and regional parties to trust the peace process eventually undermined it (Colletta, et al 2004).

The Liberian DDRR process was established in 2003 under the auspices of the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (NCDDRR). A total of 101,495 ex-combatants and individuals associated with the fighting forces were disarmed and demobilized. Rehabilitation and reintegration programmes were initiated in June 2004, which included computer and vocational skills training (such as carpentry, masonry, auto mechanics and farming). By November 2006, 22,000 participants were enrolled in formal education courses, with an additional 8,000 registered for courses starting before the end of the year. By the end of November 2006, the UN estimated that a total of 60,000 beneficiaries had completed the reintegration programme. Although many participants contend that this figure is exaggerated.

One of the major problems identified by respondents in this study was the level of corruption in the programme, which took several forms, but primarily revolves around payment of monthly stipends to ex-combatants. The most common complaint concerned consistent and multi-monthly delays in dispensing the cash by schools, for those initially enrolled in vocational training. School principals and administrators were key suspects in the corruption scheme. This is important not just as another example of corruption in post-conflict Liberia, but because such actions replicate and reiterate power relationships from pre-war, war-time, and post-war Liberia. Programme recipients were at the mercy of 'big men' (the elite).

Thus, the DDRR programme was compromised by an inability to live up to its promises, resulting in lamentably little change in ex-combatants' social and economic situation and potentially feeding their dissatisfaction. Insofar as ex-combatants are considered to be a major problem in post-conflict Liberia, then expanding their ranks seems to be counterproductive. Moreover, privileging them above their equally impoverished countrymen and women through DDRR benefits arguably helped harden the division between former fighters and civilian society, reinforcing ex-combatants' 'separateness' (IRIN, 2005). This in turn undermines reintegration's rationale.

In post-war settings like Liberia, there is a lack of diversification in the economy and a heavy dependence on a particular resource. During disarmament, a large number of former fighters were released into civilian life with promises of reintegration and sometimes inclusion in the political process, enshrined in peace agreements. These promises and expectations are however seldom met, creating a sense of anger and frustration among the ex-combatants. These grievances sometimes lead ex-combatants to challenge the new post-war peace order by engaging in spontaneous violent activities to draw the attention of the government and members of the international community. The different forms of violence that ex-combatants engage in range from taking part in new rebellions, becoming mercenaries, fighting wars in neighbouring countries, as explained earlier, to engagement in petty and organized crime, communal violence or riots (Call and Stanley, 2003:216). However, these scenarios can only be mitigated or avoided if peace agreements and the political leadership address the fundamental factors that led to the war and this has been a realization that more academics hope could be achieved. But, the most immediate threat that ex-combatants pose is when the existence of such violence constitutes a major threat to post-war order and has the potential to result in the resurgence of conflict.

Long after demobilization, many ex-combatants continue to spend time with each other, relishing their experiences of war, and showing strong bonds of loyalty and friendship within the group and in their communities. The majority of them who could not benefit from the reintegration process remain economically marginalized and excluded from decision making processes. Equally, many of them lack skills and are unable to attend vocational training and formal education, making it difficult for them to fend for themselves and their families. In the light of all these, ex-combatants become a unique and potentially dangerous group.

The perception among ex-combatants is that they were fighting a 'just war' that would result in the overthrow of the patrimonial Americo-Liberian regime, and ensure the ascendancy of the marginalized indigenous population. In their thinking, this aspiration came to fruition following the ousting from power of the Charles Taylor led National Patriotic Front of Liberia rebel group in 2003, and the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Accra, in August 2003. After securing a victory in the first round of the presidential election in 2005, the

undisputed choice of the ex-combatants, an indigenous homeboy, George Weah, suffered a defeat in the second run-off presidential election to incumbent president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. This was never their choice, and the rejection of President Sirleaf appears to have underpinned ex-combatants orientation towards violence. Politically, and economically, ex-combatants are re-marginalized in post-war Liberia, thus increasing their vulnerability to engaging in violence.

First, ex-combatants are recruited for political violence with promises of reward and this is becoming increasingly "legitimized" due to the weaknesses of the justice system to deal with the perpetrators and their sponsors. Some literature on political violence takes a "diagnostic' view (Apter, 1997:7). Applied to autocracies, political violence becomes self-legitimizing, an expression of the natural desires for freedom and liberty. In democratic societies, political violence suggests institutional weaknesses and blockages, or normative insufficiencies, injustices, or inequities, i.e. wrongs to be righted (ibid). The diagnostic view suggests that political violence results when offended interests seek their outlets by means outside the rules of the game. Another strand in literature deals with political violence as individual pathology. Those engaging in violence are likely to be in some sense "pathological." For instance, in any movement, those most prone to the use of violence have some kind of personality problems. Again, pathological conditions may arise out of asymmetries of power and access, of classes, of systems of political economy like capitalism and socialism (Apter 1997).

In attempts to curb the violence that is allegedly perpetrated by ex-combatants, the Liberia National Police, (LNP) has in the last five years launched several Security Operations to deal with violence. These include, "Operation Pyramid"; "Operation Safe Haven"; "Operation Re-load"; "Operation Dragnet", and "Operation Restore Hope". The last was a military deployment of the Armed Forces of Liberia to Liberia's borders in 2013, in order to mitigate mercenary acts and insurgency into Cote d'Ivoire by armed elements from Liberia. Paradoxically, because of the corruption within security institutions like the LNP, many of the arrested ex-combatants offer bribes to security personnel and get released into the society, and the circle of re-criminalization and violence continues. The predicaments of ex-combatants are reinforced by the neglect of the state many of

whose officials attained political power through the manipulation and use of ex-combatants. Currently, the presence of the United Nations Mission in Liberia has a deterrent factor. At different times, the UN has successfully mitigated and managed high profile violent incidents that would have degenerated into low scale conflict among the various groups competing for political power. However, it remains to be seen how the national security institutions will manage the incidents of violence when the United Nations pulls out of Liberia.

In 2005, 103,019 combatants, including child soldiers, were disarmed and demobilized in Liberia. Of this figure, about 13,872 were reported to have engaged in reintegration and rehabilitation programmes (HRW, 2005:45; NCDDRR, 2005). The remaining 89,147 were expected to be reintegrated through bilateral funding assistance, while the Liberian Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) would provide additional measures towards the reintegration of former child soldiers (GoL, 2008). There is no available record to show whether the 89,147 ex-combatants were reintegrated or not. This has left ex-combatants highly vulnerable. It was thought that a democratic regime would bring succour to the plights of ex-combatants. But the case of Liberia (and perhaps elsewhere) clearly shows that the holding of elections does not necessarily bring an end to violence. Although such broad disarmament and demobilization exercises may not deter criminality, they may reduce the prospects of the resurgence of such groups as readily available instruments of political violence domination, and control (Sawyer, 2005:140). DDRR programmes are normally considered a security imperative undertaking. The alleged reduction of armed violence that followed the demobilization of ex-combatants has not fundamentally changed some people's perception of their own security. The DDRR programme was unable to substantially reintegrate the overwhelming majority of the ex-combatants into civilian life with social and economic support. Many of them, who felt that their political goals could be pursed through the democratic process, were disappointed. In the new democratic dispensation, ex-combatants face threats and intimidation from the state security, as well as recruitment into criminal groups. The new criminal group appears to be at the heart of organized violence, and one of the most salient of their characteristics is their extreme cohesion and spread. They have woven a huge variety of local alliances including militias across Liberia's borders. Sometimes, there is collusion with disgruntled elements

within the police. Tactical diversity is also apparent in the groups, with some preferring to maintain low profile while others are highly conspicuous. But all are very dedicated in the pursuit of their cause, most of which are directed through violent means, and the primary victims are community members who live under constant threats and intimidation. There is no evidence to show that there will be a reduction in the occurrence of violence in the short to medium term unless ex-combatants are provided with sustainable livelihood opportunities. The presence of the United Nations Mission in Liberia continues to provide security cover, and deter any large scale internal insurrection against the regime.

The dangers posed by ex-combatants have manifested in different forms. They have challenged the clientelistic approach to the award of concessions in the production and extractive sectors of the economy, many of which lack transparency and Corporate Social benefits to local communities where they operate. The result is anger and frustration, exhibited by ex-combatants by violent means to seek redress. For instance, on 3 July 2015, over 500 youths protested against Arcelor Mittal Steel Company operations' (an Iron Ore mining company) in Nimba County. The protesters, who comprise mainly of armed ex-combatants, used single barrel guns and fired at members of the Liberian National Police (LNP) deployed to maintain the peace. Six LNP officers sustained serious injuries, while the protesters destroyed and looted the company's properties worth millions of dollars. It is important to underline that the DDRR has long ended, which makes it illegal for unauthorized persons to be in possession of arms, a fact that is strengthened by the existing Security Council arms embargo on Liberia. Although it is alleged that single barrel weapons were used during the protest, which are only permissible for hunting purposes and when officially registered (which they are not), their use demonstrates the fragility of the country and the "battle readiness" of ex-combatants to confront armed state security personnel.

The Ebola crisis in Liberia highlighted in a dramatic manner the lack of capacity of the Liberian government and threatened the gains achieved in the last eleven years in peace consolidation and the rebuilding of state institutions. In addition, the Ebola outbreak exacerbated the overall state fragility; pervasive institutional weaknesses; governance challenges; and deep mistrust by the citizens of the government commitment. The Ebola crisis led to military brutality

against unarmed civilians in the West Point Community who were staging a peaceful protest in response to the Ebola quarantine of their community.

The West Point Community was one of the locations predominantly inhabited by ex-combatants and I conducted face-to-face interview and focus group study there. This location was hit by the Ebola outbreak and subsequently quarantined. In response to the Ebola situation in this area, the UN Panel of Experts (UNPE 2014) indicated that the Liberian government has shown a trend towards the militarization of the Liberian State response to what was essentially a health emergency, as demonstrated by the 20 August 2014 incident which led to the shooting to death of a 25 year old student by the military forces deployed in West Point to enforce the quarantine measures after they were resisted by the population. The action of the government was not surprising because, during this period, all other government institutions, including the system of public health, had quickly collapsed after the surge of Ebola, and the government seemed to have been left with the only functioning tool, the army, as there was no alternative means to show action. This incident has further strained the relationship between ex-combatants and the government as the former sees the governmental action as a deliberate means of targeting them since West Point Community was not the only Ebola affected location in Liberia.

In 2006, the Liberian Ministries of Gender and Justice launched the National Gender-Based Violence Plan of Action, which is constructed on four pillars: protection of women and children from sexualized and gender-based violence; prevention of sexualized and gender-based violence; promotion of women's human rights; and participation of women in peace processes. Liberia has enacted two major laws aimed at enhancing protection against sexualized violence. The first is a penal law that was amended in 2005 to expand the definition of rape to include gang rape, rape of minors, and rape by weapons. Additionally, the provisions of the amendment are couched in gender-neutral terms, thereby negating the notion that rape is an offense only committed by men against women. The second reform occurred in 2008, when Liberia amended its judicial law to establish a separate court with exclusive jurisdiction over sexual offenses. Moreover, a domestic violence law is currently under consideration by the Legislature. The Liberian National Police (LNP) has established the Women and Children Protection Sections in more than 21 locations in Liberia to improve

the protection of women and children, particularly against sexualized violence. Liberia has developed an all-female civil police unit with special commitment to cases of sexualized violence.

In spite of all these efforts, there are still challenges in addressing the widespread issue of sexualized violence. Many Liberians have limited access to the formal legal system, and reforms still need to be made to the customary legal system, in which financial compensation tends to be given to the family of the survivor rather than the survivor him or herself. According to Scully et.al (2013) 40% of survivors accessed the LNP, but only 23% accessed the courts. This suggests a fairly significant gap between a woman's initial reporting of an incident of sexualized violence and that case being carried to the courts. There are several obstacles that prevent access, such as the costs and the authority of traditional leaders to mediate disputes. An Amnesty International report in 2011 found that other barriers exist for prosecution, including low rate of prosecution of rape cases; excessive pre-trial prison time for accused perpetrators; shortage of social workers in health facilities to support survivors of gender-based violence; fast turnover of staff trained in clinical management of rape; high number of rape cases being dismissed; magistrates trying rape cases not under their jurisdiction; poor selection of jurors; delays in evidence collection and investigation; poor linkages in the justice delivery system; and lack of transportation to convey prisoners to prison (Amnesty, 2011:207).

The number of incidents of sexual and gender-based violence remains high, with the majority of reported cases involving minors. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection noted 1,392 reported cases of sexual and gender-based violence in 2014, of which 720 were rape cases, including gang rape. Five children involved in those cases have died, while only one alleged perpetrator has been arrested (GoL, 2014; UNMIL, 2015). The Government, the United Nations and partners continued to emphasize the importance of addressing sexual and gender-based violence at the grass-roots level by engaging communities in changing social norms and holding perpetrators accountable.

Table 5: Criminal violent incidents in Liberia

Criminal Violent incidents	JAN-2014	FEB-2014	MAR-2014	APR-2014	MAY-2014	JUN-2014	JULY-2014	AUG-2014	SEPT-2014	OCT-2014	NOV-2014	DEC-2014
1. Armed Robbery (*) Committed with firearms	23 (14)	18 (11)	9 (5)	22 (13)	23 (12)	19 (13)	39 (24)	24 (17)	21 (15)	18 (13)	6 (3)	8 (5)
2. Arson	4	5	2	3	5	2	2	0	0	0	0	1
3. Aggravated Assault	82	71	84	64	79	45	1	0	0	0	1	0
4. Simple Assault	234	206	229	141	194	155	3	0	0	0	0	0
5. Illegal Poss. Of Drugs	16	11	9	8	13	7	7	0	1	4	4	0
6. Homicide	8	6	14	10	6	7	13	6	4	9	7	10
7. Kidnapping	2	2	5	2	5	3	2	0	0	0	1	0
8. Mob Violence	7	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
9. Poss. of firearm/am.	22	17	6	18	16	12	29	22	22	15	12	5
10. Rape/Corruption of minors	61	44	53	42	40	38	35	14	19	30	36	20
11. Riot	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
12. Robbery	13	17	15	9	10	8	0	0	0	0	0	1
13. Sexual Crimes except Rape	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	472	403	202	320	392	296	132	66	67	76	69	46

Source: UN Police daily situation reports on criminal violence incidents recorded in Liberia in 2014

Table 5 above shows a statistical report based on criminal violent incidents reported daily by the United Nations Police (UNPOL). Although these are incidents that are reported and investigated, many others occur throughout the country, and are not being noticed, reported, or investigated by security personnel. Significant among these violent activities with high numbers are armed robbery which frequently involves the use of firearms, with perpetrators harming their victims; aggravated and simple assaults; illegal possession of firearm and weapons; rape and corruption of minors; and mob violence, although the last appears to have reduced substantially following sustained campaigning and sensitization of the public mounted by the United Nations to support the government efforts. Armed robberies are most commonly reported in Monrovia and its environs. County assessment reveals that communities are concerned about armed robbery and the violence that it unleashes, and do not feel that the Police are fully equipped to protect them. Armed robberies in Liberia do not tend to involve military-grade weapons (but cutlasses, local single barrel shotguns), or involve organized gangs of former militia. However, armed robberies are often perpetrated by two to four persons, indicating some level of organization. During my Bong County assessment in 2013 as part of my official duties, women that I interviewed in the City of Gbarnga cited the lack of functioning Police hotline phones and insufficient Police night patrols as factors that undermine their security and that of their communities. Specifically, the women claimed that when they call the Police hotlines they ring indefinitely without any response.

Rape is one of the most serious crimes plaguing Liberia, with an average of eight known cases reported per week and many more never reported to the authorities (UN Report 2013 -2014). Asked if isn't ironic that sexual abuse continues unabated in post-war Liberia—the first African country with a female head of state, Ernest Gaie, ActionAid country director, said: "The election of President Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson in 2005 has given women's rights an unprecedented profile and momentum in Liberia and the president is personally committed to tackling rape and violence against women." (ibid).

In her book, entitled *"The Child Will Be Great"*, President Sirleaf gave an account how she was imprisoned, humiliated, threatened with rape, and the ordeal she suffered in the hands of soldiers loyal to the late President Samuel Doe, for her alleged involvement in the coup to overthrown Doe in 1985 (Sirleaf, 2009:142-149).

In her other writings and public speeches, she has continued to explain the sufferings that Liberian women endured during the war. Writing on *"Liberia: When Darkness Falls",* Stemn narrated, through pictorial presentation, women and their babies who were killed during the civil war (Stemn, 2011:45-52), while Dolo argued that institutional patriarchy has rendered many Liberian women dependent on their male counterparts, and that the violence against women during the war has implications for nation building in the post-war era (Dolo, 2007:116).

From the beginning of her presidency, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has demonstrated a personal interest in addressing sexualized violence. The government has placed emphasis on improving protection, prevention, and rehabilitation mechanisms for survivors. In many speeches, including her acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011, Johnson Sirleaf highlighted the need to confront the issue of sexualized violence in Liberia and all over the world (Sirleaf 2011). The Liberian government has developed one of the first National Action Plans to End Gender-Based Violence under the terms of UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Introduced in 2000, the resolution formally acknowledges the impact of war on women and girls and encourages the involvement of women in peace-building processes.

In spite of all these, the high rate of reported rape cases, particularly of minors, remains a serious security concern in post-war Liberia. From the table above, between January to December 2014, 423 rape cases were reported. In the majority of the cases, minors are alleged victims as indicated below. The high statistics are more alarming when one considers that rape likely goes unreported or under-reported in many cases due to the stigma attached to the violent crime as well as the tendency in some communities to settle rape cases through communal means. The violent nature of this crime, the considerable bodily and psychological harm it can cause to the victims and its prevalence relative to other violent crimes are major concerns, and despite laws against rape and a number of initiatives aimed at curbing the crime, it remains pervasive problem in Liberia. The result is an environment wherein women and girls are not guaranteed protection. In my personal findings through interviews and reporting, Police officers often ask victims of rape and other crimes for money to purchase fuel for their vehicles to travel to scenes of incidents for investigation. This can discourage reporting due to the victim's anticipation of a financial burden.

Rape is a crime under international law. It is also recognized by the United Nations Security Council as a threat to international peace and security in Resolution 1325, adopted in 2000 (UNSC 2000). A central component of the UN's strategy for preventing conflict-related sexual violence is addressing impunity and identifying perpetrators. In UN Security Council Resolution 1960 of 2010, the Secretary General is asked to provide 'detailed information on parties to armed conflict that are credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for acts of rape or other forms of sexual violence, and to list the parties that are credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for patterns of rape and other forms of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict on the Security Council agenda (HPN 2014; UNSC 2010). Under UNSC resolution 1820 of 2008, NGO's, human rights organizations, UN agencies, civil society groups and healthcare providers are specifically requested to "enhance data collection and analysis of incidents, trends and patterns of rape". No research that I know of or have read has credibly explained the motivation for rape in Liberia, except for the often local beliefs and unsubstantiated claims that rape of minors is a potent source of prosperity, and in particular, enhances the success of perpetrators in political contests and participation. Rather there has been a simplistic way of explaining the objectives for rape, that is, the sole fulfilment of sexual desire by force – a motivation that does not fit with the 'strategic rape theory', the dominant leading explanation for war rape since the conflict in Yugoslavia (Gottschal, 2004) – are being pursued through rape: destruction, humiliation, punishment or revenge against the enemy.

Research in this area usually reaches the same conclusion, namely that more research is required to respond to the same unanswered question: to ' understand the motives that drive perpetrators to commit such brutal acts of violence in a systematic manner by comparing the experiences and attitudes of multiple militias in order to better understand how behaviour around sexual violence varies amongst groups', or to 'elucidate the links between soldiers' perpetration of, command structure attitude towards, and motivation for sexual violence' (HPN 2015). The dearth of data on the motivation for rape in Liberia, except for local perceptions, stated above, means that this is potential area of further research.

In table 5 above, I have provided some statistics on rape in Liberia for 2014. Below are some of the rape cases of minors/under-age investigated and reported

weekly by the United Nations Police (UNPOL) in 2015. This report is categorized under UN title on Safety and Security (UNMIL 2015).

Safety and security

➢ From 2 June to 8 June, there were four reported rape cases, three of the victims were below 18 years of age.
➢ From 16 – 22 June, there were eight reported rape cases, all eight victims were below 18 years of age.
➢ From 23 -29 June, there were four reported rape cases, all the victims were below 18 years of age.
➢ From 30 June to 6 July there were five reported rape cases, four victims were below 18 years of age.
➢ From 21 – 27 July, there were three reported rape cases, all the victims were below 18 years of age.
➢ From 28 July to 3 August, there were six reported rape cases, all victims were below 18 years of age.
➢ From 4-10 August, there were seven reported rape cases; all victims were below 18 years of age.
➢ From 12 17 August, there were three reported rape cases, all the victims were below 18 years of age.
➢ From 18- 24 August, there were three reported rape cases, all victims were below 18 years of age.

The above statistics, underscores how prevalent violence that are linked to rape are in Liberia. The ages of the victims are as low as between five to ten years. It is also important to note that in all the cases mentioned above, the perpetrators escaped and were not arrested.

There is external dimension to the violence perpetrated by Liberia ex-combatants and this is particularly located with the Mano River Union. An estimated 3,000 foreign combatants, mostly from Liberia, fought in Côte d'Ivoire during the country's post-election crisis, the majority on former President Laurent Gbagbo's side. A significant number also fought on the side of the current President, Alhassan Ouattara (UN Report, 2012). About 1,000 Liberian ex-combatants and mercenaries were estimated to fight on both sides during the 2010/2011 crisis (UN Panel of Expert (2012; UNMIL/JMAC Report, 2011:3). These mercenaries were allegedly recruited and financed by the last regime's inner circle, fought side-by-side with local ethnic militias in western Côte d'Ivoire where they targeted and killed perceived Ouattara

supporters. The ability of recruiters in Cote d'Ivoire to contact and activate ex-combatants and mercenary leaders in Liberia, and for the leaders to in turn recruit hundreds of fighters to join during the 2010/211 crisis, presents potential domestic and regional threats to security in the medium to long term (ibid).

Following Gbagbo's arrest, many of the mercenaries and local militia crossed into Liberia, with huge caches of weapons, and stayed with communities of the same ethnic group in the border area, keeping many of their command structures intact. Others are reportedly still hiding in refugee camps on either side of the border. The Liberian authorities were unable to effectively screen arriving refugees for the presence of combatants. As they have not been disarmed, remnants of these pro-Gbagbo militia and mercenaries in the border area continue to pose security threats to those ethnic groups perceived to be pro-Ouattara. The situation is further complicated by the presence of criminal gangs and the fact that the area hosts key businesses, both legitimate and illegitimate (e.g. cocoa trade, gold mining, drugs and weapons trafficking). The border crossing points between Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire are very porous and heavily forested. There are few security personnel in official border crossing points. This makes it easy for criminal and illegal activities to thrive on a large scale.


Political and Economic Violence

This section is discussed in the context of four analytical framework praxis that shows how ex-combatants are re-marginalized, re-criminalized, exploited and their economic insecurity, creating the avenue for their engagement in political and economic violence. As indicated earlier, I have focused the discussion on political and economic violence as the dominant and most challenging areas of ex-combatant engagement. In addition to the narrative, I have also provided graphic and statistical explanations on the nature of political and economic violence. Importantly, I discussed the current economic situation in Liberia, in relation to its resource mobilization capacity and how this has affected the general living conditions in the country. These conditions have had an immense impact on the ex-combatant communities who have

reacted to this development in many ways. Politically, there are feelings of marginalization, rampant corruption and the lack of transparency in the public sector. Observers within and outside the country will argue that Liberia is stable and at peace because it has not gone back to war after over 10 years of democracy, but beneath that superficial stability and peace there is glaring hostility, distrust and anger in the country, all because of the massive corruption that exist at all levels in the country. Recently, the government has used the "blame game" to justify its lack of progress, citing the Ebola crisis, falling prices of Iron Ore and Rubber in the international market, and, in retrospect, the prolonged civil war as combined constraints to growth and development. Six years ago, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission released its final report, which contained important recommendations for advancing reconciliation and addressing fundamental aspects of accountability, which are essential for lasting peace. Many of those recommendations have yet to be implemented. There is an upsurge in violent public disturbances, which underscores deficiencies in the response capacity of the police. The undercurrent of public discontent and alienation expressed through violent disturbances threatens the peace in Liberia. Political cleavages have left many Liberians with a feeling of exclusion from the political process and the lack of opportunities.

A 'transition from war to peace' is unlikely to see a clean break from violence to consent, from theft to production, from repression to democracy, or from impunity to accountability (Keen, 2001) While political-institutional violence is related to collective action over participation and power, economic violence relates to survival strategies that lead to common crimes (ibid). These actors have challenged routine state violence seen as selective and which may contain a strong political message to the population, for instance warning actors against political organization or participation in elections. In Liberia, political violence has shifted into the society and amongst the main actors are ex-combatants who secure their daily survival by providing varied services to politicians, and lack other viable options and capabilities. There is also the likelihood that others who may not have benefitted from the post-war dividend have formed criminal groups. The increase in domestic violence in Liberia, for example, is likely to be rooted in these developments.

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Notwithstanding the focus of this research site on Montserrado County, I made a comparative analysis of political and economic violence across the country between April 2014 and April 2015 in order to further demonstrate why Monserrado (Monrovia) was chosen as a preferred site for this research. During this period, 57 violent protests were carried out. Let me state that although there is no hard evidence to show that the perpetrators of this violence were ex-combatants given the mixture of the protesters, there are indicators to show that they are predominantly ex-combatants. First, many of the protests, majority of those involved have always carried placards showing their dissatisfaction with the reintegration programmes, indicating that these are ex-combatants. Second, if ex-combatants cannot find new livelihoods, they will protest violently or turn to committing crime to support themselves. Although Jeremy Mullins (2013) has debunked this assertion, noting that the claim rests on a dubious causal chain. Third, the locations where violent protests have taken place are either in communities inhabited by ex-combatants, their locations, concessions or within organizations where they operate/work as unskilled labourers. Fourth, in those violent protests that involved the use of weapons and dangerous objects, the perpetrators were identified as ex-combatants. Finally, ex-combatants have been known to provide leadership in political campaigns and support to politicians, lead protests against government policies and actions, protests to confront and resist police brutality against unarmed civilians, protests against bad labour practices etc.

*Figure 11: Map showing the distribution of violent protests in the 15 Counties*

#	Violent Protests	COLOR CODE
1.	Political motivated protests	29
2.	Economic motivated protests	28
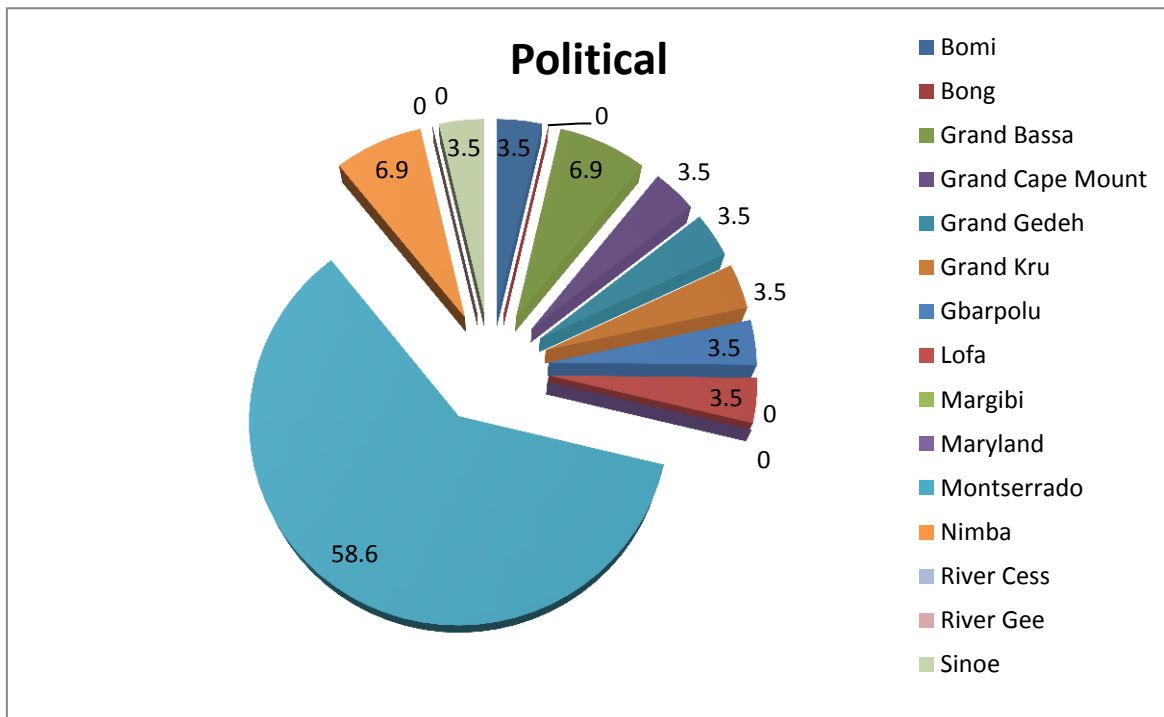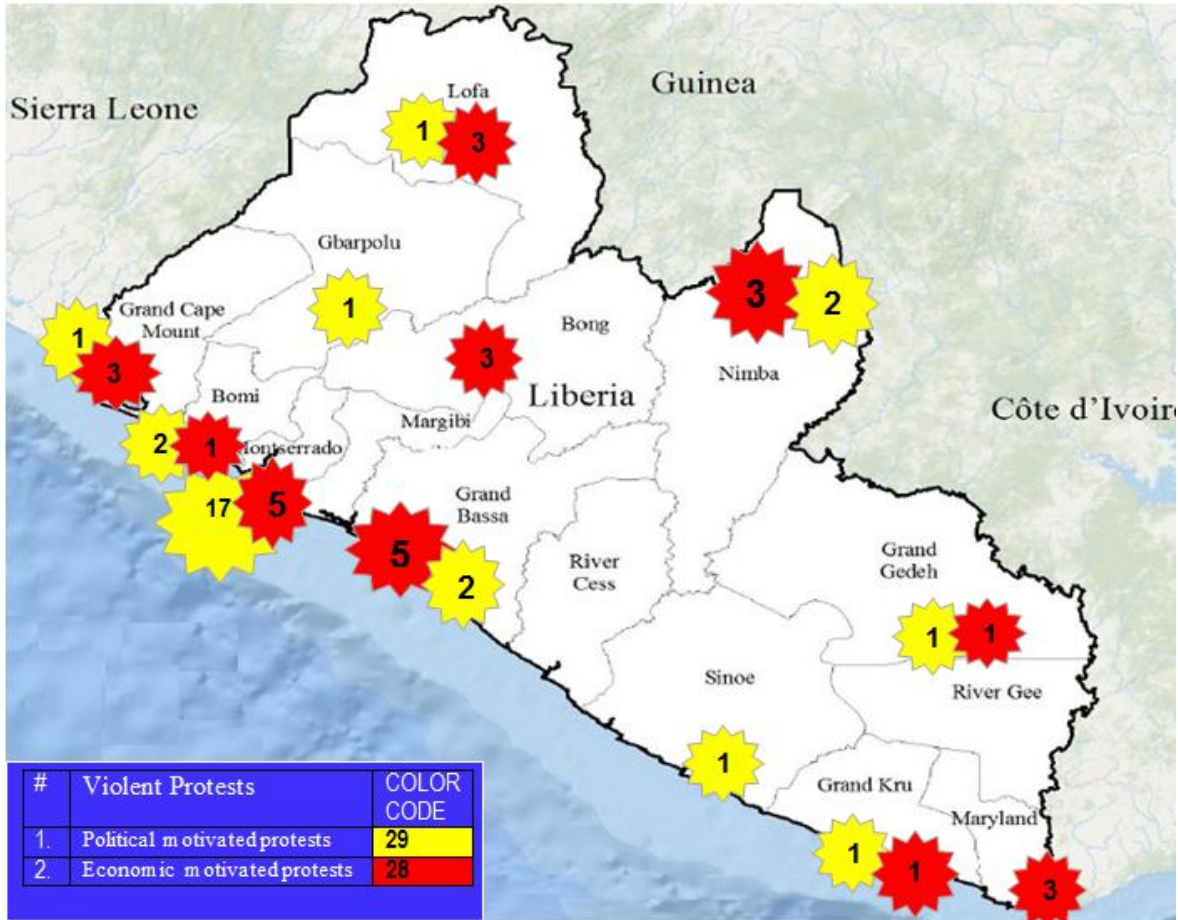
Analysis

During the period under review, there was a total of 29 politically motivated protests with the highest in Montserrado which recorded 17 violent protests. There were 28 economically motivated protests with the highest of 5 in Montserrado and Grand Bassa Counties respectively. Montserrado is the political and economic capital while one of the World's giant Iron Ore Companies, Arcellor Mittal Steel and the Liberia Agriculture Company are located in Grand Bassa County. The predominant work force in these concessions is ex-combatants who occasionally engage in protests to demand for better wages and benefits. In addition, Montserrado accounts for 58.62% of political and 17.24% economic protests follow by Grand Bassa and Nimba counties with 6.90% each of political and 17.86% and 10.71% of economic respectively. Bomi, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru, Gbarpolu, Lofa, and Sinoe counties all had 3.45% each of political protests. Bong, Grand Cape Mount, and Nimba counties had 10.71% each of economic, while Grand Gedeh and Grand Kru counties had 3.57% each of economic. The overall averages between political and economic protests are 96.57% and 95.79% with political protests being prevalent at 0.78% higher than economic. There were more political and economic protests in Montserrado and Grand Bassa as shown in the charts, graph and percentage representation below, while three counties out of the 15 counties did not experience any forms of protests and four counties had one of each of the protests (political/economic).
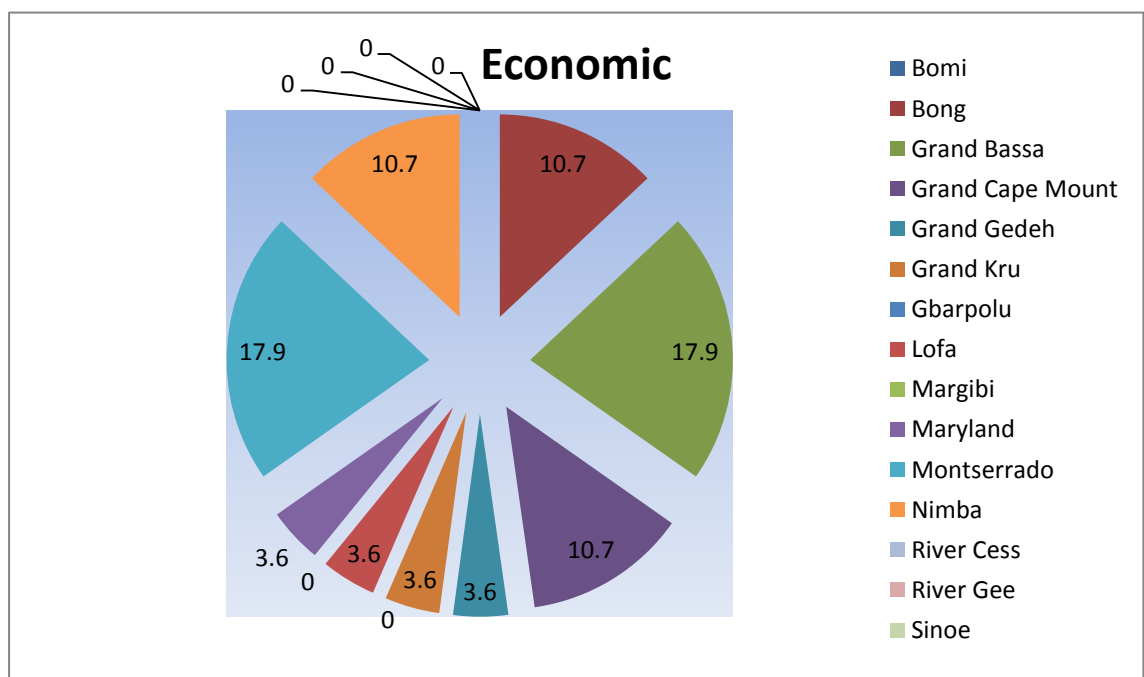
Graphic analysis of protests April 2014 – April 2015
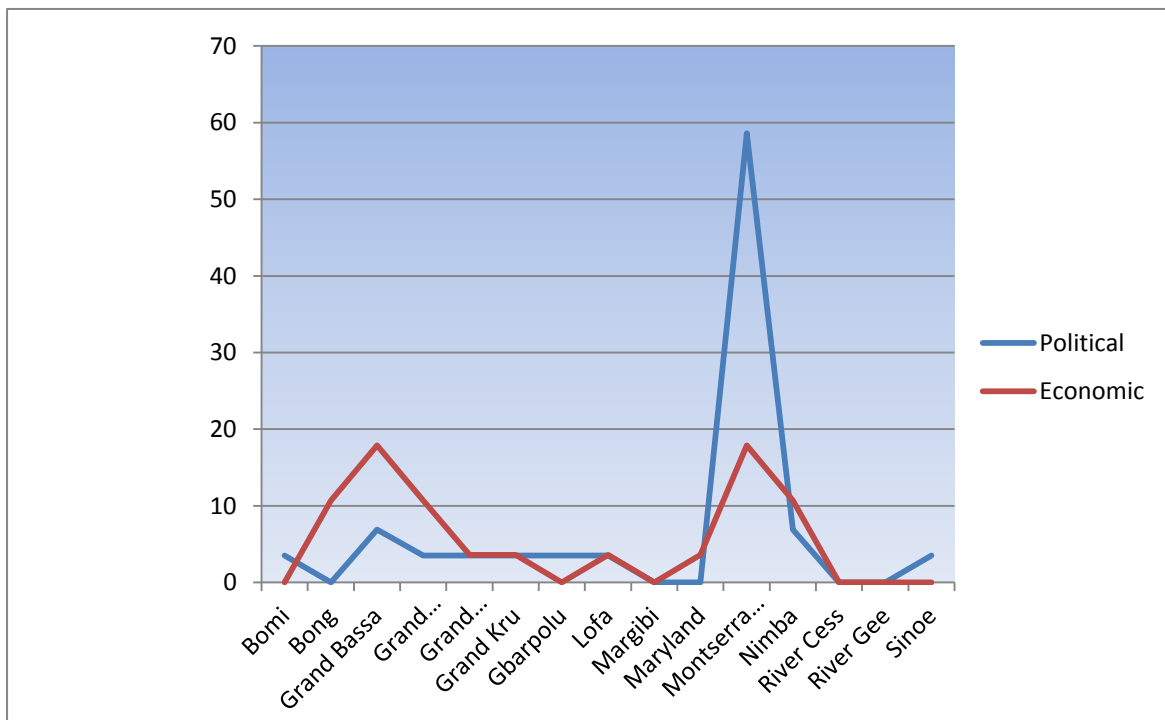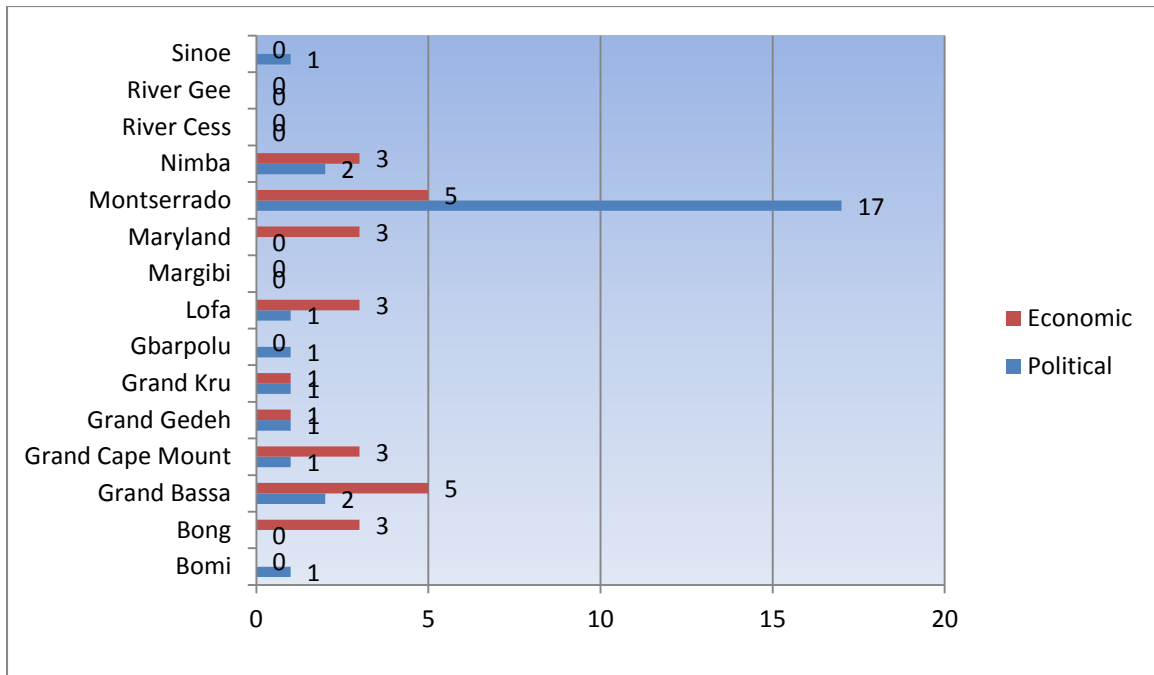
Percentage analysis of protests April 2014 – April 201

The general economic conditions in Liberia have impacted negatively on the population. The consequence is that those who are most affected, and have no alternative means of livelihood, take advantage of a peaceful protest against the government to express their anger, and engage in violence with a view to destruction, stealing and looting. Again the most affected areas are locations where concessions operate, with a significant number of the unskilled workers as ex-combatants. Here, the study identified and discussed how Liberia's major exports of Iron Ore, Rubber, and Palm Oil have contributed to Liberia's current economic hardships, and the reactions by segments of the population, particularly, unemployed ex-combatants. The prices of these products have fallen drastically in the international market resulting in the lay-off of a significant number of workers. The problem was exacerbated following the outbreak of the Ebola epidemic which forced concessions to scale down and or shut down their operations. In the graphs below, I show that this situation has affected the Liberian economy and served as a push for the occurrence of violence. I have analysed the global market price for iron ore, rubber, and palm oil for the period of November 2014 to December 2015 to identify trends between the commodities that caused the market's continued price drop.

Iron ore- The price drop is being driven by two factors: evidence that supply is continuing to increase out of the World's biggest producers, Australia and Brazil; and concerns that Chinese demand is tanking as the economy slows (UK. business insider.com 2015).

Rubber- Thailand is the world's largest supplier of natural rubber. In recent years, the country has faced falling demand, particularly in China, a major rubber consumer, and oversupply at the global level. This has made the Thai government resort to subsidy and buying programmes to support rubber growers against a weak economic backdrop in 2014 and 2015. The natural rubber price has been on a downward trend since 2013 because of high inventories and production against a backdrop of slower demand (security.com/emis/insights/ 2015).

Palm Oil- Palm oil production is vital for the economy of Malaysia, which is the World's second- largest producer of the commodity after Indonesia. For the first seven months of 2015, Malaysia's exports to the European Union and China, two of its biggest markets, were down from a year earlier (Wall Street Journal 2015). This caused an oversupply that created a ripple throughout the market making prices lower for all exporters. Also pressing on palm oil are cheaper soybeans. Soybean oil and palm oil make up around 62% of the World's edible-oils consumption: When soy prices fall, palm oil tends to fall in response. Recent forecasts by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for a strong soybean harvest this year have added to fears of a global oilseed glut.

Chart Analysis: To better understand how troubling iron ore, rubber, and palm oil exports for Liberia are one should open the market space when prices first started to fall from its highest price. Iron ore price was its highest in late 2011 at USD 179 a dry metric ton. In December 2015 the price was USD 39 per dry metric ton. That is a 79 per cent reduction in price. Rubber was also at its highest price in late 2011 at USD 280 per metric ton. In December 2015 the price was USD 55, which is a 77 per cent reduction in price. Palm oil in late 2011 was USD 1.23k per metric ton. In December 2015, the price was USD 503 per metric ton, which is 58 per cent reduction in price (World Bank 2015).

Looking more closely at these commodities there are clear commonalities that have led to the decline of their prices. Specifically, from November 2014 to December 2015 there were three events that weakened those markets. First, in February 2015 palm oil and iron ore prices began to decline sharply after reports of oversupply in the global market due to China's slowing imports, one of the biggest markets in the world. (See #1 on chart below) Also, investors begin speculating that China's market will slow in 2015.

The second and major thread causing all three prices to plunge was in July 2015 (See STAR on chart below). It was on this date that the International Monetary Fund released their revised *World Economic Outlook* that reported the slowing of China's economy and the over valuation of the Yen. With China one of the biggest importers of all three commodities, prices tumbled hard.

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Making things worse was the fact China did slow its imports as speculated in February 2015.

The final thread affecting all three prices was in September 2015 (See #2 on chart below). It was on this date that the US and China discussed increasing their interest rates. The rise of interest rates affects commodity prices because most commodities are priced in dollars, so a rise in the currency makes commodities expensive for holders of other currencies (www.cnbc.com 2014). As a result of the above events, iron ore, rubber, and palm oil were down for the year; -37 per cent, -26 per cent, and -24 per cent respectively.

This is more troubling news for the ordinary Liberian workers who continue to hear about more downsizing and the closing of concessions, despite the Sirleaf administration's efforts to gain global economic support to rejuvenate and service the economy. Unfortunately, that support may only come in the long-term, but it falls short in assisting and mitigating the conditions of ordinary Liberians enduring economic hardships like concession downsizing. The reactions of ex-combatants have been profound, resisting any attempts, through violent protests, to downsize them without the government providing them with alternative sources of livelihood. Many of these protests have led to the destruction of properties and injuries to the ex-combatants in their confrontations with the police who were also affected, and the expatriate staff. Arrests and prolonged detention of ex-combatants in prison without trial, trigger another round of violent protests from members of the ex-combatant communities. Liberia's continued economic hardships are largely a result of its reliance on rubber, iron ore, and palm oil exports, which are experiencing very low global pricing. For example, global rubber prices just from November 2014 through November 2015 experienced a 37 per cent reduction (see rubber price graph). This is on top of the price slide in 2014.
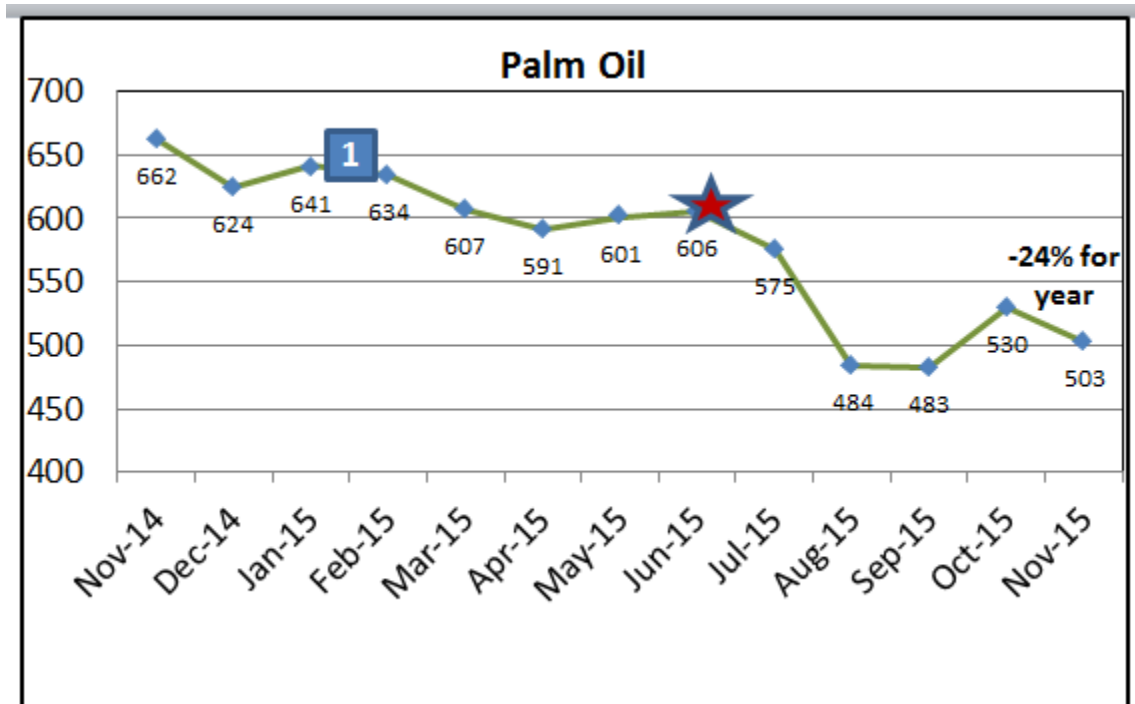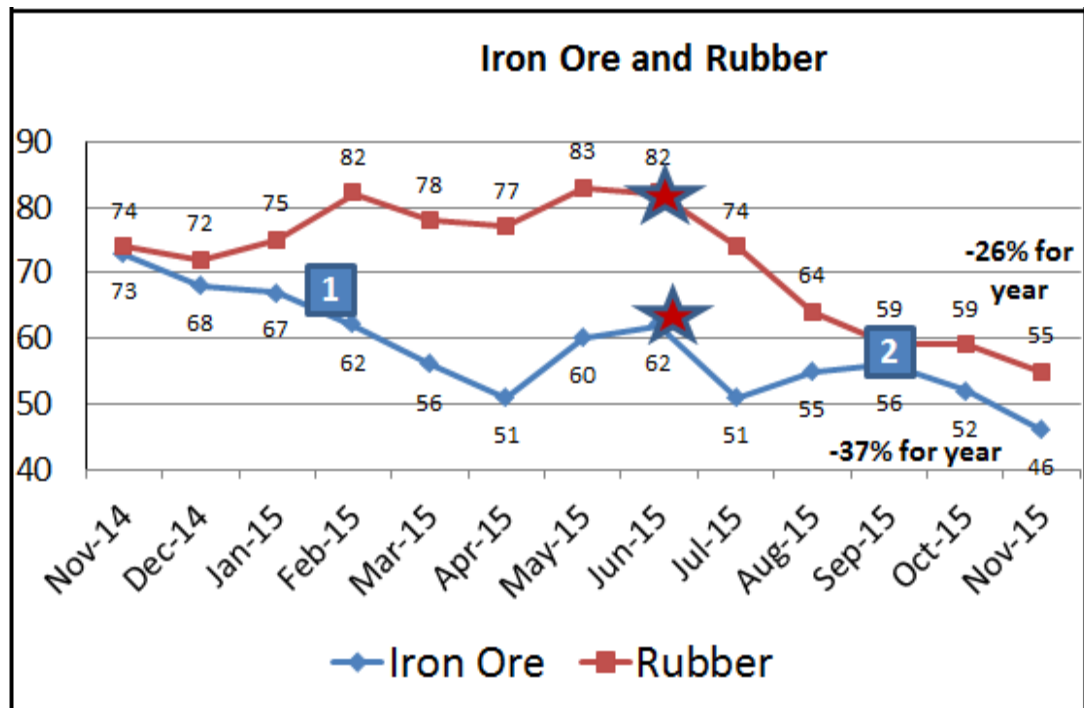
Chart 1: Palm Oil

Chart 2: Iron Ore and Rubber

Related to the foregoing, the bad economic condition is also reflected in the number of violent armed robbery incidents that have occurred between November 2015 – February 2016.

Analysis

The analysis covers a period of four months, highlighting the number of incidents, kinds of weapons used in the commission of the robbery and the location of their occurrence. A total of 47 armed robberies were committed within the five Counties of which 38 occurred in Montserrado (Monrovia), six in Margibi and one each in Bomi, Sinoe and two in Grand Bassa Counties.

Additionally, two incidents involved the use of AK-47 assault raffles, 23 the use of single barrel raffles and 19 the use of cutlasses/knives. Multiple weapons (shot guns and cutlasses/knives) were used to commit six of the robberies, and eight were committed with unidentified weapons believed to be shot guns. 10 of each of the robberies occurred in November and December 2015, while 23 and 3 occurred in January and February 2016 respectively.

Montserrado constitutes 80.85% of the total robberies, while Margibi accounts for 12.77%, and 2.13% each for Bomi and Sinoe counties and 4.26% for Grand Bassa. Also, November and December 2015 account each for 21.28%, while January and February 2016 account for 6.38% and 53.19% respectively.

While there is no evidence to suggest that ex-combatants are the masterminds of these armed robberies, which can be attributed to limited research in this field and in Liberia generally, there are indicators to show that ex-combatants may constitute the majority of the perpetrators. First, telephone calls from community members to UNMIL operation/situation centre (not even to the local police due to lack of confidence in them) seeking intervention for an ongoing armed robbery incident have often alleged that ex-combatants are "terrorizing" them, meaning that they are the perpetrators of the robbery. On further probing why they think that ex-combatants are the perpetrators, the response is always: "they live among us and they are the only group that knows how to shoot". Although this perception may be wrong

the fact that community members harbour this type of negative sentiment against ex-combatants within the same community means that ex-combatants are yet to be fully accepted within communities and the hatred may be due to their continued use of violence against other members of the community. Second, in February 2016, the Liberia National Police investigated and dismissed seven of its senior officers for the supply of assorted weapons to unidentified individuals for the commission of armed robbery (New Dawn 2016). This followed the arrest of individuals who upon interrogation confessed that some members of the police force supplied them with weapons in exchange for money plus the loot from their robbery. Investigation also found out that some of them have backgrounds as former fighters and are linked to some of the defunct factional groups. This revelation may have confirmed the perceptions of community members that ex-combatants constitute the majority of armed robbers. Third, the availability of weapons in Liberia used in the commission of these robberies is known in the country, particularly concerning fleeing Liberian ex-combatants during and after the civil conflict in Cote d'Ivoire, where they fought for the different protagonists.

Managing Violence and Peacebuilding in Liberia

This section discusses the strategies for the management of violence in Liberia, including through the peacebuilding approach. The peacebuilding initiative is seen as an effort to address the root causes of violent conflicts and their transformation, and therefore, the discussion in this study is important in order to gauge its strength and weaknesses in mitigating post-war violence in Liberia. In discussed peacebuilding in order to demonstrate the various perspectives and interpretations by scholars and how these have manifested in the Liberian situation. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) assigned different responsibilities to various national institutions and international partners in pre and post DDRR era. These include the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL), the United Nations, International Contact Group for Liberia (ICGL), the ECOWAS/ECOMOG, and the Government of Liberia (GoL). The exile of Charles Taylor to Nigeria on August 11, 2003, the signing of the Accra Agreement on August 18, 2003, and the United Nations Resolution 1509, which established a stabilization force, on

September 19, 2003, led to a new era of hope and peace in Liberia. Seizing the opportunity created by these initiatives, the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL), with the support of the international community, developed the Result-Focused Transitional Framework (RFTF) as the overarching framework and planning tool for setting goals and actions in ten priority areas called clusters. A key cluster focuses on disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation, and reintegration (DDRR). In the Community Resettlement and Reintegration Strategy (CRRS), developed by the NTGL and the international community, the rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants was aligned with the cluster which dealt with refugees, returnees, and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). The reintegration of ex-combatants was linked to the resettlement process as a way to create a strong framework that will accommodate all groups and facilitate the physical, economic, and social reconstruction of the entire society. This approach was justified by the experiences the 1997 DDRR process, which showed that "programmes aimed only at ex-combatants divided communities and caused considerable resentment on the part of civilians who received no special assistance" (OXFAM, 2004).

The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2003) under Article 1V, the Government of Liberia, the LURD, MODEL and the Political Parties in the conflict, agreed for the deployment of an International Stabilization Force (ISF) in Liberia. Accordingly, the parties requested the United Nations in collaboration with ECOWAS, the AU, and the ICGL to facilitate, constitute, and deploy a United Nations Chapter V11 Force in the Republic of Liberia to support the transitional government and to assist in the implementation of the agreement. With regards to the cantonment, disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants, the parties further requested, in Article V1, the ISF to conduct the disarmament of all combatants of the parties including paramilitary groups. All arms and ammunition are to be placed under constant control by the ISF, and it is to deploy troops to all disarmament and demobilization locations in order to facilitate and monitor the programme of disarmament. Following this request, the UN Security Council

Resolution 1509 of September 19, 2003, established the United Nations Mission in Liberia, with 15,000.00 troops. The resolution clearly stipulates the mandate of UNMIL which includes:

(a) "to observe and monitor the implementation of the ceasefire agreement and investigate violations of the ceasefire; (b) to establish and maintain continuous liaison with the field headquarters of all the parties' military forces; (c) to assist in the development of cantonment sites and to provide security at these sites; (d) to observe and monitor disengagement and cantonment of military forces of all the parties; (e) to support the work of the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC); (f) to develop, as soon as possible, preferably within 30 days of the adoption of this resolution, in cooperation with a Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC), relevant international financial institutions, international development organizations, and donor nations, an action plan for the overall implementation of a disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, and repatriation (DDRR) programme for all armed parties; with particular attention to the special needs of child combatants and women; and addressing the inclusion of non-Liberian combatants; (g) to carry out voluntary disarmament and to collect and destroy weapons and ammunition as part of an organized DDRR programme; (h) support the reform of the security sector by assisting "the transitional government of Liberia in monitoring and restructuring the police force of Liberia, consistent with democratic policing, to develop a civilian police training programme, and to otherwise assist in the training of civilian police, in cooperation with ECOWAS, international organizations, and interested States" (UNSC, 2003:4).

UNMIL faced several challenges in supervising the disarmament and demobilization of combatants. In the immediate period following the signing of the CPA, the ex-government forces of Charles Taylor were still enaged in fighting with LURD and MODEL rebel factions, and there were instances of abduction, looting and harrassment of the civilian population. Although UNMIL has an enforcement mandate to use force under Chapter V11, that was not applied, as the Mission reasoned that it may escalate the situation and further put the civilians at risk. The then Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) in Liberia, Jack Klein, warned that "those who are formenting

trouble will be held accountable for any crimes committed". Factional leaders who were still unleashing violence in many parts of the country were persuaded to cease hostilities. Following this appeal, factional leaders and fighters showed up for disarmament at Camp Sheifflin, in the outskirts of Monrovia (ICG 2004; Nichols, 2005)). Ex-combatants commitment to the process was a mix of fear and expectation. Given the unpredictable and spontaneous nature of Liberia's wars, many ex-combatants feared that a resurgence of war may put their safety in danger, and thus they were reluctant to surrender their weapons inspite of the financial rewards and the promise of reintegration (ibid). This was a major challenge to UNMIL. Although, the cantonment sites were closed on 4 November 2004, certain disarmament activities continued to take place. Consequently, the same month, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) announced that:

> "There will be a grace period when weapons and ammunition can be handed in at any UNMIL check point voluntarily without prosecution. Handing in weapons in this manner will not be eligible for entry into DDRR and cannot receive any of such benefits. Simiarly, any person caught with weapons during this period not in process of handing them in voluntarily will come under Liberian Law covering illegal gun ownership. Mop-up operations dealing with caseloads in specific remote locations of Liberia will continue until these are completed. The people entering DDRR via this route will be given the benefits of a normal combatant in the programme. As of 1 December 2004, all illegal gun ownership comes under the Liberian law as the grace period for voluntary handover ends" (UNMIL, 2004).

In its determination to remove weapons from post-war Liberia, UNMIL embarked on "cordon and search operations" to look for weapons, but this achieved limited success as most combatants concealed their weapons in the forests and inaccessible locations within communities. Further, the UNDP launched a programme of "weapons for development" within the broader context of "Disarmament and Community Development" aimed at encouraging community members to disclose locations of weapons and surrender them to the United Nations in exchange for development of their communities. Again, this approach did not yield substantial results as most community members were afraid that disclosure might put their lives at risk with ex-combatants who live in the same communities (UNDP 2012). In this connection, it should be

recalled that in 2005 community members in the in the Old Road Municipality, disclosed to security officials where weapons were buried in a graveyard for possible use by former rebel groups. This generated tension and subsequently led to violent attacks on suspected community members who leaked the information. However, the UN continue to discover and take possession of hidden and abandoned weapons in remote locations, but weapons, particularly locally made arms, remain in circulation throughout Liberia and are mostly used by criminal elements to commit crimes. Institutional corruption within the relevant national agencies participating in the DDRR process seriously undermined the ability of UNMIL in its monitoring roles. This is not surprising in an improvised post-war country, where many people thought that the DDRR process was a source of making quick money, and therefore seen as a continuation of the "grabbing and looting" that characterized the civil war years (Students 2013; Heritage 2012). There was practically no mechanism for accountability and, regrettably, the international community was focused on the urgent need to complete the DDRR in order to pave the way for Presidential and Legislative elections in 2005. This apparent haste to complete the programme and pull out by avoiding further spending has been one of the major sources of criticisms against the United Nations and other international actors operating in post-conflict environments (Daboh, et.al 2010:10). The UNMIL mandate also covers issues such as police and defence reform, restructuring, training, and operational support, assistance in the restoration and reform of judicial and prison systems, support for the restoration of state authority and administration capacities at government and local levels, good governance, support for civil society, and assistance to constitutional processes. The CPA makes specific reference to the security agencies to be restructured, including the Liberia National Police (LNP). Article VII refers to the Liberia National Police and other security services such as the Immigration Service, Special Security Services, Customs Security Guards, and other statutory security entities (CPA 2003). During the civil wars, police in Liberia (like the other security services) reportedly abused human rights and used official powers for private gains. There was no effective law enforcement, and mob justice was rampant. The population was deeply mistrustful of the Liberian National Police (Malan, 2008). The RAND

Corporation's report provided guidance on the role and functions of the new LNP:

> The primary missions of the LNP are (a) to prevent and fight crime and (b) to maintain public safety. These missions call for a light but sizable, community-friendly police force that can earn the confidence and cooperation of the Liberian people. Anticipating occasional civil disorder, the LNP should also have a branch capable of riot control—e.g., the police support unit (PSU) (Gompert, et.al 2007:25-26).

In 2004, the United Nations Mission Police (UNPOL) began, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1509 and the CPA, to reform the LNP from scratch. UNPOL was required to assist the LNP in maintaining law and order, restructuring, retraining, and re-equipping the police service. At that time, public confidence in the LNP was "zero." During this period some of the police personnel had no uniforms, and the majority had not been paid for the past few years. They had survived mainly by extracting bribes from members of the public whom they were supposed to serve and protect.

UNPOL faced an extremely difficult task. It did not have an executive mandate, granting UN Police powers of arrest. This power was reserved for the same police that they were required to reconstitute. Due to the bad image of the force, UNMIL started reintroducing the LNP to the public through a sensitization programme, supported by the UNMIL Public Information Section, emphasizing that UNPOL was acting in support of the new LNP, and not as an independent law enforcement agency. The selection and vetting criteria agreed by UNMIL and the Government of Liberia are similar to those in most African countries. The Liberia National Police has been increased to a total of more than 4,000 trained and deployed personnel. This represents a police to citizen ratio of 683, whereas the UN generally recommends a ratio of one police officer per 450 citizens. UNMIL and the Government of Liberia have estimated that the total police force needs to be increased to 8,000 to ensure public security and that this needs to occur prior to full UNMIL departure. The LNP is clearly not quite there yet. The existing ranks remain, however, both quantitatively and qualitatively insufficient. More training, resources and infrastructure support are needed to enable the LNP to be effective. Additionally, the LNP remains over-represented in urban areas, particularly in

and around Monrovia while deployment throughout the country continues to lag. Liberians remain unsatisfied with limited police presence, slow police response to crime and high rates of corruption among the ranks. There is still a widespread sense of insecurity in Monrovia, in particular, and of unacceptably high rates of armed robbery and gender based violence (UN SG's Report (2014:4). UNPOL has been working with the LNP to improve police responses to calls for assistance by the public. However, the biggest problem with the LNP at present is low morale and poor discipline, on the one hand, and extremely poor leadership and management on the other (Malan, 2008). This assertion made by Malan has not changed, and if anything, it is only marginally better in the area of training which is provided by the United Nations Police. But the payment of salaries and other benefits remains a problem. This creates avenues for extortion and involvement in other criminal activities such as drugs trade as I have reported in the course of my official work in Liberia.

With regard to the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), real progress has been made with a completely reformed force consisting of new recruits. The AFL comprised of 1,900 soldiers as of February 2014, with plan to reach 2,200 by the end of 2015 (UN SG's Report, 2014:11). The AFL has recently achieved responsibility – both financial and functional – for its own training having taken over from the US Army Training and Evaluation Programme. However, gaps in the strength of the force remain, including high rates of attrition, and gaps in discipline and professionalism (UNMIL 2012:11). Outside of the army and police, it is important to consider the broader context. Historically, politicization of the military has helped to drive conflict. There continues to be weakness in civilian oversight of the security sector, coupled with a public and civil society that does little to hold the sector to account. Although there are various legislative committees set up to provide oversight, they remain weak and ineffective. While some steps have been taken to enhance civilian capacity, these remain insufficient. In addition, the lack of effective civilian oversight impacts upon public confidence in the armed forces. The result of all these has been a continuation of violence in different forms, particularly within the capital city Monrovia and its environs (Malan, 2008).

The Government of Liberia (GoL)

The holding of an election in 2005, signalled an end to war, optimism to end mismanagement in government, and a new beginning based on peace, inclusive economic opportunities and respect for justice based on human rights. At the inception of the new government, the DD component has been concluded, while the RR aspect which is supposed to be a long-term exercise was terminated after one to two years due to lack of funding. The implementing agency, NCDDRR was dissolved. These actions arguably questioned the regime's commitment towards addressing the plight of ex-combatants in post-war Liberia. However, several short-term and medium-term development plans, the types that are characteristic of Africa states and governments, have since been initiated arguably to address these important post-war challenges. In 2006, the government launched a 150-Day Action plan which provided the first glimpse of hope to war-torn Liberians, that the new democratically elected government would protect basic rights and restore vital social services. Indeed, the 150-Day Action Plans and subsequent plans were a precursor to other plans such as the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy (iPRS) of 2007 and the Lift Liberia Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) of 2008-2011.

These strategies and plans provided stimuli to the already struggling and weak economy. They also sought to strengthen the rule of law and improve the national security environment. However, descent into conflict occasioned far more significant damage to infrastructure and institutions than the gains from the period of recovery have been able to resolve. The path from recovery to prosperity demands a greater quality of public investment that has not been possible so far. By the United Nations Development Index, Liberia remains one of the poorest countries in the world (AfT 2013). Significant stretches of the struggling rural agrarian economy are cut off from urban Liberia (which of course is just the capital Monrovia) during the rainy season due to the deplorable road conditions. Unemployment remains very high, especially among the country's youthful population, rampant corruption remains high in government and other public institutions, and human insecurity is exacerbated by the deteriorating economic conditions. Faced by

multiple problems, particularly how to provide sustainable livelihood for the large number of un-integrated ex-combatants, and internally displaced persons (IDP's), coupled with enduring incidence of violence, the government sought to adopt a holistic approach to deal with these issues. Under the PRS, the government developed a framework of four pillars for development, namely; peace and security, economic revitalization, governance and rule of law, and infrastructure and basic services.

The central goal of the Peace and Security pillar was to create a secure and peaceful environment, both domestically and in the sub-region, that is conducive to sustainable, inclusive, and equitable growth and development. The economic revitalization pillar focused on achieving growth and development. The Governance and Rule of Law pillar envisages enhanced participation in the ownership of government, building effective and efficient institutions, and strengthening and enhancing the effectiveness and integrity of legal and judicial institutions, amongst others. Finally, the infrastructure and basic services pillar seeks to achieve substantive development in the construction of roads and bridges, transportation, energy, post and telecommunications, water and sanitation, public buildings and housing, health, and education (LPRS 2008).

In spite of what appear to be progressive steps encapsulated in the PRS document towards achieving economic recovery and growth, the strategy did not yield substantive results, and was therefore hugely criticized by many national stakeholders (ibid). Marginalization of youth and women, and the mismanagement of natural resources remain widespread. The situation of the youth and ex-combatants remains a critical security challenge, and continues to manifest in the increasing risk of violence. Gender based violence, which was used as weapon of war during the two-decade period of unrest, remains widespread in post-war Liberia. There is still over-concentration of power and corruption, restricted access to the decision making process, and limited space for civil society participation in governance processes. In the light of all these challenges, accentuated by a deteriorating situation and violent protests across the country, the government needed a robust policy response to convince the population of its commitment towards improving their livelihood and peaceful co-existence. Consequently, in 2013,

the government launched a development strategy – the Agenda for Transformation (AfT). The AfT is the government's five-year development strategy. It allows for the three year (2008-2011) Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), which transitioned from post-conflict emergency reconstruction towards achieving economic recovery. The AfT will not deliver transformation by the end of the next five years, rather it is assumed to be the first step towards achieving the goals set out in the so-called Liberia Rising 2030, that is, Liberia's long-term vision of socio-economic transformation and development. However, the success of the AfT will inevitably entail making hard choices and taking deliberate and bold steps to ensure that resources are directed in a transparent manner towards priority areas and interventions. Aid resources are particularly important in this regard, since AfT financing is expected to rely heavily on funding from development partners (AfT, 2013:154-155).

The Peacebuilding Approach

The DDRR programmes are seen as an essential part of peace-building, and without efforts to assist former combatants to reintegrate into society, their potential volatility could provide the opportunity for conflict to reignite. What then is peacebuilding, and what does it look like? Is it high-level diplomats working out a regional and international plan for addressing the conflict in Syria? Is it civil society organizations bringing religious leaders together to dialogue on Islamist militant Boko Haram in Nigeria? Or women's groups working together across the lines of conflict in Israel and Palestine to deliver humanitarian aid to families in Gaza? Peacebuilding is all of this, and much more. Post-conflict peacekeeping developed into something of a growth industry for international forces in the 1990s. The first major operation involving international UN troops was deployed in Namibia in 1989, followed by missions in Nicaragua (1989), Angola (1991), Cambodia (1991), Mozambique (1992), Liberia (first 1993), Rwanda (1993), Bosnia (1995), Croatia (1995), Guatemala (1997), East Timor (1999), Kosovo (1999), and Sierra Leone (1999). In total, fourteen peacekeeping operations were deployed from 1989-1999 to territories that had recently experienced civil conflict (Paris, 2004:3).

The questions related to peacebuilding are debated among scholars and policymakers in many places around the world, and they relate to a more general set of questions. Is violence something to be managed, mitigated, negotiated, mediated, resolved, prevented or transformed? Is peace something to be kept, made or built? The field of peacebuilding did not originate out of a central place. Rather, the work of peacebuilding took root in different cultures around the world. It is not surprising then that peacebuilding practitioners have developed different terminology. Some use the term "peacebuilding" to refer to post-conflict work. Others use it as an umbrella term for all work geared toward social change at all levels of society and in all stages of conflict. There is an increasing sense of confusion about the terminology or language in the field of peacebuilding, and these challenges impact coordination efforts. The table below explains the range of differences in meaning of the term peacebuilding. However, many of the different uses of this term also equally apply to other terms that are used as "umbrella terminology" such as conflict resolution, management or prevention.

Table: 3

Other scholars insist that the term peacebuilding must also include efforts to address the root causes of violent conflict. The Carnegie Endowment's Commission on the Prevention of Deadly Conflict defined peacebuilding as "structural prevention" which consists of the strategies to address the root causes of deadly conflict (1997). In addition, the Joint Utstein study of peacebuilding concludes that "peacebuilding attempts to encourage the development of the structural conditions, attitudes, and modes of political behaviour that may permit peaceful, stable and ultimately prosperous social and economic development (Joint Utstein Study 2003)." It states that there are four main headings related to peacebuilding: to provide security, to establish the socioeconomic foundations of long-term peace, to establish the political framework of long-term peace, and to generate reconciliation, a healing of the wounds of war, and justice (Utstein Study, 2003:4; Smith,

2003:10). The Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy states that there are three broad types of peacebuilding:

 a. Political peacebuilding is about agreement and legal issues, and includes formal negotiations, diplomacy, etc.

b. Structural peacebuilding is about infrastructures and includes building economic, military, social and cultural systems that support a culture of peace through activities such as voter education, disarming warring parties, police training, building schools, and good governance.

c. Social peacebuilding is about relationships and includes dealing with feelings, attitudes, opinions, beliefs, and values through dialogue processes, community-building activities and training (Schirch, 2008:5).

Fukuyama's argument is important for setting the scene about the phases of the discourse and evolution of contemporary peacebuilding since 1990. This relates to the conceptual and practical (policy) transition from traditional peacekeeping to state (institutional) building and to humanitarianism (Ismail, 2008:11). The other transition moves the discourse and practice from "sheer" humanitarianism to political realism or militant humanitarianism or the relief and reconstruction of complex environment (Bello 2006:281), and to a technology of normalization and security for liberal peace (Duffield 2001, 2007). Yet, the advent of an asymmetrical agenda of peacebuilding in the global conceptual and policy agenda hardly precluded contestations about its meaning, strategies and, lately, its ideological underpinnings (Ismail, 2008). To foreground these contestations, Keen (2000:14), in seeking to problematize the phenomenon of War and Peace, raised the crucial observation that "we hear about rehabilitation, reconstruction, resettlement and all the various 're-s' of post-conflict work. But if you could recreate and reconstruct the exact social and economic conditions prevailing at the outset of a civil war, would it simply break out all over again – for the same reasons as before?"

The intellectual foundation of contemporary peacebuilding appears to be rooted in peace research and conflict-resolution literature and the writings of

peace theorists. According to Miall et al. (1999:36), peacebuilding refers to "the attempt to overcome the structural, relational, and cultural contradictions which lie at the root of conflict". While it is acknowledged that actions, including diplomatic negotiations such as shuttle and two-track diplomacies, are historical phenomena and elements of broader peacebuilding, the conceptual foundation of contemporary peacebuilding is often related to Galtung's tripartite approaches to peace – peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding. Miall et al. (1999:186–7) reproduced aspects of Galtung's (1975) thesis that defined peacekeeping as actions seeking "to halt and reduce the manifest violence of the conflict through the intervention of military forces in an interpository role"; peacemaking as actions that are "directed at reconciling political and strategic attitudes through mediation, negotiation, arbitration and conciliation mainly at the elite level"; and peacebuilding as actions and propositions that addressed "the practical implementation of peaceful social change through socioeconomic reconstruction and development". Other peace theorists reinforce this narrative by linking contemporary peacebuilding to the distinction between structural and direct violence, and between negative and positive peace. (Galtung (1964:95).

From a considerable hands-off approach to international "peacekeeping" during the Cold War, mainly as a result of geo-political considerations and concerns about state sovereignty, "peacebuilding" has emerged as a key focus of international attention beginning in the 1990s, with the United Nations playing a leading role. Since then, the concept of peacebuilding and its agenda have evolved significantly. Building on UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali's 1992 An Agenda for Peace, peacebuilding was originally associated with the (post-) conflict phase in countries that had experienced internal warfare, and was defined as "actions undertaken by national or international actors to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict" (Call and Cousins 2007:3). These early interventions in war-torn societies tended to focus on the establishment of a "negative peace" (i.e., absence of, or prevention of a relapse into, armed conflict) and operated under very short-term timeframes. The emphasis of this "liberal peace-building" model (Paris 2004) was on holding a successful post-conflict election

as soon as possible (usually within a year or two of the signing of a peace agreement) and on laying the foundations of a market-oriented economy, with the assumption that these provisions would prove sufficient in themselves to enable host societies to embark on a road towards lasting peace almost automatically (Paris and Sisk 2008).

While some scholars/institutions have used the liberal peace thesis as the appropriate and sometimes acceptable model for development, peace and stability, others have criticized it for a variety of reasons. Richmond and MacGinty looked at the most significant contributions made by the critique of the Liberal school. The persistence of liberal peace 'solutions' closes the door on political and on difficult discussions about sustainable forms of peace, legitimacy, responsibility and inequality (Richmond and MacGinty, 2014:1). Both noted that liberal peace has attracted criticisms from realist, Marxist, liberal, constructivist, critical and post-colonial scholars, for a range of often similar reasons. It has also attracted the attention of many students, scholars, and policymakers, including from the post-conflict and developing world, and appears to have become a central debate in international relations (ibid, 2).

In my argument, I nevertheless noted that this has not been able to address many of the problems that it has generated, neither has it gained universal acceptance. For instance, most of the development agendas undertaken in post-war Liberia by bilateral and multilateral institutions, including the United Nations, appear to have adopted the liberal peace as the best approach. But this has equally been criticized at the national level. For instance, during a workshop sponsored by Liberia's Governance Commission, a Liberian scholar, Yarsuo Weh-Dorliae, criticized the United Nations led liberal peace approach in the security sector reform programme. He noted that the diversity of trainers for the Liberian National Police, from contrasting policing jurisdictions, produced an outcome that lacked a country-specific context for Liberia, and that the Liberian government failed to take ownership of its training programme (Weh-Dorliae, 2015:4).

Therefore, the most important contribution made by the critique of the liberal peace has been the construction of a framework of analysis allowing scholars to unpack the evolving nature of various forms of peace activity. This has been carried out in its wider historical, ideological, and methodological

contexts, and has mounted a challenge to the liberal peace framework over its claim to represent the most emancipatory peace framework in history on a universal basis (Richmond and MacGinty, 2014:4).

But, the mixed results of "first-generation" missions, with the relative success of the mission in El Salvador contrasting sharply with the renewal of violence in Liberia and Rwanda in the early 1990s, for example, led to a substantial rethinking of the complexity of post-conflict transitions, and of the challenges embedded in bridging the gap between relief and development (Wyeth and Sisk 2009). Perhaps the most crucial insight or lesson to emerge from these experiences was that promoting political and/or economic liberalization without ensuring that a sufficiently strong and effective formal institutional framework was in place to channel new rights, freedoms, demands and expectations peacefully could lead to considerable instability and even fuel further conflict (Menocal, 2010:2). This led to a growing recognition that rebuilding or establishing at least a minimally functioning state was essential to undertaking political and economic reforms and maintaining the peace, especially in the long term (Call and Cousens 2007, Paris and Sisk 2008). As a result, from the late 1990s onward, the concept of peacebuilding became more expansive and more consciously focused on the importance of state institutions, while it continues to emphasize the centrality of non-state actors, mainly civil society and bottom-up processes as key to building sustainable peace.

At its most ambitious, peacebuilding has shifted from the relatively minimalist focus on "negative peace" towards the maximalist goal of transforming society by strengthening human security and addressing fundamental grievances, horizontal inequalities, and other root causes of conflict (Menocal, 2010). Thus interpreted, peacebuilding is a multifaceted endeavour that includes building democratic governance, protecting human rights, strengthening the rule of law, and promoting sustainable development, equitable access to resources, and environmental security (Barnett and Zürcher 2008). On the other hand, as Charles Call and Elizabeth Cousens (2007) have suggested, it may be wiser to steer away from either a minimalist or a maximalist conceptualization of the term, and to opt for a middle ground. As such, peacebuilding can be defined as:

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> "those actions undertaken by international or national actors to institutionalize peace, understood as the absence of armed conflict ('negative peace') and a modicum of participatory politics (as a component of 'positive peace') that can be sustained in the absence of an international peace operation" (Call and Cousens 2007).

Peacebuilding requires a range of approaches. While many actors engage in multiple categories of peacebuilding, the figure below (figure 1) highlights the unique goals of different approaches to or categories of peacebuilding.

Figure 1
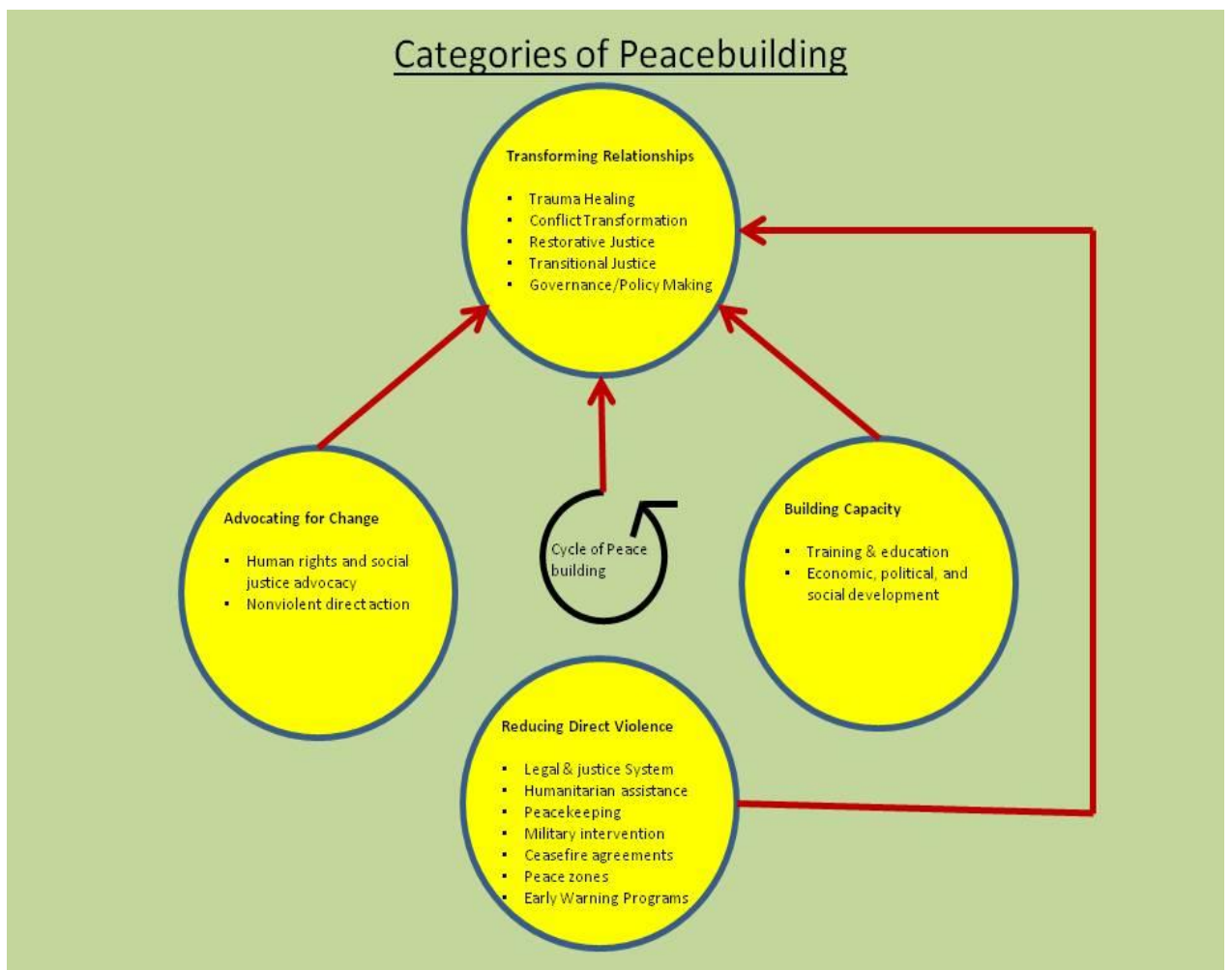
Source: John Paul Lederach (1997) Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies, United States Institute for Peace, 39.

The missing relational dimension of peacebuilding in Galtung's formulation is included in Lederach's conflict transformation approach to peacebuilding that emphasizes the transformative goal of peace building. It sees peace building as transcending the resolution of specific problems to focus on the content, context, and structure of relationships. Hence, "conflict transformation envisions and responds to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice to direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships" (Lederach 2003: 14). Through this, peace theorists identify reducing the relapse into direct violence and contributing to conditions for socioeconomic and political recovery and reconciliation as the primary goals, and the transformation of relationships

and society as the ultimate goal of peacebuilding (Ramsbotham 2000:172; Miall et al. 1999:60).

At each level of the pyramid above, there are people capable of inspiring and leading social change efforts. At the top level, the United Nations, national governments etc. participate in official dialogue, negotiation, and mediation to address conflicts such as a political crisis. At the middle level, national and regional organizations, businesses, religious bodies, the media etc. lead policy and programme initiatives, such as providing regional coordination for relief aid for a humanitarian crisis. At the grassroots or community level, a variety of local groups carry out relief and development programmes, civilian peacekeeping, dialogue, trauma healing, training and education programmes, and other projects (Schirch, 2004:71).

Lederach proposed four key principles that complement the three levels of the pyramid: (1) A horizontal capacity: a horizontal capacity for peace building is a set of relationships within each level of the pyramid that allows leaders to coordinate with each other in peace building programmes across lines of conflict, ethnicity, religion, or other social divisions. Most current peacebuilding programmes foster horizontal capacity. People-to-people dialogues between citizens from India, Pakistan, and Kashmir, for example, develop a vision and capacity for working together for change when they come together to share their experiences of violence. (2) Vertical capacity: a vertical capacity for peacebuilding is a set of relationships between top, middle, and grassroots leaders that recognizes their different and interdependent contributions to peace building. Increasingly, people at all levels are recognizing the need to have relationships with people working at other levels. For instance, the United Nations is increasingly showing interest in working with regional organizations and their grassroots partners in setting up early warning networks to alert the international community of impending violence. (3) The middle level: the middle level category, such as some businesses or religious leaders, are most likely to have access to and relationships with those at both the top and grassroots levels. Working with the middle level, then, requires strategic planning to foster vertical cooperation. The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding is an example of a mid-level organization that has access both to grassroots people and groups

working for change, and to high-level government and UN diplomats. (4) Vertical and horizontal integration: this is a set of relationships between individuals, networks, and organizations that allow people at all levels to work together to bring about peace in a violently divided society (Lederach, 1999).

Lisa Schirch (2004:74-5) argues that peacebuilding requires the inclusion of Moderates and Extremists, as well as Insiders and Outsiders. Both leaders who instigate violence and those who already support peace need to be involved in peacebuilding processes. Far too many programmes involve only those who are predisposed to peace. Pro-violence leaders are often left out as they are seen as "spoilers" capable of hijacking, side-tracking, or even rejecting peace processes. Yet, if they are not included, peace building programmes have little chance of success. Schirch notes that insiders and outsiders participate in peace building in different ways. Insiders are people who live within the conflicted community and call it home. They generally make a long term commitment to the work and have more at stake if peacebuilding succeeds or fails. Insiders have a deeper understanding of local culture, context, the conflicts, and local resources for peace. They are more likely to hold credibility and trust with local people and to have extensive networks of relationships. On the other hand, outsiders are people and organizations who travel to the conflict region specifically to participate in peacebuilding. Outsiders are likely to have a larger set of economic and political resources, which allows them to raise international awareness about the conflict and about how local participants are working at peacebuilding. They can help influence national and international powers to address the conflicts and find funders to give financial resources.

In this connection, what is needed is polycentric approach that analyses each task, identifying its components and seeking appropriate institutional remedies (Sawyer, 2005) as illustrated in table 4 below. Each peacebuilding task is performed at different level, making the process representational and inclusive.

Table: 4

Peace building Task	Local Level	Mezzo Level	National Level	Basin-wide Level	Sub regional Regional Level	International Level
Disarm and demobilize				Basin-wide coordinated mechanisms	ECOWAS peacekeepers	UN peacekeepers
Reintegrate ex-combatants			Government and civil society organizations	Basin-wide coordinated mechanisms		
Uncover hidden weapons	Local and community based organizations	Pan-ethnic organizations	Government and civil society organizations	Basin-wide CSOs and pan-ethnic organizations	ECOWAS peacekeepers	UN and INGOs (small arms action networks)
Create early-warning system	Local and community based organizations	Pan-ethnic organizations	CSOs	Basin wide CSOs	ECOWAS and AU observatories	UN and INGOs
Resolve ethnic-based conflicts		Inter-ethnic and interreligious organizations	Government, interreligious, and women's NGOs	Cross-border inter-ethnic organizations and basin-wide CSOs	ECOWAS council of elders and Eminent Persons Group	INGOs
Address impunity					African Court on Human Rights	International Criminal Court and special UN tribunals
Create national reconciliation mechanism	Local and community based organizations	Inter-ethnic and interreligious organizations	National Truth and Reconciliation Commission	Basin-wide Eminent Persons Group	ECOWAS Eminent Persons Group	UN and International Contact Group support

Source: adapted from Amos Sawyer (2005) Beyond Plunder: Towards Democratic Governance in Liberia, Lynne Rienner Publishers: Boulder, London.

The critical point here is that peacebuilding activities must be seen as foundations for long-term governance and not as an assortment of vital activities undertaken eclectically for post-conflict recovery and as donor resources become available (Sawyer, 2005). Post-conflict peacebuilding activities must be designed to constitute the foundations for democratic governance, and the people of the country must be central to the processes of designing and implementing peacebuilding tasks with participation from the local levels through a series of stakeholders to the international levels. Each component is expected to play a critical role in this multi-level arrangement. The argument being made here is that the local people are central to this approach, and they must be seen as co-providers and co-producers as well as consumers of peacebuilding activities and of the outcome of such activities. Local people cannot be left as spectators in the peacebuilding process. When this is done correctly, the task of the polycentric strategy will

be achieved. Finally, when peacebuilding successfully address the problems arising from the poor implementation of the DDRR programme, the chances of reverting to violent and conflict are substantially eliminated.

Conclusion

The occurrence of violence has remained a disturbing issue in post-war Liberia. The occurrence has taken different forms and shapes, including sabotage of infrastructure, physical attacks on individuals and community members, arson, looting, armed robberies, attacks against law enforcement personnel, including violence that has resulted in deaths. These violent occurrences are raising fear among the population that the departure of the United Nations peacekeeping operation will create a huge security vacuum. Fearing this imminent security gap, in a meeting on 11 March 2016 with the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Liberia, a coalition of civil society organizations and political parties called on the UN to extend its mandate in Liberia beyond 2017 in order to observe the conduct of the Presidential and Legislative elections slated for that year. The key conclusions drawn from this chapter are that the contemporary political and economic structures of Liberia which arguably are an inheritance from the pre and war years, have continued to create conditions for the production and reproduction of violence. Second, it is clear that the DDRR programme was poorly implemented and this made the reintegration of ex-combatants unsuccessful, leaving them vulnerable to engage in a variety of negative activities, including engaging in violence. The next chapter will discuss the data gained from the fieldwork.

Chapter Six:
Presentation and Analysis of Research Data

Introduction

In this chapter, the data for this analysis come from face-to-face interviews conducted with ex-combatants and focus groups discussions with a combination of predominantly ex-combatants and a mix of other groups. Overall 60 ex-combatants and 10 others (leaders/commanders) were interviewed, and 175 people participated in the focus group discussions in the identified locations of the research. The questionnaire was administered to ex-combatants who had participated in the conflict and DDRR process in Liberia. The study included questions on basic biographical information, the individuals' experience in the war (which faction they fought in, locations of fighting and rank for example), their participation in the DDRR programme, what they are currently doing for livelihood, their perception about the government and their former factional leaders, the perception about their re-engagement in violence, and whether they feel a sense of re-marginalization., and how they think they can avoid being re-marginalized. Re-engaging in violence forms the key variable for this analysis.

Analysis of fieldwork

About 80% of all the respondent categories, ex-combatants and non-combatants, including focus group participants expressed disappointment in the DDRR programme, particularly the reintegration component which failed to properly absorb them into the society and provide them with sustainable livelihood opportunities. Some respondents feel they are rejected by their communities and family members, while others expressed some degree of acceptance, but are still viewed as potential enemies. Further, 70% respondents (respected and known ex-combatants) still considered themselves as having control and influence over members of the ex-combatant group in their locality. They hold the view that they are capable of mobilizing them for insurgency should the need arise. About 62% of the

respondents stated that clemency should be granted to all those that participated in the civil war as a means of healing the nation. They strongly believe that national peace and reconciliation can only be achieved if there is forgiveness but underline that ex-combatants need to be rewarded because they fought to liberate the country from the hands of greedy and vicious leaders. Some claimed that they were under-age when they were forcefully recruited against their will, and cannot be held liable for the atrocities committed during the war.

On the other hand, 45% of the respondents expressed their regret for participating in the civil war. They strongly held the view that their involvement was a mistake, others felt disadvantaged and marginalized within the society and had to participate, yet many were victims of peer pressure as one of the driving forces behind their involvement. Only 15% of the respondents held the view that the establishment of a War Crime Court will be the best way to investigate those who committed war crimes, and that this will serve as deterrent to any individuals or groups that may want to destabilize the country in the future.

The data revealed that 'idleness' and 'unemployment' have led to frustration of ex-combatants that frequently manifests in aggression and violence in different forms. Liberia's post-conflict policymakers appear not ready for or committed to tackling idleness and unemployment brought about by poor DDRR programmes, and insensitive that this has the potential to make ex-combatants to pick up arms again.

Fig 12: Respondents and their factional groups
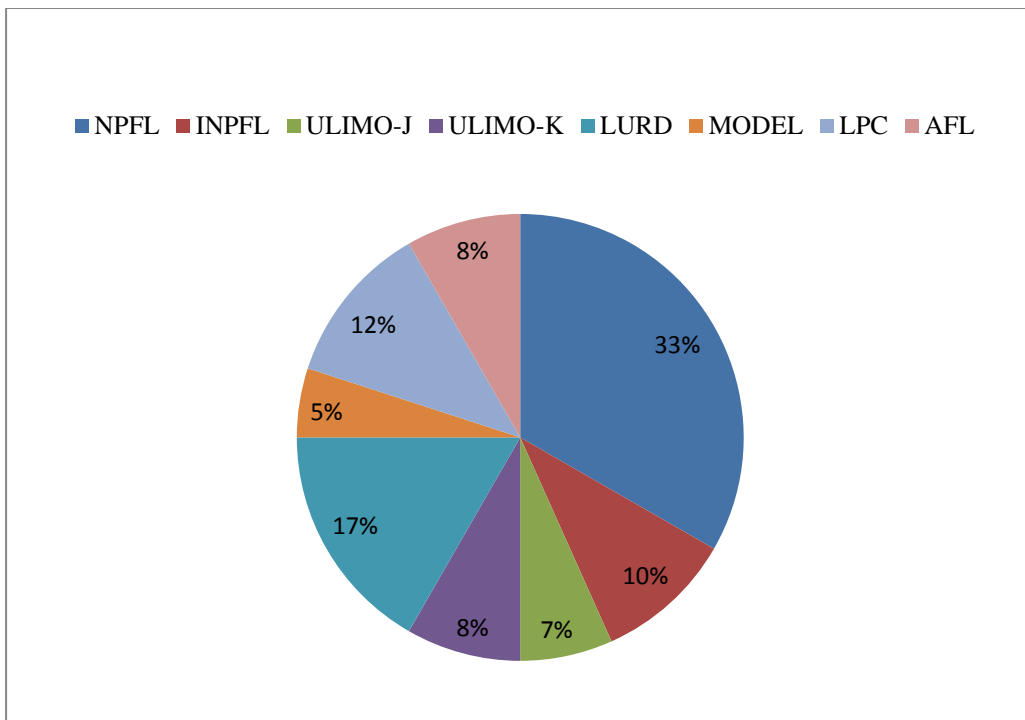
Fig 13: Ex-combatants factional group and level of participation
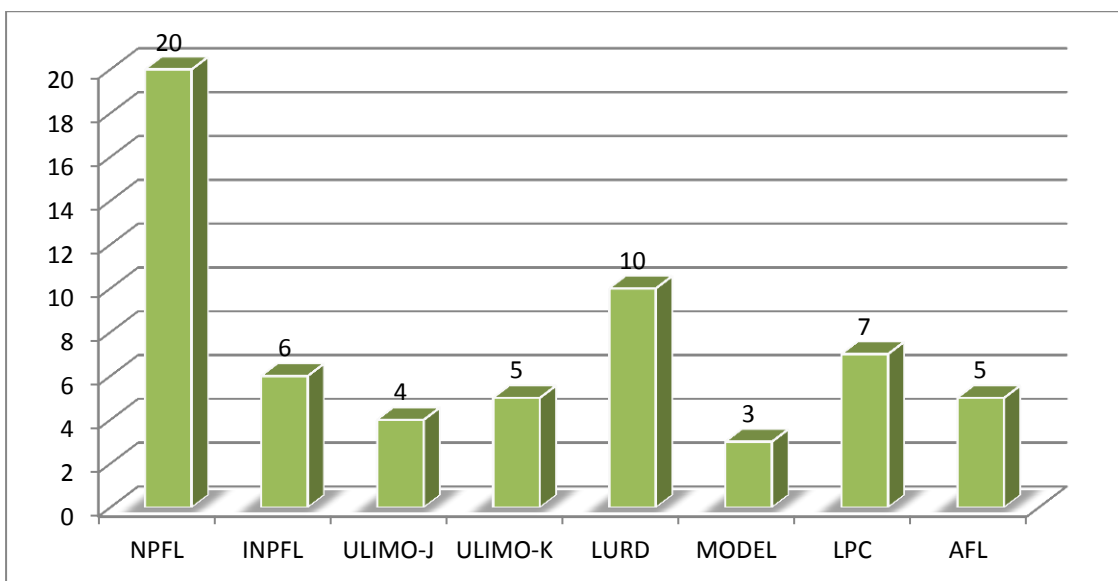
Table 6: Main factional groups in the Liberia's civil war

NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
INPFL	Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia
ULIMO-J	United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy
ULIMO-K	United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
MODEL	Movement for Democracy in Liberia
LPC	Liberia Peace Council
AFL	Armed Forces of Liberia

Fig 14: *Ex-combatants seeking livelihood – "No work, no peace"*

Fig 15: *Ex-combatants who benefitted from reintegration display their carpentry skills.*

Figs 1 and 2 above show the percentage of respondents in their membership of the dominant factional groups in the Liberian civil war. There are other small but dangerous units that committed various war crimes and human rights violations, such as the Lofa Defense Force (LDF), the Small Boys Unit (SBU), and the notorious Special Anti-Terrorist Unit (SATU), which was commanded by Charles Taylor's son, "Chuckie" Taylor, who is serving a prison sentence of 97 years in the United States. The respondents from the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) of Charles Taylor represent the highest number in the samples as well as in the country, with 33%, because of the use of child soldiers and forceful recruitment during the war. In addition, the membership of NPFL cuts-across the 16 ethnic groups of Liberia. The NPFL received external funding and support, notably from Libya, Burkina Faso, including blood diamond funding from Sierra Leone. Elements from the Liberian Armed Forces (AFL) make up 5% of the respondents. The AFL was politicized during the war and their participation compromised the neutrality of the force, and undermined their constitutional role of protecting the country from external aggression. Although the disarmament and demobilization programme was concluded eleven years ago, these factional groups are still

"active" and maintain their network. For instance, as explained elsewhere in this study, many of them were recruited as mercenaries to fight in Cote d'Ivoire following the 2010 post-election crisis, and they have continued to cause destabilization in the west of the country.

Ex-combatants, Re-marginalization, and Violence: Identifying the Causal Mechanisms

As stated previously, while the four dimensional factors in this research remain significant in how they interact to generate violence, I have focused specifically on advancing the marginalization factor because of its broad usage by participants in the research during interviews and focus group discussion. It also forms a representational factor to the other three independent variables. I note that political and economic violence falls in the context of analysis. I have posed the following questions:

1. *Are ex-combatants experiencing re-marginalization in post-war Liberia, and how do we know this?*

2. *What are the political and economic sources for re-marginalization of ex-combatants?*

3. *Are re-marginalized ex-combatants likely to engage in violence?*

(Re-) marginalization can be understood as persistent inequality and adversity resulting from discrimination, social stigma and stereotypes (NDI 2016) Understanding the nature and depth of re-marginalization of ex-combatants is the first step towards combating it. This is aimed at seeking solutions towards reversing stigmatization, discrimination, exploitation and political exclusion of ex-combatants.

The study found that ex-combatants are experiencing re-marginalization and this was made clear during the focus group discussion when many of the participants, speaking in agitated and rebellious tones stated why they feel marginalized:

➤ People don't want to know about us.
➤ People don't want us and the things that we do in our communities, sometime we take marijuana to cope with frustration and community members report us to the police.

- People don't want to talk to us.
- When we apply for jobs and they find out that we are ex-combatants, they don't accept us, even when we are "qualified". But we see ourselves as "war affected persons".
- Community members feel we are hostile.
- But when it comes to politics, politicians will need our services to help fight opponents and when they win, they will forget us.
- They said the Truth and Reconciliation is to forgive each other. But the war is over but they still have not forgiven us
- Even in the communities where we live, the government wants to demolish the houses. The government said they are slums, but we have not been provided with alternative locations, just because they don't want to see our presence again.
- For those of us who operate pempe – commercial motorcycles- we are always being harassed by the police for not having licenses and not being registered, and they collect money from us always.

The political and economic sources for the re-marginalization of ex-combatants were identified through two approaches. The first corresponds to the concept of relative frustration as it was adumbrated by James Davis and Ted Gurr (1962), for whom violence is the result of a gap between expectations and the possibility of seeing them met. The second approach does not ignore the concept of frustration but lays special emphasis on the uprooting process which forms one of the spontaneous explanations of violence (ibid). In this perspective, the protagonists of violence are found among frustrated individuals perturbed by social change and more particularly by the clashes of modernity and tradition (Apter, 1997:303). Although the frustration theory was severely criticized by authors such as Charles Tilly (1978) who mainly reproached them with not taking into account the fact that political violence was instrumental by nature, that for the protagonists it constituted a way of achieving their objectives. And in their views (Utas, 2005:144; and Njeru, 2010:29) reintegration failures lead frustrated ex-combatants to threaten renewed violence.

Ex-combatants identified multiples sources of their re-marginalization. First, they see themselves as being put at the edge, making them less important in a country where they feel and see themselves as "liberators" – meaning that their acceptance of ending the war has not been fully recognized. They feel excluded and their needs have been ignored, their opinion less recognized. Second, ex-combatants continue to experience the process of political and economic re-marginalization. Since the coming into power of President Sirleaf's government, ex-combatants claim that they have been neglected and have no access to political decision making processes. Ex-combatant choice and preferred candidate to lead the country, Mr. George Weah lost the election twice, first as a presidential and second as a vice presidential candidate. As a result of this the hope of ex-combatants voices being heard and their participation in decision-making were dashed.

Ex-combatants also report a sense economic re-marginalization derived from the lack of political representation. Their interests were never taken into consideration in the national budget appropriation and spending, while the employment of this group never became an issue of national concern to the government. They were not given economic assistance to reintegrate, and because of the absence of a national programme to reintegrate ex-combatants, they rely on self-employment such as commercial motorcyclists. Ex-combatants are also dismayed over rampant corruption at all levels of the government which is another way of re-marginalizing them economically. The economic re-marginalization of ex-combatants has induced poverty within their community. Poverty and re-marginalization have led to deficits in their livelihoods, education, health and access to other basic services, and these deficits are in turn often connected to their exclusion from political decision-making as mentioned earlier. Perhaps the views expressed by ex-combatants that most clearly articulate the link between the four explanatory factors was when they stated that they will resist any attempt to make them suffer in a country where everybody has equal rights. The lack of security is also of concern to ex-combatants. They feel intimidated, harassed and brutalized by state security officials in their communities. Some of them complained about the maltreatment their members receive at the hands of

security forces when they are arrested and thrown into prisons, just for protesting against the policies of the government.

Participants allege that when they protest to demand their rights and benefits, particularly those related to their reintegration, the state views this as unrealistic demands coming from criminal elements, and this serves as a source of the economic neglect. For the participants, economic security is the basis for their survival, and in this regard, they can only continue to seek means of resisting attempts to make them economically insecure. The violent reaction of ex-combatants to the quarantine measures in the West Point Community during the Ebola crisis which denied them access to food and water appears to be one of the many ways they hope to respond to their conditions of economic insecurity. The participants also expressed displeasure with the re-criminalization, and indicated a feeling of helplessness due to their vulnerability and lack of political and economic power, but also reassured themselves of continuing "fight' against those elements that re-criminalize them.

The question whether ex-combatants are likely to engage in violence in the light of their re-marginalization did not receive explicit and direct affirmation. However, outspoken ex-combatants indicated to me that the use of violence is not their exclusive preserve, and that any group can engage in violence. They cited the examples of ex-members of the Armed Forces of Liberia who have often carried out violent protests to demand the payment of their severance benefits, In spite of their non-committal stance, documented actions of ex-combatants point to the fact that their continued subjection to the four explanatory factors inevitably leads them to acts of violence. This is further demonstrated in the actions of one of the important but high risk segment of ex-combatants – the commercial motorcyclists.

They are important in the sense of providing cheaper means of public transportation to the poor in the society. But highly risky in some of their actions which are further explained below. During the research, ten ex-combatants–turned –commercial motorcyclists were interviewed. They belong to the umbrella body called the Liberia Motorcyclist Taxi Union (LMTU), a well-organized group with a strong network. Commercial motorcyclists are

known to be one of the sources of violence, particularly mob violence, against members of the public and security personnel, usually in defence of their members and actions. For politicians, members of the motorcyclist union are easy recruits to provide support for political activities during elections, some of which have turned violent. Of particular challenge to the state is the mob dimension of their activities. The membership of the LMTU in Montserrado County (Monrovia), the location of the research, is between 12,000 and 15,000 (LMTU 2015). When I asked about the dominance of ex-combatants within the LMTU, its Chairman was a bit reluctant to provide details. However, he acknowledged the existence of ex-combatants within the Union but noted that it was difficult to give the exact number. He feels that the ex-combatants among them probably give the Union bad reputation because of their occasional resort to violence when they feel aggrieved, particularly over the ill-treatment meted out on them by security forces

There is a growing concern amongst the majority of Liberians and members of the international community over increasing mob violence incidents in Liberia. For instance, the Liberian National Police (LNP) statistics indicate that between January and September 2013, incidents of mob violence increased by over 40% compared to the same period the previous year (UNMIL-JMAC Report, 2014). Mob violence typically causes considerable bodily harm to victims, and incidents appear to be escalating in terms of level of violence, which are increasingly leading to deaths of victims and/or to mobs turning against security agents who try to restore order. This is particularly concerning given the scheduled UNMIL troop reductions associated with the transition; typically, national agencies lack the capacity to deal with these issues and it is becoming increasingly difficult for UNMIL to respond in support of the Government as its military presence thins across the country. For instance, at the start of the UN Mission in 2003, its military strength was 15,000 troops deployed throughout Liberia (UNSC 2003) As of August 2015, it has 3,779 military personnel. But the UN Police has increased from its initial number of 1,115 in 2003 to 1,383 personnel as at August 2015, to support the national police in the maintenance of law and order throughout Liberia. Ultimately, as the UN continues its draw down, the number of its

police will reduce. On 22 September 2013, a serious mob violence incident involved over 300 motorcyclists in the city of Gbarnga, Bong County, about 195 kilometres from Monrovia. The city was the headquarters of Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) rebel group, where over twelve thousand ex-combatants live, many are self-employed as commercial motorcyclists. That year, I travelled to Gbarnga, on an assessment mission; I interviewed an ex-combatant leader who informed me that although the government documented twelve thousand as the official number of ex-combatants in that county, there are actually over twenty thousand, and many remain unemployed. The Gbarnga violent incident occurred because motorcyclists were demanding the release of their colleague, who was suspected as a thief, from Liberian National Police (LNP) custody. After the LNP refused to release the suspect, the crowd, armed with cutlasses, axes and other metal weapons pillaged the town, destroyed shanty homes, and "terrorized" the population. One person was killed and many others sustained injuries. Furthermore, these hostile actions are frequently turned against intervening security forces, including UN personnel when the target of the mob justice is taken into custody for safety (The Analyst 2013). In February 2012, Liberia's Inspector-General of Police warned motorcyclists to avoid being used by criminal elements to "terrorize" peaceful citizens (UN Report, 2012). He made the statement against the backdrop of complaints received from communities that commercial motorcyclists connive with criminal elements to break into homes and in the process harm their victims. In my comparative assessment (UN Report) of the operations of commercial motorcyclists in Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, and Nigeria, I found that Liberian ex-combatants-turned motorcyclists are more disposed to engage in violence. This could probably be linked to the fact that most of them had participated in the war, but those in Sierra Leone who also went through war, do not display such high levels of violence.

This is what two ex-combatant motorcyclists said during an interview: First respondent-

> "We have been neglected and rejected by the government because we fought in the war. The money given by the international community (US and London) was shared by our

> leaders. No reintegration. We struggled and bought motorcycles to work and feed our family, now the police is after us, arresting us and taking bribe from us, claiming we violated traffic regulations. We will not allow them, we will fight back. I said this, my name is Zikky."

The second respondent was more agitated:

> "UN will leave Liberia and we will deal with all the leaders who have put us in this condition. Remember how former President Samuel Doe publicly executed 13 Ministers in 1980. This is what will happen to some of them."

Yet, other respondents simply commented:

> "Please UN should tell the police and the government to stop harassing us, and leave us alone so that we can do our business and send our children to school. We are not politicians and we don't want positions in the government. But we support politicians who fight for our interest."

When asked about his views on the DDRR in Liberia, an ex-combatant student informant stated:

> "I wasted my entire youth life fighting for this country and after myself and other gallant fighters succeeded in removing greedy dictators; more vicious dictators have emerged, favouring family members, friends, and the elite group, snatching out money abroad. Those who presided over the DDRR squandered the huge money contributed by the international community. I remember that several donor conferences were held abroad to raise funds for Liberia's reintegration process, but the money went into private pockets. We will continue to use all means in our disposal within the platform of the student's body to advocate for the emancipation of ex-combatants who fought for the country, and one day all of them in government will pay the price of their actions"

This was one of my students who could not hide his feelings about the state of affairs in the country and how the DDRR programme re-marginalized ex-combatants and made them worthless within their communities. His education is being funded by an International NGO which he did not disclose, but he is equally concerned that at the completion of his Master's Degree studies, at which time he will be 55 years old, he is not likely to get a job. He has fears

that his four children might not get education. When asked what he meant by the "use of all means" he resorted," "Sir, you know we have been trained in that act and we will still do it, even though we are getting old, our younger fighters are still around".

In my interaction with various actors I have identified the following factors to be responsible for the occurrence mob-related violence:

- Dissatisfaction with law enforcement's inability to provide proper security to community members against criminal elements, while ex-combatants hold the view that, as agents of the state, security personnel are their greatest enemies who continue to harass and prevent them from achieving their goals.

- Dissatisfaction over persistent harassment and extortion of money from ex-combatant commercial motorcyclists by the police,

- Frustration with an ineffective justice system, linked to an inability to consistently prosecute and imprison known community criminals, e.g. Isaac Chegbo (aka Bob Marley) and Augustine Vlayee (aka Bush Dog), etc..

- A growing class divide, lack of progress and deplorable living conditions, making the less fortunate desperate and violent,

- Community practice, inappropriately labelled "jungle justice" such as through the "Sassawood" – the local administration of poisonous local liquid to individuals (by drinking) who are suspected to have committed serious offence.

- A volatile society, where violence runs close to the surface and explodes during such incidents,

- Possible post conflict trauma, leading to rapid escalation of violence.

Table 7: below shows some incidents of mob violence that are linked to the ex-combatant commercial motorcyclists who operate within Montserrado County (Monrovia). These types of mob violence occur throughout the country where motorcyclists operate, particularly in areas where there is less presence of security personnel.

Table 7: Some incidents of mob violence linked to motorcyclists.

	Date	Location	Description of Incidence	Action/Outcome
1	10 Jan 2013	Monrovia, Montserrado County	20 commercial motorcyclists assaulted a man for attempting to steal a car battery on Randall Street.	Victim was injured. No arrests were made
2	18 May	Monrovia, Montserrado County.	Two men attempted to rob a commercial motorcyclist, the motorcyclist held on to one of the men and an angry crowd responded in Brewersville City.	The victim was killed.
3	20 May	Monrovia, Montserrado County.	A UN vehicle was involved in a road accident on Somalia drive which led to the death of a commercial motorcyclist. About 100 angry members gathered and threatened to destroy the UN vehicle and harm the driver.	Reinforcement of security stopped their action. No harm was done.
4	18 Jun	Monrovia, Montserrado County.	A commercial motorcyclist and two passengers were assaulted by a mob after one of the passengers was accused of theft.	Victims sustained injuries. No arrests were made.
5	13 Sep	Monrovia, Montserrado County.	A man riding a motorcycle was beaten in Gardnersville City by a crowd for stealing a laptop computer.	Victim was injured. No arrests were made.
6	13 Sep	Monrovia, Montserrado County.	A man riding a motorcycle was beaten in Gardnersville City by a crowd for stealing a laptop computer.	Victim was injured. No arrests were made.
7	20 Sep	Gbarnga, Bong County.	Following an assault on a commercial motorcyclist by some military officers, a mob of some 200 motorcyclists went on a rampage destroying several properties.	The police arrested four individuals for rioting, one was beaten to death, and two others sustained severe injuries.
8	16 April 2015	Paynesville City, Montserrado County	A commercial motorcyclist was shot and killed by police due to the violation of a traffic regulation. Over 150 motorcyclists staged a violent protest that led to the closure of	They destroyed five sub-police stations and burnt one. They also freed several criminals detained at the stations. The

			many businesses, and caused insecurity to the population.	Police arrested 30 motorcyclists involved in the incident.
9	20 April	Rehab Community, Montserrado County	Unspecified number of commercial motorcyclists engaged in violent protest to demand the release of their members detained by the police, and the restrictions placed on their operations.	They blocked the main junctions to the International Airport, just few kilometres from the residence of the Vice President of Liberia
10	21 April	Iron Gate, Lower Virginia, Montserrado County	Several commercial motorcyclists protested against the arrest and detention of one of their colleagues who later died from injuries he sustained from the hands of the police. He was arrested by police on allegation that he stole motorcycle.	A crowd made up largely of commercial motorcyclists threatened to burn down the police station. A member of parliament intervened to calm the angry crowd, and promised them that justice will be done.

Source: Documented records 'data collected in my official role'

During his statement to the parliament on the activities of motorcyclists on April 22, 2015, the Liberian Minister of Justice, Benedict Sannoh, referred to commercial motorcyclists as another group of 'warring factions' who can easily be mobilized. In my view, this description by the Minister is inappropriate because, as I stated earlier, some of the motorcyclists may have been combatants, but they are no longer "warring factions" because they have gone through the process of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration into civilian life. However, they could be referred to angrily as "warring factions" due to their violent behaviours and conducts reminiscent of warring factions in the war years. Although, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement used the phrase "warring parties" to describe those who were involved in the war, in some instances too, "warring factions" is dominantly used locally in post-war Liberia to describe a rebellious group. Public criticisms of the Minister's comments have been profound: for instance, a civil society and human rights activist, who was also a former Minister of Public Works, through the electronic media, deplored the statement by the Minister, while the New Democrat Newspaper (June 2015:9) described the statement as the

inability of the government to deliver justice to motorcyclists and their families who have been injured and murdered at the hands of brutal police officers. Another group referred to government officials as the main "warring factions", whom have become vampires, killing the national economy through uncontrolled stealing of money without being prosecuted (ibid).

These groups of motorcyclists fall under the category of vulnerable self-employed population which the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) put at 75%. Some of the motorcyclists are, nevertheless, college students, and graduates seeking self-employment because their elected officials and the government have not delivered economic and social services. Motorcyclist respondents who are former combatants argue that taking up the job as a commercial motorcyclist is a self-reintegration measure in the absence of government support.

Some of the respondents informed me of how they were recruited as mercenaries to fight in the post-election Ivoirian civil war. That country continued to face several attacks on its western borders with Liberia spearheaded by Liberian ex-combatants. For instance, on 16 May 2015, three known ex-combatants at command positions were arrested by the Liberian National Police (LNP) in Fish Town for allegedly recruiting ex-fighters in Wlebo District, River Gee County, to engage in cross-border attacks in Côte d'Ivoire. The suspects included Powell Solo, a.k.a. "General Power"; Dennis Slayah, a.k.a. "Charles Ble Goude"; Augustine Vleyee, a.k.a. "Bush Dog", all of whom belonged to the defunct factional group, Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL). In statements to the LNP, the suspects confirmed that they had met with ex-fighters, but claimed that they were running an agreed "covert" operation for the National Security Agency (NSA) on Liberia's border with Côte d'Ivoire in the southeast, aimed at discouraging former combatants from engaging in the Ivorian conflict, rather than to recruit them for mercenary activity (New Dawn Newspaper, May 2015). The NSA denied the claim of the suspects (NSA 2015).

Another previous mercenary activity involving one of the arrested ex-combatants reveals the likely awareness by the government of their activities. In April 2011, Augustine Vleyee (Bush Dog) was arrested by the Liberian

authorities. He was in a command position with mercenary and militia forces implicated in atrocities in and around the Ivorian town of Bloléquin. After his arrest, Vleyee was released because the investigation was alleged to have been "hampered by a lack of proper evidence and contradictory statements by officials of government" (The Analyst et.al 2011).

The salience of these incidences is that the government is aware of the activities of influential rebel commanders. They may indeed even be receiving financial incentives from the regime in order to discourage and prevent the lower–level ex-combatants from engaging in acts of internal or sub-regional destabilization. For instance, during my interaction with some influential rebel commanders who are not in government, they disclosed receiving some financial support from their colleagues/leaders in the government so that they can maintain the peace and to discourage the lower-level ex-combatants from fomenting trouble. In the same vein, my discussion with former rebel leaders in government confirms that, indeed, they provide financial support those ex-combatants who have no jobs, as they (ex-combatants) continuously threaten to derail the peace in Liberia. In other words, the militant value of these ex-combatants, especially their knowledge of the location of arms caches, and ability to foment trouble through militia activities, placed them in an advantageous negotiating position. The claim that they are working for the NSA, could also provide an insight into how former fighters are being utilized by the state in support of the security information network. On another note, these former fighters could also provide their services to the highest bidder, a "double agent" approach to earn a living.

From my interviews and discussions, it appears there is still some level of command/control, and networks of rebel leaders and ex-combatants. This prevailing atmosphere makes it easy for quick mobilization of ex-combatants by their leaders for any activity. Some of them disclosed to me that they are sources of "foot soldiers" for their leaders, politicians, particularly during elections, and for politically motivated protests and demonstrations directed at the government. This appears to conform to the comments of one of their leaders in a media interview. The former leader of the rebel group – Liberia United for Reconciliation and Development (LURD) – Danmate Conneh, stated this about his former fighters/ex-combatants:

"They are ready," "If I were a troublemaker, we would have trouble here every day because, as combatants who are ready for trouble, they talk to me every day," "They don't have money and they are frustrated. They can do anything. I tell them no, we can't do that now; we need peace in this country. "There are a lot of people who, as combatants, there are no jobs for them, no programmes for them. Everybody is abandoned," people have suffered in this country a lot." (Conneh 2014)

The comments by Conneh come at the time the UN mission is drawing down, preparatory to exit from Liberia. Many Liberians have expressed fears that with the prevailing threats of violence in the country, UNMIL withdrawal may leave a security vacuum that could be exploited by defunct rebel groups such as the LURD to plunge the country into another civil war. The statement by Danmate Conneh is also an indication of the growing discontent among ex-combatants. Deep psychological and physical scars persist after the civil wars that ran from 1989 to 2003 and claimed a quarter of a million lives. Numerous rebel factions raped, maimed and killed civilians, some made use of drugged child soldiers, and deep ethnic rivalries and bitterness remain across the country of about 4.5 million.

During an interview with a rebel leader who is serving in government and was indicted by the Truth and Reconciliation Report (TRC) for prosecution, he informed me that "if anybody tries to arrest him, he will resist it by all means through the support of his former combatants", thus underscoring the continuing violent nature of ex-combatants. He did not elaborate more when I inquired about the nature of resistance. Although the war in Liberia has ended, the country still remains extremely fragile given the presence of key rebel leaders who serve in the government, and who still enjoy the loyalty and support of their former fighters, and have the capacity to mobilize them when faced with imminent danger. This finding concurs with Soderberg-Kovac (2008:141) who argued that the emergence of rebels as new-born democracies in post-war politics gives rise to a number of challenges for both democratic progress and sustainable peace.

During the focus group, the key participants were ex-combatants. However, I created an atmosphere where other informants could also provide useful information for the research. In the light of this, non-ex-combatants (as

indicated in the methodology) also participated and this combination provided different interesting perspectives that enriched the data. In some instances, heated arguments ensued between ex-combatants and non-combatants, at which point I intervened and discussions continued in a calm atmosphere.

Table 8: Focus group codes placed in five categories

Number in focus group	Number of codes	Respondent codes	Categories	
35	5	We were organized (10) No skills for job (7) Fear/uncertainty/mistrust (4) Forgotten/abandoned (9) Difficult conditions (4)	Conditions	
36	6	Working together (10) Positive attitude (2) Non-violence (2) Learning a skill (4) Reached out to ourselves (8) Used our knowledge from the war (10)	Strategies	
35	8	Receives help from people (2) Employment still a problem (4) Stigmatization continues (6) We're in charge of our future (3) Engages in political struggle (4) Feel betrayed, let down (3) Violence continues, just a different type (10) Don't rely on the state (4)	Consequences	
36	6	Poor leadership/representation (9) Repression by state security (5) Failure to address the causes of conflict (6) Corruption remain high (4) Nepotism/Cronyism in governance (6)	Perception of the States	

		No plans for ex-combatants and their families (6)		
33	5	Stay united (7) Adopt any means for survival (10) Work with other ex-combatants in the region (5) Ready to fight again if the need arises (8) Apathy, cynicism (3)	Reactions/Responses	
Total participants: 175				

In table 8 above, a total of 175 people participated in the focus groups in the five sites. In the coding, I conducted a category analysis in which I created five categories. During the focus group discussion, some participants narrated their war experiences and the challenges that post-war presented. Statements by participants within the five research sites presented complex and broader narratives which need to be simplified in categories. For instance, when participants state that "in post-war Liberia, peoples' living conditions have not improved, it only made us worse-off, and more determined to fight for our rights at all cost", this presents a worrisome picture. Therefore, in order to capture the wider range of issues and challenges of the discussions, I created five categories based on recurring themes which brought the data together in a meaningful and coherent relationship.

The categories are:
i. Conditions,
ii. Strategies,
iii. Consequences,
iv. Perception of the State,
v. Reactions/responses.
First, Conditions, which is in 5 codes, describes the current state of affairs of ex-combatants, and their feelings of vulnerability as they entered into civilian life. The ex-combatants had nothing, coming out of war, losing their weapons in the disarmament process and receiving a meagre Transitional Safety

Allowance (TSA) of $300 each person for surrendering ten guns and without sustainable reintegration. They did not have the experience to engage in negotiating the reintegration process, and they felt judged, forgotten and abandoned. Ex-combatants therefore remain in the official category of vulnerable. Second, the Strategies category describes the participants' perceptions of working hard, connecting with each other, learning a skill, and continuing with the ideological struggle. Third, the Consequences category is probably the largest obstacle facing ex-combatants. Many comments reflected a sense of disappointment with the lack of change, economically and socially, within the larger Liberian society: lack of employment, lack of support, continued stigmatization of ex-combatants which is linked to a bleak future for them and their families, and the inevitability of the continuation of violence.

Fourth is the Perception category. There is a perception among respondents that the state has failed because it did not deliver the promised reintegration to ex-combatants, even with huge international support to the government in the post-war era. Though there was poverty before, now there is extreme poverty. The number of people living in poverty has increased. The group noted that corruption and nepotism are deeply entrenched in the government, and that this condition could create an atmosphere for future crisis in Liberia. Finally, the Reactions/responses category ranges from being united to adopting various means in order to ensure their survival. Further probing to seek explanation on the notion of "various means", produced more disturbing comments from an ex-combatant, who prefers to be called "Risky Commander", when he stated:

> "You will know what we mean when the United Nations leaves the country, and if this nonsense continues we will go back to the bush and teach these leaders lessons. My good friend from Nigeria (referring to me) anywhere you are, you will hear the news, and if you decide to come back, we will tell you more stories."

It is also pertinent to know that there is solidarity with ex-combatants from countries within the region. The notion of solidarity is based on participants' views that they were fighting/fought for the same cause and anything that affects one person affects others. It will be recalled that during the post-

election crisis in Cote d'Ivoire, Liberian ex-combatants were activated through their leaders to support various factions that fought on the side of President Alhassan Outtarra and former President Laurent Gbagbo. Some of the comments by respondents are not surprising and apparently grew out of their disappointment and frustration with the peace accords process and its implementation by the state and the international community. Specifically, there was distrust about the promises that were not delivered.

Female ex-fighters found sections of society unyielding. Seven out of the ten female's ex-combatants that participated in the focus group discussion reported that they faced reintegration constraints by virtue of society's misperception that they played unwomanly war roles, and because they were despised as being too independent, rough, ill-educated and unfeminine to be good wives. Most female ex-combatants who returned with fatherless children were disowned by their own families and lived as misfits seeking solace in drug and alcohol abuse, as government did not offer them specific assistance (Sadomba and Dzinesa 2004). Another area that was of great concern, and discussed extensively during the focus group session was the link between ex-combatants, rape, and HIV/AIDS transmission. The greatest risk of HIV/AIDS may occur in a post conflict phase, as returning ex-combatants who have been reintegrated into the society are likely be carriers of the virus because of their sexual life style during the war including rape and, in Liberia, the level of infection remains high. Another dimension to the risk posed by HIV/AIDS in post war era, relates to the role of peacekeepers in sexual exploitation and abuse of the local population in exchange for favours or money. Reports of sexual exploitation in some UN missions are well documented, e.g., in Congo DRC, Haiti, Central Africa Republic etc. This is why the United Nations has continued to emphasize and implement zero tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse within its peacekeeping missions world-wide.

Discussions during the focus groups also focused on disabled ex-combatants, many of who have turned street beggars, recruits for politicians to disrupt electoral activities, and those who engage in drug selling and consumption. Equally, many have engaged in sporting activities such as soccer and have become members of the Liberia Sport Association. Through

this means, they are paid a monthly stipend for their livelihood. There were no long-term specific provisions for the reintegration of physically disabled ex-fighters with specific needs. A National Rehabilitation Centre established for ex-combatants lacked a coherent plan and has since remained in limbo.

At a more familial level, there were cases where families and returned disabled combatants both found it difficult to cope with the new situation. Disabled ex-combatants, who were disillusioned at the lack of community acceptance and were angry, resorted to anti-social and violent behaviour that led to anti-ex-combatant sentiments. Disabled ex-combatants sometimes engage in protests such as road blocks to raise attention to their specific needs, and this frequently raise a red flag. Being unemployed and disabled meant that the frustrated former combatants were vulnerable to taking recourse in antisocial behaviour. The absence of community-based reintegration decreases the communities' absorptive capacity thereby creating potential for violence.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented data obtained during the fieldwork, from interviews conducted and focus groups discussions, along with observations and data collected in my official capacity. I have also provided broader analysis of situations to support my data. In my finding, I concluded that ex-combatants are dissatisfied with their conditions and no longer want palliatives of token cash, bags of rice, and empty promises from the government of a better future. The study found out that ex-combatants want the benefits of reintegration (sustainable employment); democratic dividend (inclusion and participation in the political process); economic security (better living conditions); and safety and security (absence of brutality by the agents of the state). Discussion in the final chapter of the thesis undertakes further analysis and conclusions.

Chapter Seven:
Conclusions and Thesis Output

Introduction

On 25 June 2016, I visited the West Point community to see the participants in this study and to find out if there has been any change in their lives and perceptions about them since I last interviewed there in 2012-2013. I met one of the key respondents who was happy to see me again. He sat in a "pool betting" office with others smoking marijuana. I indicated to him that I was not comfortable sitting there, and he took me to a small hut with leaking roof and the floor was water-logged, as this turned out to be his house. I asked: tell me my friend, how have you been, have things changed for better since my last visit here about three years ago? He responded:

> "Oh, you can see yourself the condition we are living here, we have been completely forgotten by the government. The entire community is flooded as a result of the rainy season. We are frustrated and I tell you even though some of us are getting old and may be tired to fight war again, the same reasons that led us to fight are still there. We will support our younger ones to fight if things do not change to see our economic conditions better and send our children to school. We are marginalized more than ever" (Boley 2016).

The above statement indicates the contusing challenges faced by the society when ex-combatants are not successfully reintegrated. Distrust towards ex-combatants by other members of the society continue to exist, and the ex-combatants knows this and therefore responds to the society's rejection through violence means. The chapter is primarily concerned with crystallizing the links between the four dimensional analytical framework in order to effectively present answer to the research question.

It further presents a summary and main findings of the study. The analysis shows that the reintegration component of the DDRR programme did not have any significant impact on ex-combatants. While it is likely that the programme, even though with a short-lived training, may have helped some participants in finding jobs, those jobs were not particularly sustainable. With limited employment or no opportunities, participants are rendered vulnerable.

While it is not politically feasible to get jobs for all Liberian ex-combatants, participants in the focus group study alleged a complete re- marginalization of ex-combatants by the political elites. They argued that no percentage of the ex-combatant community benefits from the government employment schemes, rather beneficiaries are friends and relatives of politicians and the political class. Muggah (2009: 1–29) suggests that the DDRR approach needs to be reconsidered in the light of failures to deliver real results to the participants. It is therefore appropriate to state that in Liberia, the DDRR may have failed to produce better economic outcomes for the participants.

Ex-combatants remain a challenge to post-war Liberia, and despite the threat they pose to the nascent democracy, peacebuilding efforts have thus far been unable to offer better livelihood opportunities for ex-combatants. Thus this study has attempted to fill the gaps in understanding of the roles and ambitions of ex-combatants in post war Liberia by responding to the research question: What are the perceptions among ex-combatants about their re-engagement in violence in post-war Liberia? The study has sought to arrive at a theory that explains how the four dimensional factors interact, and how response to these factors, lead ex-combatants to re-engage in violence. This was done through face-to-face interviews, focus groups study, and being a participant observer, interacting and studying the participants for over ten years. While the findings in this study will engage the academic community towards further research in this field, it will also be beneficial to policy-makers.

Summary of major findings

The study has made a contribution to the literature on DDRR by explaining the inefficient and ineffective DDRR initiative in Liberia and how this led to the unemployment of many ex-combatants. This situation has posed threats in undermining the national security. In the light of this, ex-combatants have formed the bulk of criminal elements in Liberia, and been available for recruitment as thugs by the political class during elections and as mercenaries to fight in neighbouring countries as exemplified in the war in Cote d'Ivoire in 2010-2011. The study also shows that most of the respondents are yet to be fully accepted and reintegrated into their communities. Some of them alleged that they are still being discriminated against by community members. The

short time frame of the reintegration process, the lack of commitment and transparency in the programme, donor fatigue and dwindling political will at national and international levels, all combined to cause a failure of the reintegration programme in Liberia. Indeed, ex-combatants criticized the securitized conception of reintegration as 'time–buying', just as critiques of reintegration call into question the track-record of neoliberal, macroeconomic interventions to deliver real benefits to individuals in war-affected communities. As Porto et.al (2007) argued, the lived experience of reintegration from the point of view of ex-combatants remains 'fundamentally unexamined' in policy and academic literature.

Through the adoption of the four explanatory factors of re-marginalization, re-criminalization, exploitation and economic insecurity, the study constructed a theory that explains why ex-combatants in Liberia re-engage in violence. First, it contends that ex-combatants suffer from political exclusion and lack of representation. This occurs despite the roles they play in support of political leaders to win elections. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement provided for the participation of former factional groups and their members in politics, and to occupy political positions. However, the low ranking majority of ex-combatants were excluded and re-marginalized. Because ex-combatants have no resources they generally do not aspire to political positions, but only provide support through political campaigns and offering their votes to candidates of their choice who are then expected to seek for their wellbeing once in power. Secondly, ex-combatants face re-criminalization through their recruitment as mercenaries, and the push to engage in crimes such as drugs consumption and trafficking. Thirdly, ex-combatants face exploitation through unfavourable wage labour and service delivery. Finally, they suffer from hunger, poverty, and lack of economic resources. Ex-combatants lack personal security for themselves and their families, and are harassed and brutalized by state security. This has elicited reciprocal revenge by ex-combatants which manifests in violent undertakings targeting the state and sometimes community members who may have served as informants to state security.

Over ten rebel factions participated in the Liberian conflict, each expressing a different ideology. This state of affairs made the war to be

protracted and it lasted for fourteen years. Each rebel faction claimed superiority over the others, and the killing of fighters and the civilian population took the same pattern. The study found that in post-war Liberia, ex-combatants have not only demonstrated unity of purpose, but have also professed a common ideology, that is, a struggle for political and economic emancipation no matter the location where they may find themselves. For instance, ex-combatants who were able to enrol in the University through family and charity support, refer to themselves as political and economic "freedom fighters". Also within the University, another group made of ex-combatants call themselves "intellectual militants". When they are ready to confront state security, they usually appear in unique uniform (Khaki and red/black beret), and this is said to reflect their militant and organizational character. In my personal observations in the University and other locations with concentration of ex-combatants, they exhibit the same character of aggressiveness which makes them easy to identify. Although, someone who has not lived in the society for a longer time will assume they are just group of people who just expressing political and economic opinion.

The study makes another contribution by showing how ex-combatants have become a vibrant social movement in the absence of credible opposition groups to challenge the state in the fight against political, economic and social exclusion and re-marginalization. In other words, ex-combatants have epitomized social struggle in Liberia as increasing numbers have rejected rural life, flocked into the urban areas for employment, and the agitation for increased political rights and participation (Bolten, 2012). Ex-combatants continue to aspire to recognition and to overcome their war-time history, to be seen no longer as fighters but as members of the civilian community. The research found that the systematic application of the four dimensional factors by the state against ex-combatant communities potentially led to their radicalization. This has reinforced group identity and ultimately led to criminal networks, which, as indicated previously in the study, involve senior police officials who supply criminal elements with weapons which they use for the perpetration of crimes and other violent activities.

The research inquiry reveals how ex-combatants' intentions were suppressed through the "purchase of their violence" often mediated through

the brokerage system by their former leaders and commanders. The study also shows how ex-combatants continue to reject re-marginalization because they fought in the war. In my interview and interaction with some of the ex-combatants, rather than seeing themselves as rigidly ex-combatants, in some instances they want to be referred to as "war affected" This concurs with Shepler's (2005:197) adoption of the "discourse of abdicated responsibility" namely that because they were under age for much of the war, they were not responsible for their actions.

Through the adoption of the re-criminalizing factor, the study established the phenomenon of recruitable and migratory ex-combatants. Hundreds of unintegrated and unemployed ex-combatants became readily available for recruitment in insurgency and civil wars in neighbouring countries such as in Cote d'Ivoire, while some migrated as far as Mali engage in the war for financial gains. At the local level, ex-combatants are recruited and financially motivated by opposition politicians to participate in violent protest against alleged unfavourable policies of the government. In addition, they may be recruited to carry out ritualistic killings, which are widespread in Liberia. For instance, on 30 September 2015, violent protest erupted in the city of Ganta, Nimba County, after a commercial motorcyclist was killed for ritual purposes. This followed a wave of ritualistic killings that had occurred in the area in the same year. Although there was no hard evidence to prove that the perpetrators were ex-combatants, community members alleged that it only them that have the experience and skills to embark on such acts, in addition to their link with the sponsors of the killings. The sponsor of the Ganta killing, a known local businessman, Prince Howard, was arrested. The incident led to the destruction of several properties, including the vandalization of a police post, release of prisoners, and the death of two persons during the violent protest. Whereas ex-combatants gain the opportunity to engage in violence when domestic and regional elites (entrepreneurs of violence) recruit them for personal political and economic interests, ex-combatants go against these elites when there is a perception that they are being exploited (Daily Observer, 2015).

The study has also built on existing theory by highlighting the persistent challenges to the neo-patrimonial state structure in Liberia which continues to marginalize the less privileged members of the population, particularly ex-combatants. It noted that the increasing "elitisation" of the society and their control of the country's enormous resources accentuated by patrimonial governance system have inevitably resulted in the deepening of violence in post-war Liberia.

I have advanced an argument that although peacebuilding can transform post-war society into a developed and peaceful entity if well implemented, peacebuilding efforts in Liberia have not been successful in mitigating violence. Respondents in the study did not recognize the efficacy of peacebuilding in responding to their needs. I noted that although the international community is supposed to be promoting peacebuilding, its policies on ex-combatants in Liberia have not been substantially felt. I noted that high-profile incidences of violence can have negative impacts on peacebuilding activities and the society at large. The study findings therefore agree with the view that a realistic implementation of any peacebuilding programme in Liberia must take into consideration Laderach's pyramidal and Sawyer's polycentric transformation strategies of peacebuilding that involve a range of participants from critical members of grassroots communities to the top-level national and international stakeholders.

While the study noted the existence of political cleavages and divisions in Liberia, it builds on patrimonial and clientele system which has been exacerbated in the post-war era. There is constant and fierce competition between the Americo-Liberians and the nativists. The former have dominated political leadership since the declaration of the country as a Republic in 1847, while the latter remain at the margin of national political leadership. The nativists comprise 15 ethnic groups, and provide the bulk of the ex-combatants. Their future aspiration is to overthrow the political hegemony of the estimated five percent Americo-Liberians. Therefore, the current study provides an early warning to the Liberian state and members of the international community about the potential and real dangers of continued re-marginalization of ex-combatant communities.

The study has established a causal link between the consumption of drugs and the motivation to engage in violence. Interviewing law enforcement officials across Liberia, it was noted that ex-combatants are major hard drugs carriers and consumers. They possess weapons and are feared, as they threaten those who stand in their way. Law enforcement officials are not equipped to confront and arrest ex-combatants engaged in drug deals. Marijuana is cultivated domestically in huge quantities in Liberia and this is a source of livelihood for many families, and, because they are feared, ex-combatants become major drug runners.

In terms of policy implications, the study shows that the government of Liberia is yet to advance a realistic policy framework that will address ex-combatants' sustainable reintegration and how violence-induced crisis can be managed and prevented. This perhaps calls for a future research undertaking. The study has also come up with new observations. First, ex-combatants remain highly connected to their former rebel leaders, commanders and factional groups, and the dissolution of the factional groups was merely symbolic. Second, the majority of the people serving in the government (over 80 percent) including the President have links to the war (President Sirleaf had confessed during the TRC testimonies to her financial contributions to the war, allegedly on humanitarian grounds). These individuals may therefore not be different from ex-combatants. Perhaps the only difference is their financial loot which the ex-combatants do not possess. Third, unemployed youth are getting increasingly frustrated and appear to have identified with, and joined, ex-combatants in their political and economic struggle for survival. Fourth, violence often creates significant shifts in policy directions, not as a permanent solution for addressing the grievances of ex-combatants, but as a measure to deploy excessive force to counter the violent activities of ex-combatants. In turn, ex-combatants develop new strategies of disproportionate violence. In a sense, ex-combatants have become agents of political obstructionists.

Conclusion

The high expectations for a comfortable post-election livelihood vanished among many disenchanted ex-combatants who failed to reintegrate fully into Liberian society. The euphoria of the end of war, and the democratic elections, were replaced by varied socio-economic hardships and vices including depression, alcoholism, and recourse to violent behaviour. One major problem researcher's encounter in many countries in Africa is lack of official statistics. This problem is compounded in Liberia by a protracted 14-year civil war during which all state structures and institutions were uprooted by rebel groups. As a result, this study relied significantly on information gathered from my interviews and discussions with the research participants, and my engagement over a long period as a participant observer. The study found that the Liberian conflict was the direct result of many years of marginalization, oppression, and exploitation of indigenous Liberians by the Americo-Liberians. The study also found, in the post-war era, a lack of concrete economic recovery and development programmes, making it difficult to find alternative reintegration for the large number of demobilized ex-combatants.

This study discussed the outcome of ex-combatant reintegration and the occurrence of violence in post-war Liberia using a four dimensional analytical framework, consisting of: (a) re-marginalization (b) re-criminalization (c) exploitation, and (d) economic insecurity. I found this framework a useful tool in capturing various micro–macro processes and dynamics which have affected the reintegration programme as well as individual ex-combatants in different ways. It has shown that, at the outset, successful reintegration depended on the overall political context in which the entire DDRR programme was implemented. In this regard, the study noted that the politicization of the reintegration programme was a contributing factor for its failure which then left ex-combatants unintegrated and highly vulnerable.

While physical violence may not be endemic in all 'post-conflict' countries, it is a problem in Liberia given its history of violent conflict, and a risk of relapse into armed conflict is potentially present. The intensity of violence is an important indicator which must be taken into consideration, and

the political and economic context of violence must be understood as important elements of redress in order to sustain the post-war peace and stability. Through violence and the use of arms (mostly locally made single barrel short guns which exist in large numbers), ex-combatants can reverse the relationships of dominance and marginalization that they suffer under the state in the post-war dispensation. It can also give them power to extract revenge on individuals who wronged them in the past (Keen, 2000:23-25; Lyon, 2004:269-271). Therefore, this analysis provides a basis for the development of intervention strategies as well as for prevention of the occurrence of violence in Liberia.

Ex-combatants may be pressed to seek for funding and support (internal or external) to confront the regime. The study therefore raises concerns of radicalization along religious lines - a problem that was highlighted by Ellis (2007). On this note, the research sites are the first potential hotbed for radicalization, as they are providing increasing space for its occurrence. For instance, these are sites where you have frustrated ex-combatants, joined by unemployed youth and other dissatisfied groups. Combined, they continue to express extreme political views, and therefore becomes susceptible for political manipulation to engage or be used for instance, in electoral violence against perceived opponents or the regime. In particular, ex-combatant's radicalization becomes possible because they are mainly drug addicts, and observing their behaviours, they appear lost in life and trying to find their identity within the society. In my interaction with many of them, and in my observational study, they feel rejected by the culture that surrounds them, and this makes them to develop resentment and rage. The flashpoint of their radicalization appears to occur when spoilers and opposition elements make them feel included as individuals, and legitimize their resentment.

Finally, political attention is increasingly focused on the 2017 presidential and general elections, which will be held in a complex political, social and economic environment marked by external economic shocks resulting from the drop in global prices of raw materials. There is public concern in Liberia over the drawdown and closure of the United Nations Mission in Liberia, as well as the challenges posed by the security transition to

state institutions, and the increase in public order incidents across the country. This fear runs deep in the minds of the majority of Liberians–that the national security institutions will not be able to fill the vacuum that will be created following the exit of the United Nations and this will further put the country at increased risk of violence by ex-combatants.

Issues for further research

I have provided different perspectives about ex-combatants' tension and violence which form part of the governance crisis in Liberia. I have also provided a new way of thinking about ex-combatants and their values in the society. It is clear that past paradigms of using combatants as spoils of war, and abandoning them are outmoded because they have the capacity to challenge post-war dynamics and destabilize the peace. I have invited new eyes, new sights, and new insights to other issues that generate violence in Liberia, which have the propensity to induce conflict in the medium to long-term. There are issues that cannot be fully addressed in this study owing to its limitations but they require further research.

It is important to conduct further research on the spread, strength, and cohesiveness of ex-combatants, nationally and at sub-regional levels, including the diaspora connections. There appears to be a common pattern and motivation for civil wars in the Mano River Union area, and most of the fighters have received training and indoctrination from the same ideological schools, particularly under Muammar Gadhafi's Presidency. The existence of the group called the Liberian-Ivorian Mercenaries Association (LIMA) is perhaps indicative of the cohesiveness of an assortment of ex-combatants, militias, and mercenaries. The United Nations Panel of Experts observed that Liberian mercenary command structures in the Ivorian conflict were fluid and relied on an alliance of generals who often activated their own recruits, mainly drawn from unemployed Liberian ex-combatants. The Panel also obtained testimony concerning the substantive overlap between the military operations of Liberian mercenaries and certain pro-Gbagbo Ivorian militias, whose forces are now residing in Liberia, intermingled with Ivorian refugees (Panel of Experts 2013). In the event of an escalation of violence which may lead to war, ex-combatants could easily have access to weapons which appear to be

in circulation within the sub-region. For instance, the Panel of Experts also identified one significant arms embargo violation committed by Liberian mercenaries and Ivorian combatants in River Gee County, Liberia, in May 2011. It noted that an arms cache was discovered near the Liberian-Ivorian border, comprising 74 assault weapons and associated ammunition. There are several inaccessible locations in Liberia's border towns where the panel suspects the deposit of arms caches.

The place of female (women) ex-combatants in post-war Liberia remains a concern. Although women generally comprise between 10 and 30 per cent of armed forces and groups (Bouta, et.al 2005:9), and tend to be younger than their male counterparts, surprisingly little research has been done so far on the lives of female ex-combatants in post violent armed conflicts. However, this research noted that, the contributions of Irma Specht (2006) "Red Shoes: Experiences of girls ex-combatant in Liberia ", and those of McKay and Mazurana (2004) "Where are the Girls?" highlighted the presence and experience of girls in armed forces and groups, within the context of Mozambique, Northern Uganda, and Sierra Leone. In spite of these efforts, many questions remain unaddressed with regard to female ex-combatants in Liberia. For instance, what has been the outcome of their participation in the peace deal? How has the war affected their personalities? How are they coping after the war, particularly in highly dominated patriarchal society? Are they able to use their experiences to increase gender equality? or do they go back to their earlier status of inequality?, and how well did the DDRR processes and programmes address their needs? Liberian female ex-combatants played different and vital roles during the war, such that some of them earned the titles of "Commanders and Generals". But in post-war era, their visibility and role appears to have diminished significantly.

As indicated earlier, violence against foreign concessions is a huge problem, and fears are being expressed by many Liberians, including the government, that if this continues, it might force the closure of some huge investments in Liberia. Liberia has great mineral wealth – iron ore, gold, diamond, and (oil and gas) which are currently under exploration. Exports of rubber and iron ore represent 95 percent of its total export, and Liberia has attracted foreign direct investment (FDI) in several non-traditional sectors

including petroleum, palm oil, hotels, finance, industry, and infrastructure in the amount of US$16 billion (AfT 2013). However, tension and violence within concession areas throughout Liberia have remained enduring. As a matter of fact, post-war concessions, be they agriculture like palm oil or rubber, or industry like mining, are all protest-prone to the extent that fire-arms violence erupts at different times. In 2007, an anti-expansion protest against the Liberia Agriculture Company (LAC) led to the killing of a Belgian Plantation Manager, Bruno Mitchell. Expatriate staffs of concessions are always in fear about actions of ex-combatants when community members are denied corporate social responsibility benefits, and these are instead channelled to the government. This approach not only excludes and marginalizes the affected communities, but also encourages their continued impoverishment.

Finally, I have argued in this study that there are many variants of neo-patrimonialism in Liberia, but this is insufficient to explain the phenomenon of violence in the country. The Liberian state is characterized by its contradictions and cannot be reduced to one logic. A country that prides itself as the oldest African Republic of 168 years of "independence" remains economically backward and politically divided and unstable. While it can be argued that Liberia has made some progress in state-building, its democracy will continue to feature a system of elite privilege based on privatization of public office and prevention of effective rule of law where it threatens elite interest. The nexus between violence and development remains fundamental. The United Nations Millennium Declaration, part of which coalesced into the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs) was to be achieved by the year 2015. Sadly, even though the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 2000) Resolution prominently speaks of peace, security, and disarmament, the MDGs themselves were wholly uninformed regarding the effect of war and violence on poverty. They reflect an appalling lack of comprehension that so long as there is violence, there will be no development. This is inevitably true of Liberia.

Post Script

A very recent update in my research discusses the challenges in the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report. The problem is that there is a deepening of Liberia's fluid political and fragile security environment with a looming crisis capable of degenerating into violent conflict. The context under which this could occur is the numerous calls by Liberians for the implementation of the TRC recommendations, including the establishment of a war crimes court, in Liberia to prosecute perpetrators for human rights violations and war crimes. This call is strongly resisted by those indicted by the report in a manner that threatens the fragile peace in the country.

The TRC report has remained in limbo since its publication in 2009 raising concerns, among Liberians and members of the international community, about the implementation of its recommendations, particularly the aspects of prosecution as a means of addressing the atrocities committed during the war. However, in a letter to the Speaker of the House of Representative, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf presented a progress report on the implementation of the recommendations and urged the lawmakers to deliberate on the matter and identify an appropriate approach for further implementations of the recommendations. Part of the President's letter stated:

> "As regards prosecution, as you may recall, in my report of March 2010, I suggested that the establishment of an Extraordinary Criminal Court requires joint effort of the Executive and the National Legislature, which has the constitutional mandate for establishing courts, and for the civil society through participation with the Liberian National Bar Association. At the same time, we note the importance of restorative justice that is ongoing under several of the policies, programmes and initiatives covered in this report. This is without prejudice to any future consideration by you in the establishment of Special Courts as recommended by the TRC report." (Sirleaf 2015).

The submission of the report at this time in Sirleaf's Presidency, and her comments on prosecution, ignited the political atmosphere, with sharp divisions apparent amongst the population, as some welcome prosecution while others spoke vehemently against it in a manner that threatens the fragile

peace. This context is exacerbated by the imminent departure of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) somewhere between 2016 and early 2017. This is going ahead notwithstanding the circumstance, because the Security Council noted that there is overall progress towards restoring peace and security in Liberia, and commended the enduring commitment of the people of Liberia to consolidate peace and advance democratic processes and institutions. But the Security Council also expressed concern regarding the significant challenges that remain across all sectors, including continuing problems with violent crimes, in particular the high rates of sexual and gender-based violence, especially involving women, children and girls.

Several factors now constitute real threats to the TRC report's implementation in post-UNMIL dispensation:

1. The decision by the United States Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), through its International Human Rights Unit, to continue tracking records of individuals living in the U.S who might have committed war crimes back in their countries of origin (New Republic 2015). In particular, the focus on Liberia derives from the US government's decision through the FBI to re-open investigation over the five American Catholic Nuns that were killed by a rebel group in Liberia during the war in 1992 (The Times 2012). Before the FBI involvement in the tracking of war criminals, some Liberians residing in the United States became active in seeking justice and the need to address war impunity. In groups, they filed complaints against individuals in the U.S who they claimed caused unbearable sufferings for them during the civil war in Liberia. It was in the light of this complaint that Mr. Thomas Woewiyu, a former Charles Taylor Commander/Defense Spokesman of the factional National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), was arrested in the U.S. He was charged with lying on his application for U.S citizenship by not disclosing his alleged affiliation with a violent political group in Liberia. Weowiyu was key actor in the rebel faction NPFL when, in 1992, the group carried out a brutal military campaign during which perceived adversaries were tortured, civilians were executed, girls and women were raped and forced into sex slavery, and humanitarian aid workers were murdered (New Republic 2015). Thomas Weowiyu remains in a US prison.

2. The submission of the TRC report by the President to the Legislature for action elicited criticisms on the grounds that some members alleged that she violated the TRC recommendation that barred her from political activities for 30 years, by contesting the 2011 Presidential election. In particular, one of the key rebel leaders, Senator Prince Johnson, of the defunct Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL), described the TRC report as "material that grossly violated the rights of people who dedicated their time to appear before the Commission to give their sides of the story, and noted that the TRC also violated the Liberian Constitution, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the Act that established the TRC" (New Dawn 2015). The position of Senator Johnson is not surprising. In 2010, following his threatening comments in the media about the proposed prosecution of those involved in the war, and the tension that it generated in Liberia given his antecedents, I went to his office to interview him on the issue. In his statement, he indicated to me that he will strongly resist any attempt to arrest him for prosecution, and reminded me that he has a large number of supporters who will join forces to resist such arrest, apparently referring to the large number of former fighters who still remain active and maintain contact with him.

3. At the national level, President Sirleaf has been under intense pressure to ensure that the TRC recommendations are implemented. Although the government has taken minimal or cosmetic measures towards addressing key elements of the recommendations, such as reconciliation (through the "palava hut" process – equivalent to "Gachacha" in Rwanda), historicity and memorialization, critical issues of reparation and prosecution remain distant. Given the complexity of the Liberian conflict, and the intractable nature of its socio-cultural interactions, it will be difficult to achieve the Rwandan model of reconciliation through the so-called palava hut mechanism. As one Liberian victim of the war stated:

> "You know, a warlord raped my aunt and she never recovered, she died in 2007. We don't know him, (the warlord), whether he is living or dead, but we know the faction he was fighting for and their leader is enjoying government today. The President, Senator Johnson and many other people who should be in jail

for killing or helping to kill Liberians are today big, big shots riding in fine, fine cars around here, It is not right" (Inprofile Daily 2015).

At the international level, the pressure on the government may have emanated from the need to avert a repetition of the past, and to ensure that the money spent by bilateral and multilateral institutions on the TRC process is justified. Critically, President Sirleaf would like to maintain a positive international posture and credibility by ensuring that the process for the implementation of the report is at least in progress before the end of her tenure in 2017. This is also coming in the light of a recent media report in which her name was mentioned among four other female candidates, including German Chancellor Angela Merkel, EU Foreign Affairs Chief, Catherine Ashton, UNESCO Director General, Irina Bokova, and UN Development Programme Administrator, Helen Clark (Washington Times (2015) as a possible successor to current UN Secretary General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon. Her success in this race is not likely, given the zoning methodology for the appointment of the SG which means it is not the turn of an African candidate. Nonetheless, she may stand a chance of being appointed as a Special Envoy of the SG at the end of her Presidency. The pressure on the regime may also have come from the United Nations Security Council. In its progress report on Liberia, the Council noted that the situation in Liberia continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security in the region, and indicated that it:

> "Look[s] forward to a comprehensive, inclusive constitutional review process as well as the implementation of the National Reconciliation Roadmap, urging efforts to strengthen the Independent National Commission on Human Rights which could play a key role as a publicly accessible human rights institution and as a mechanism to monitor and follow-up on the implementation of the recommendations of the TRC, and stressing that the responsibility for the preparation, security and conduct of a free, fair and transparent 2017 presidential election rests with the Liberian authorities" (UNSC 2015).

While the United Nations recognizes the need for the implementation of the TRC recommendations and the need for genuine reconciliation in Liberia, the

organization remains ambivalent in taking practical steps to ensure that Liberian stakeholders and international partners are engaged in the scrupulous implementation of recommendations and perhaps taking the responsibility for the establishment of a war crime court as it did in Sierra Leone. It is important to underline that Charles Taylor was tried and prosecuted because of war crimes and crimes against humanity that he committed in the Sierra Leone war. Thus far, no individual or group has been indicted and arrested in Liberian territory or prosecuted for their role in the Liberian civil war.

4. Debate over the President's letter has commenced and both Houses of the Legislature are divided over the issue of prosecution and the establishment of a War Crimes Court. The presence of perpetrators of war crimes in the Legislature is likely to prevent any tangible outcome and will probably delay the process until the tenure of the current regime comes to an end. This process is likely to be complicated by the recent Security Council de-listing of suspected war criminals from the assets and travel ban sanctions (UNSC 2015). One of the obvious implications of this decision is that individuals and groups at home and in the diaspora will now have access to looted wealth and use it to engage in political activities, as politics and access to power in Liberia (as in many African countries) are determined by money. For instance, in October 2015, Mr. Benoni Urey, who is arguably the richest serving politician, and a close association of Charles Taylor, was allegedly aware of the whereabouts of his (Taylor's) wealth abroad, and reportedly recruited Taylors former fighters as his bodyguard during the official opening of his party's office in the Southern Maryland County of Liberia, in preparation for the 2017 Presidential election (UNMIL Report 2015). The lifting of the assets and travel sanctions ahead of the election, and UNMIL security transitioning to the government, are both likely to have a security impact on Liberia as its national security institutions remain weak and lack the capacity to take full responsibility.

5. In the light of the renewed calls by many Liberians for the establishment of a war crimes court, and fearing prosecution, the former rebel leader of the defunct Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and 2005

Presidential candidate, Sekou Damate Conneh, stated that he is prepared to lead a peace and reconciliation process in Liberia. Conneh indicated his intention to engage with other rebel leaders such as Prince Johnson, George Boley, Alhaji Kromah, and Cyril Allen, to organize a national taskforce to promote peace and reconciliation in Liberia (UNMIL-JAOC Report 2015).

6. Returning to the criticism of President Sirleaf's action mentioned in number two above, during public testimony to the Commission in 2007/8 President Sirleaf conceded that she had made financial contributions to the amount of ten thousand dollars to the Charles Taylor-led insurgency on humanitarian grounds. Most of her critics, and those who also participated in the war such as Senator Johnson, allege that she played a more active role in the war than merely a financial contribution. But on account of her confession and role in the war, she was barred from participation in politics for 30 years in the TRC recommendations. In her determined effort to remain in politics and retain the presidency, she sought the intervention of the Supreme Court, which then ruled in her favour to allow her to contest the 2011 election. This decision by the Supreme Court dramatically changed the political landscape and undermined the TRC report. The Supreme Court was heavily criticized by many Liberians for this alleged unjust decision which saw the politicization of TRC report and largely eroded public confidence in the judiciary. Many of the warlords are likely therefore use the decision of the Supreme Court as an excuse to make an argument for non-prosecution.

7. To underscore the potential danger that the TRC report poses to peace and stability, the Chairman of the Commission Mr. Jereme Verdier, has fled the country into exile since the publication of the report because of threats to his life and family, allegedly by those marked for prosecution. The threat by rebel leaders to cause destabilization if they are arrested for prosecution remains credible. With the divisive and confrontational politics in Liberia the TRC report remains a potential source of violence and conflict.

 All these current factors must be considered to add to the security risks posed by the structural position of the ex-combatants outlined in my thesis, making Liberia a country very likely to return to conflict.

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