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Peace and recovery
witnessing lived experience in Sierra Leone

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Peace and Recovery: Witnessing Lived Experience in Sierra Leone

By

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of PhD

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Abstract

**Peace and Recovery:
Witnessing Lived Experience
in Sierra Leone**

A critical re-examination of the liberal peace is conducted to explore the ways in which certain ideas around peace have come to dominate and to be regarded as "common sense". The foundation of my critique comes in the personalisation of peacebuilding through the stories of people who are the intended beneficiaries of its actions. This thesis seeks to open up and challenge the current measures of success and the location of power by introducing voices and experiences of Mende people located in the Southern and Eastern provinces of Sierra Leone.

I have attempted to open up a reflexive space where simple questions can be re-examined and the location of recovery can be seen as a space influenced, shaped and performed in the context of diverse influences. I draw on my personal experience living in Bo, Sierra Leone for two months in 2014 and local level actors' subjective reflections on individual and communal notions of recovery, post-conflict.

My findings are reflected in "building blocks" that uncover a partial story of personal perspectives on recovery. The story suggests a de-centred and complex "local" within the existing context and realigns the understanding of subject and agency within peacebuilding. This collection of experiences, stories and encounters reshapes the notion of peace as an everyday activity with the aim of improving well-being on a personal level. It is also a part of the peacebuilding process that exists outside of the traditional organisational lens.

My main contribution has been in allowing alternative space(s) of peacebuilding and peace-shaping to have a platform that is not restricted by the confined epistemic "expert" community toward an understanding of "progress" as an experiential and subjective process of recovery. This

approach sought to challenge the current site of legitimacy, power and knowledge, and in order to achieve this aim I drew on a new methodological toolkit and the absorption of key concepts from other disciplines such as managerialism and the sociological concept of the "stranger".

My research offers an opportunity to observe and utilise information sourced from the creativity and spontaneity of the everyday lived experiences of Sierra Leoneans and ordinary phenomena connected with this.

Key words:

Bo

Development

Liberal Peace

Managerialism

Neo-Liberalism

Peacebuilding

Performance Indicators

Positionality

Post-Conflict

Poststructural

Power

Recovery

Reflexivity

Sierra Leone

Success

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List of Acronyms

ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
APC	All People's Congress
CAST	Consolidated African Selection Trust
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CDF	Civil Defence Force
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DfID	Department for International Development
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community Of West African States
EU	European Union
EVD	Ebola Virus Disease
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
IBL	Institutionalisation before Liberalisation
ICAI	Independent Commission for Aid Impact
IFI	International Financial Institution
IMATT	International Military Assistance Training Team
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Nongovernmental Organisation
IPRSP	Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
IR	International Relations
IRC	Inter-Religious Council
ISAT	International Security Advisory Team

MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
NCSL	National Council of Sierra Leone
NERC	National Ebola Response Centre
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NIC	National Interim Council
NPRC	National Provisional Ruling Council
NRC	National Reformation Council
NRS	National Recovery Strategy
PANAFU	Pan African Union
PBC	Peacebuilding Commission
PBR	Payment by Results
PFM	Public Financial Management
PRGF	Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RSLAF	Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
RUSI	Royal United Services Institute
SAF	Structural Adjustment Facility
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SLA	Sierra Leone Army
SLASA	Single Leg Amputee Sports Association
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
SLST	Sierra Leone Selection Trust
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission

TRC-R	Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report
UBC	United Brethren in Christ Church
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIPSIL	UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VfM	Value for Money

Part I

Chapter One: Space and Time: Introduction to the Liberal Peace and its Local Antithesis

I. Introduction

In the absence of light there are many dark rooms. As I entered the first room through the gloom I noticed a discoloration on the walls and ceiling. When I asked the local woman next to me what it was, she replied, “it’s blood; this is where they killed the villagers, where they cooked them and ate them”. I then noticed the blood stained clothes still on the floor. When the town chief had given me permission to visit the slaughter-house in Kailahun I did not expect to see a building frozen in time. Suddenly the civil war was no longer words on a page, no more a historical narrative, it was right there in front of me on the faces of the people in the room, in the artefacts at my feet, with the mud-brown blood all around.

On 23 March 1991 Sierra Leone was plunged into a brutal civil war when the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) under the leadership of Foday Sankoh crossed the Liberian border into eastern Sierra Leone. The RUF was quick to make progress eventually gaining control of the diamond mines in the Kono District that would prove crucial in the continual funding of the conflict. The number of causalities is estimated at 70,000 with around half the population displaced from their homes (Kaldor & Vincent, 2006: 4). The brutality

inflicted upon innocent civilians during this conflict made headlines all over the world, with the use of execution, amputation, sexual violence and child soldiers. In January 1999 the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) formed of disgruntled soldiers from the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) joined the RUF and attacked the capital Freetown (Keen, 2005a: 222; McMullin, 2013: 162).

With the failure of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) a West African multilateral armed force and later the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to stabilise the situation, in 2000 the British were sent in under a Commonwealth mandate to evacuate non-combatants (Woods & Reese, 2010: 61-63). However, seeing the situation on the ground Brigadier David Richards expanded the original mandate to take-on the RUF in battle and to protect Freetown (Marhia & Davies, 2012: 76-77; Miller, 2013):

> …I was tasked under the codename Operation PALLISER to go to Sierra Leone with orders to prepare to conduct a Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) of British and other expatriates who might be in danger…It has been said that my decision to ignore my orders from London and intervene militarily in the civil war – which is what happened over the next few days and weeks – was cavalier. It

> wasn't. It was the result of hard-nosed analysis (Richards, 2014: 131-132).

With progress being made a ceasefire was announced in November 2000. In 2002 the UN declared the war officially over with the final phase of disarmament and demobilization (Kaldor & Vincent, 2006: 8). Peace had been secured and the country could be reconstructed. What is meant by such things, in the context of a place like Sierra Leone, is the subject of this research.

I argue that a critical re-examination of the liberal peace is required to explore and expose the way that certain ideas around peace have come to dominate and to be regarded as "common sense". This ideological development and eventual domination of the practice of peacebuilding must be understood through the exploration of underlying power structures. These power structures create a system of values and measures that are difficult to dissect or disrupt within frameworks that support the basis of the status quo. By introducing the stories and voices of Sierra Leoneans from the Southern and Eastern provinces I hope to begin the process of personalising peace and recovery.

II. Background to My Research

I am fascinated and challenged by the notion of peacebuilding and the process of taking a country torn apart by conflict and installing through various processes at different levels a new system, presumably better equipped to prevent conflict and promote the fragile phenomenon known as "peace" (The Brahimi Report, 2000). It seemed to me that this process- if it was real, and could be mastered and replicated, would reveal something profound about the social and ethical condition of humanity. Perhaps, even the process of peacebuilding offered a toolkit, a set of universal values that could potentially change the international system for the better- which was the liberal internationalists' dream (Hoffman, 1995: 164; Paris, 1997; Bose, 2002: 89; Richmond, 2011a: 4).

Unfortunately for scholars studying the social world things are never this simple and explanations seldom linear and casual (Leavy, 2011: 8). After all, what is peace? Who decides? How is it measured? In what way(s) can peace be established and to what extent can it, somehow, be "proven"? Although the number of civil wars has decreased since the end of the Cold War their repetition in certain locations especially after a peace agreement is still a disturbing pattern (Walter, 2010; Williams, 2013: 1). In the case of Africa:

> It's time to confront our continent's least endearing trait: conflict. This recurring phenomenon is perpetuating poverty and preventing the fulfilment of Africa's potential as a whole. In recent months, relapses into conflict in the Central African Republic, Mali and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have highlighted the struggle that many African countries face in moving from fragility to peace. This is not a uniquely African problem, but it is here that the problem is most pronounced. The majority of the 1.5 billion people living in fragile states across the world are in Africa. Of the 18 member countries of the g7+, a group of fragile states, 13 are African (Marah, 2013).

After the end of the Cold War with no ideological competition between states or political systems there was renewed enthusiasm around liberal ideas (Willet, 2005: 571; Duffield 2007: 116; Mac Ginty & Williams, 2009: 61; Hentz, 2013: 144). In this context a particular kind of approach to peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction has since dominated the peace epistemic community. It is known as the “liberal” or “Western” peace:

> The dominant thinking is the “liberal peace”- dominant in that it pervades the most powerful and prestigious institutions and governments who take on the work of peacebuilding. Its aims are simple and familiar: to end armed violence and to establish human rights, democracy, and market economies. Its intellectual provenance

> is the liberal tradition that arose from the Western Enlightenment (Philpott & Powers, 2010: 4).

The term "liberal" peace suggests a version of peace rooted in democratisation, the rule of law, free and globalised markets, and neo-liberal development (Richmond & Franks, 2009):

> The concept of the liberal peace is a broad umbrella, as it takes account of the ideology of peacemaking, the socio-cultural norms of peacemaking, the structural factors that enable and constrain it, its principle actors and clients, and its manifestations. The term seeks to capture the totality of internationally sponsored peace support interventions (Mac Ginty 2010: 393).

This construction of peace creates a dominant discourse and body of knowledge that practitioners follow in the procedure of post-conflict reconstruction (Höglund & Svensson, 2011; Fjelde & Höglund, 2011: 18; Richmond, 2011a). The complex nature of dealing with a country post-conflict has led to value-laden decisions being made regarding a suitable "model" for peacebuilding (Richmond, 2011a). International institutions and agencies in the West and other areas of the developed world are present physically, ideologically and/or economically post-conflict. They rely on liberal-inspired norms and values that influence social, political and economic structures

(Paris, 1997). Liberal interventions do not only occur after conflicts (although the conflict in Sierra Leone is an example on a grand scale) but rather liberal values can be adopted in developing countries through poverty reduction initiatives and narratives associated with "good governance" (Mac Ginty, 2010: 393).

Yet, in the case of civil war the roadmap to an enduring peace cannot be purely theoretical or abstract as it involves the subject and practitioner. The transition from theory to practice has meant that the liberal model of peace has been a popular definition of peace in practice, "…the liberal peace also claims to be a Platonic ideal form and a Kantian moral imperative: it is also a discourse or a master signifier that may sometimes silence any thought or discussion of other alternatives" (Richmond, 2008a: 21).

Thus the "evolution" or genealogy of liberal peacebuilding that suggests what Foucault (1977) would describe as the "history of the present" (Sharpe, 2010: 43) can be found in a number of mainly United Nations (UN) texts, and member states generally fit around and support these broad mandates. Here I adopt Foucault's understanding of the genealogical method which seeks to reveal "a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic expositions" (Foucault, 1980a: 194). The genealogical method is an

investigative method which deals with the constitution of the subject in an attempt to expose the narrow frameworks of thinking that characterise the present. A number of UN documents and organisations have been involved in creating the history of the present including: An Agenda for Peace in 1992; the Supplement in 1995, the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), the Agenda for Democratization in 1996 and the Brahimi Report (2000). These documents have all contributed to establishing dominant norms around peacebuilding as it is enacted by international peacebuilders in Sierra Leone.

The view that shared values can create a more peaceful world (i.e. the democratic peace theory) has led to these values being imposed in fragile states creating an overt hegemony of peace. As Richmond (2011) suggests this form of peace is not a gift or supported through local production, and is seen instead as a contract between the donors and the recipients. Western development agencies rely on funding from government and therefore must justify their efforts in terms of outputs, and this often involves a rigid framework of intervention where needs are prioritised, budgeted and delivered with varying results through overt business management practices and techniques (Duffield, 2007): “Peacebuilding is often reduced to a technical exercise, the implication being that peacebuilding assistance is essentially value-free and that it does not represent important choices and interests” (Newman, 2013: 321).

The process of building peace includes activities such as conflict prevention in the form of mediation, peacemaking (through reconciling different parties), peacekeeping (used to support ceasefires, peace agreements, to protect civilians and monitor elections) and peacebuilding. The reason why I have focused on the term peacebuilding is because it offers the most potential for a holistic and emancipatory type of peace that seeks to transform social structures. It encompasses top down, mid-level and bottom up approaches all with the ambition of creating a sustainable peace and an environment for development to flourish. Peacebuilding can be used to transform structures and deep-rooted issues that fostered the outbreak of conflict. The prioritisation within peacebuilding and the journey towards a sustainable peace contains both power and politics, and it is this aspect of peacebuilding that I am investigating and challenging.

III. The Contested Nature of Peacebuilding

Consequently, peacebuilding itself is a contested term with no fixed definition or timespan. The term was essentially invented by Galtung (1976) who created a distinction between the cessation of war (negative peace) and an engagement with political, economic and social structures (positive peace). According to the former UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, peacebuilding aims "to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify

peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict" (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). Therefore, when I see a particular landmass, such as Africa, frequently mired in conflict, I wonder if the "experts" have the right tools, approaches and expectations when "peacebuilding":

> Studies indicate that while intra-state violent conflicts are on the decrease, the incidence of conflicts recurring after a peace agreement has been brokered or after being dormant for years is on the increase. This means that efforts to bring peace, security and development to post-conflict societies have not had much success (Iyer, 2011: 25).

Peacebuilding became an internationally recognised "practice" when it was put into operation after the end of the Cold War. Peacebuilding began to enter the rhetoric of the UN which had gained renewed optimism and was taking a more active role in international affairs since the Security Council was no longer blocked by constant vetoes. This transition was closely accompanied by the process of democratisation which seemed consonant with liberal ideas of a functional, and functioning, society, especially post-conflict (Zürcher et al, 2013: 85).

The idea of a model of peacebuilding based on universal values is compelling. Democracy is supposed to give people a voice, neo-liberal market reforms are believed to lead to economic prosperity (for part of the population) and few

can disagree with the promotion of human rights (Donais, 2012). The problem comes with ring-fencing these ideas of peacebuilding as a totality and as a model bucking no dissent (Ishmail, 2008; Philpott & Powers, 2010). If we look a little deeper at the values of liberalism we can separate its aspirations from its materialisation; thus the representation of diverse groups in a society can take a form contrary to the modern form of liberal democracy adopted in the West. These are ideas and explanations attached to political values, preferences and a vision of a certain international system that falls into line with values favoured by dominant Western powers (Richmond, 2008a; Richmond & Franks, 2009: 19). It seems that peacebuilding is franchised from a liberal democratic hegemony rather than being constructed as a local, bespoke imperative (Ignatieff, 2003; Mosse, 2005; Tadjbakhsh, 2011; Kappler, 2014: 51).

This is hardly surprising. In order for this model to be applied anywhere and everywhere, it must be universal by nature in order to be seen as legitimate and applicable (Foucault, 1988). This implication of the model of the liberal peace and how it is constructed means it takes on the responsibility of transforming an entire society, from a failed state to something perceived as successful. In order to retain this legitimacy the "model" and its discursive rationale cannot be seen to fail. If it does so, the model reveals its counter-productive, counter-factual nature so the blame is then pushed onto the country, culture or region, that is framed as the sole site of the problem, and

not the model of liberal peacebuilding itself (Richmond, 2011a: 3; Ryerson, 2013: 63).

IV. The Business of Peace

> ...Which therefore would be the real conception of the world: that logically affirmed as an intellectual choice? Or that which emerges from the real activity of each man, which is implicit in his mode of action? (Gramsci, 1999: 631).

The notion of the liberal peace has transformed in many ways into an institutional construct with its liberal values residing within a framework of ideas associated with value for money (VfM) and payment by results (PBR). This managerial and economic logic has introduced technocracy (Heathershaw, 2009: 55; Mac Ginty, 2012: 287-288) as a key idea in understanding the motivations, legitimisations and stated results of international participants in a post-conflict setting. Peacebuilding becomes a technocratic process focusing more on procedure than context where missions are replicated from the master template rather than sourced in the conditions of the "locale". My work resides within the dichotomy and tension between the dominant and international and the conditional and local as:

> The rhetoric of 'participation', 'local ownership' and 'partnership' may do little to mask power relations in which the conception, design, funding, timetable, execution and evaluation of programmes and projects are conducted according to Western agendas (Mac Ginty & Williams, 2008: 5).

A technocratic rationale for peacebuilding, with its dependence on bureaucracy and constructed knowledge is not politically neutral. They are practices dominated by Western, liberal "experts". Here local perspectives of peace are relegated to the status of "subject matter" rather than "participant":

> Thus, peacebuilding operations have become "vehicles of system management" for oppressive global politicoeconomic structures, with peacebuilding actors serving as managers within a system that is primarily interested in the security of the North and the maintenance of its way of life (Matyók et al, 2011: 129**)**.

As this understanding of peace is intrinsic to development agencies set up by states and organisations such as the UN which consists of member states, peacebuilding in practice replicates development agencies' model of organisation. Government development agencies such as the UK's Department for International Development (DfID) rely on PBR to judge whether a project is viable and successful. If non-governmental organisations (NGOs) wish to

propose a project they must speak the same language and be seen to use the same measures if they are to attract funding. This constricting framework is recognised by the UN in a number of documents:

> Priority-setting must reflect the unique conditions and needs of the country rather than be driven by what international actors can or want to supply. Post-conflict transitional political authorities and newly elected governments frequently ask for assistance in assessing national needs and prioritizing actions to address potential conflict drivers. The UN and the international community often fail to do this, allowing priorities to be dictated by mandates or by availability of resources, rather than by the country's most urgent needs (UN, 2010a: 13).

Here the UN recognises that too much pre-planning can blind UN peacebuilders and other development actors from the experiences on the ground and prevents flexibility in their approach. In Sierra Leone, for instance, the push for HIV/AIDS awareness far exceeds that of malaria and other water-borne diseases which are statistically bigger threats to the population (Iyer, 2011: 21). These problems are raised again in the Review of UN Peacebuilding Architecture (2010), the New Deal (2011) and the UNDP Governance for Peace (2012):

> These complexities, even if recognised at the establishment of the new architecture, are perhaps still not fully internalised. There is impatience for the PBC to construct its narrative, to find its success stories, to define precisely its added value. These are legitimate concerns and the Review seeks to address them. But the Organisation must adjust to the realities: the need is for the UN to continually reappraise its own structures and prioritise its approach to ensure they match needs on the ground (UN, 2010b:5).

Here the UN acknowledges the limitations of a rhetoric of change without the core values being internalised into the daily running and organisation of its peacebuilding activities. In this instance context is an obstacle to a quick success story. Therefore, the purpose of the PBCs presence is to legitimise themselves as an organisation rather than the wider aims of peacebuilding. There is a tension between the eagerness to fulfil a purpose without fully understanding what would be beneficial for the people, in this instance it is about what is best for the PBC rather than the people:

> And while ‘technical assistance’ and ‘project implementation units’ are frequently deployed to ‘get the job done’, they can sometimes impede progress precisely because of their overwhelming impulse to deliver functional expertise (UNDP, 2012a: 47).

This "overwhelming impulse to deliver functional expertise" does not allow for the organisation and its approach to adjust to the changing context. Its rigid framework prevents any innovation, creativity or cross-over between different visions of "progress":

> Formulaic, template-driven, and technical approaches can unintentionally trigger instability and renewed violence (ibid: 113).

This efficient, formulaic approach is often due to the structure and cultures of organisations that must justify and cost their activities sometimes prior to even engaging with the context. This blindness to complexity creates an uncritical devotion to a standardised engagement around ideas of peace and recovery:

> International partners can often bypass national interests and actors, providing aid in overly technocratic ways that underestimate the importance of harmonising with the national and local context, and support short-term results at the expense of medium- to long-term sustainable results brought about by building capacity and systems. A New Deal for engagement in fragile states is necessary (International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, 2011).

The problem with this rhetoric and the rhetoric of national ownership for technocrats is that it reveals a flaw in the dominant system where universality

may be pulled into question if local engagement in practice is considered important. Such flaws cannot be overcome through existing tools because to a certain extent it rejects the epistemic dominance of the "expert" and the dominance of the liberal peace if it runs counter to the existing cultural norms of authority, security and legitimacy.

In the ensuing chapters I will break down the liberal peace model to expose an array of values linked to universality, neo-liberal economics, liberal democracy as well as graduations and versions of peace that can be both contradictory and self-legitimising (Autesserre, 2014). These are all key in creating and maintaining the dominant discourse or "regime of truth" (Foucault 1977, 1980a, 1980b).

V. Research Questions

Based on the above observations this work sets out to challenge the power, legitimacy and universality of the liberal peace project and the ways in which this project is implemented through peacebuilding post-conflict in Sierra Leone. I have the space and confidence both theoretically and methodologically to ask simple yet essential questions that reside at the foundation of peacebuilding.

The problem on the surface seems rather simple: This is a critique of the liberal peace because it fails to deliver stability in certain parts of the world. However my research goes deeper than a simple critique as it seeks to expand the space of peacebuilding by witnessing the various ways the road to peace are enacted in everyday life. The approach I adopt in critiquing the liberal peace is not an attempt at producing an improved model. In fact there is no end goal but rather a process, one of deconstructing a dominant discourse through local perspectives and improving this methodological process along with the lives of ordinary Sierra Leoneans. There will always be hegemonic powers and discourses but it is the tools that I use to explore them that are my concern. I argue that the social world is complex, fluid, and ever-changing, and therefore any research that goes directly to the people affected by change can help question, challenge, and adjust perceptions previously taken for granted. The concept of peace is a good example of these perceptions: what type of peace is being built and why? These questions have been closed for discussion.

The act of embracing ambiguity is relevant for peacebuilding practitioners when tackling a complex environment, although many may know the conflict resolution and development literature these are not hardened facts about reality and they are often strangers to the context they are entering. The act of humbling oneself allows the hidden transcripts and networks of the everyday to become visible and potentially utilised along with aspects of existing

literature on what we know of stability, security, the human condition and the pursuit of improved well-being.

This research can largely be split up into three parts. The first unpacks the liberal peace and seeks to problematise its location as the dominant approach to peacebuilding. The process of problematisation involves opening up and challenging common sense assumptions around truth and knowledge by exploring power dynamics and offering alternative perspectives. This will contextualise the second part of my research, which will consist of analysing the explanations and stories of Sierra Leoneans, mainly from the district of Bo, to gain insight into how they order their lives, define themselves and others, and what this means for recovery and future peacefulness. In the final part of my research I will bring the aims and contradictions of the liberal peace together with the individual stories of people in Bo to unveil a broader, more nuanced and reflective understanding- indeed, multiple understandings of peacebuilding. Through this work I also come to understand more of myself and my place in the dominant discourse and in the local. Indeed this notion of "place" and its coagulation with agency is something I explore and question throughout my work.

Peacebuilding is a complex process involving a number of different actors, interventions, explanations and reforms that, at the local level, cut across the whole of society (Duffield, 2001; Paris & Sisk, 2009). The challenge for my

research was to narrow down the focus when engaging in a critique of the liberal peace. I explore the liberal peace literature, its legitimising discourses, but allow my contribution to the academy to be formed through the themes emerging from the peoples of Sierra Leone, their stories and their voices in relation to their experiences of having peacebuilding "done to them". My main contribution has been in challenging the current site of legitimacy, power, truth and knowledge within peacebuilding to include an experiential and subjective process of recovery. To achieve these challenges has prompted me to search for and use a new methodological toolkit and to absorb key concepts from other disciplines such as managerialism from business studies and the sociological concept of the "stranger". My research has opened up an avenue to absorb mechanisms of recovery through the creative and spontaneous activities of the everyday lived experiences of Sierra Leoneans and ordinary phenomena connected with this. By challenging orthodox approaches and understandings of peace and development I have sought to reopen the debate on how we approach peace and how we determine "success". For instance, I explore the notion of personal well-being as an indicator of success. I have captured a moment in time already lost to the Ebola epidemic where hopes were high but realities were harsh. This research project is relevant to any activity concerned with building and understanding the notion of a sustainable and locally owned peace. It exposes the liberal peace as a political project rather than as an accurate reflection of human nature.

My starting point therefore begins by acknowledging that the liberal peace is a partial narrative of a much wider and complex story of recovery that is often relegated in favour of a rational, technocratic story. I sought to unpack this closed system by including marginalised voices from people living in Bo, from men, women, youths and amputees who are at the heart of this alternative knowledge construction (Geertz, 1973; Pouligny, 2005; Brown, 2013; Millar 2014).

This leads to my principal research question:

What does peace and recovery mean in its local context?

From this initial research question a number of other enabling questions are born:

(i) How is the dominant approach to peace, recovery and success created and legitimised?

(ii) How do these two realities- the dominant and the local- co-exist?

(iii) What are the implications of opening up traditional explanations, and spaces, of peacebuilding through the process of witnessing lived experience?

My work does not attempt to unpack the numerous internal contradictions inherent within the liberal peace, nor am I celebrating the many apparent failings of this model whilst romanticising the "local" within Sierra Leone. My work seeks to go beyond the simplified rhetoric of success contained within the managerial logic that deconstructs and simplifies complexity and subjectivity. Through my local engagement with the lives of ordinary Sierra Leoneans I hope to open up a reflective space where peace and recovery are explored in multiple forms and functions.

The foundation of my critique comes in the personalisation of peacebuilding through the stories of people who are the intended beneficiaries of its actions. I have chosen to listen and document the voices of people from Sierra Leone concentrating for my main study on the Southern and Eastern provinces where I encountered mainly Mende people. My pilot study was exclusively in Freetown and as I will explain in Chapter 4 this experience changed my perspective on the location – and space(s) – of - my main work. It also profoundly changed my perspective on "self" as it highlighted the importance of location and identity.

I was drawn to Sierra Leone because it was and still is cited as a model of success by international standards and norms in terms of peacekeeping and its subsequent progress (UN News Centre March 2014; UN "Report of the Peacebuilding Commission Assessment Mission to Sierra Leone"; Ban Ki

Moon March 2014 “Secretary-General Remarks at Closing Ceremony for the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone”; Richards, 2014). By interrogating this perception of success, and the reason for its’ assertion I seek to expose and explore limitations behind the ideology of peacebuilding and the liberal peace which forges and legitimises its processes and practices.

VI. Overview of the Thesis

This work is organised as follows:

Part I

Chapter 2 looks at the construction of the liberal peace as the dominant framework of understanding around the practice of building peace. It introduces the political, cultural, economic and historical antecedents that subsequently ring-fenced peace to include distinct values and processes. I proceed to look at how the liberal peace was implemented in Sierra Leone, in this section power dynamics are explored through examining what was prioritised in the peacebuilding process and why. I then challenge this singular story through a critical re-evaluation in Chapter 3. I begin by looking at where Sierra Leone fits in the liberal peacebuilding narrative, how it became the model of “success” and what this label neglects. I draw on a poststructural lens

to explore and expose the power dynamics, agency, knowledge construction and discourses that operate to legitimise and construct a "common sense" narrative around the way peace is envisioned and implemented. I examine the most important legitimising mechanism of the liberal peace, its measures of success. Here I merge the context of Sierra Leone with the liberal peace model to look at the importance of managerialism and performability in understanding what success looks like. I use the example of the Ebola epidemic to problematise this approach and reveal the one-dimensional nature of success within the managerial and liberal peace framework. Chapter 3 is used to change the point of observation regarding conflict transformation away from the traditional focus of problem-solving approaches, security sector reform (SSR), neo-liberal economic reforms and democratisation towards the subjective and experiential process of peacebuilding on the local level.

After reviewing the liberal peace literature and offering a critical re-evaluation, I then explain in Chapter 4 where I position myself within my research in terms of a foundational critique. I begin with the lone researcher and my place in the story, and multiple descriptors of peacebuilding. I explore the implications of my role as a reflexive researcher by charting my personal journey of research and how this has informed my theoretical and methodological positioning. This chapter documents my pilot study in Freetown and my main study in Bo and explores a perspective of the "field" as a performance constructed between myself and the participants. My

methodology is an attempt to capture a moment in time by witnessing lived experiences of ordinary Sierra Leoneans whilst living for two months with a family in Bo. Here I also explore the obstacles to my research, my operationalisation to ethically and reflexively engage with the "local" and the use of discourse analysis.

Part II

Part I set up my main argument for the personalisation of peace and recovery. It reviewed the existing literature and the conflicting knowledge that has made the critique of the liberal peace a possibility. In Part II I move away from the traditional literature and explore the people and their stories of recovery.

Chapter 5 sets out the relevant information on Bo for my research and its place within Sierra Leone. It explores who the "local" are in this research and the reasons for this choice. The chapter looks at who the Mende people are and the lead up to the civil war. With key historical, political and cultural themes explored I progress onto my two findings chapters.

Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 consist of emerging themes and findings derived from my analysis. Although these chapters are linked they serve different purposes: Chapter 6 opens up a new space to understand the mechanisms of

power when constructing peace whilst Chapter 7 attempts to locate the "substance" of that very notion of peace.

Chapter 6 introduces the concept of the "stranger", which I use to explore the reaction to the peacebuilder and researcher as strangers as well as the conception of internal stranger in Sierra Leonean culture. This perspective explores the meaning attached to "presence" and introduces themes around the "substance" of peace in Chapter 7. Chapter 7 introduces multiple perspectives constructed around four core themes: religion, education, corruption and sport. These themes grew out of my interaction with local people. Each theme will be explored in turn in suggesting how they are integral in understanding the road to recovery and future well-being after conflict. Chapter 7 builds on the findings in Chapter 6 and through this new prism it re-imagines the liberal peace.

Part III

Chapter 8 concludes my thesis by reflecting on the research journey that allowed for a change in observation to occur around concepts such as peace, recovery and development and the practice of peacebuilding. I suggest how this space can and should be extended beyond the traditional organisational, managerial and IR framing. It sums up my time in Bo as a witness to lived experience by discussing the implications of the findings on the academy and

upon me. The chapter suggests a context full of complexity with mechanisms for recovery enacted in the everyday in the pursuit for improved well-being. I also revisit the Ebola outbreak before finishing with a final thought.

The next chapter will explore the understandings and explanations of the liberal peace and how they came to shape and dominate common assumptions around peace, development and recovery.

Part I

Chapter Two: The Danger of a Single Story

I. Introduction

Chapter 1 introduced my interest in peacebuilding. It gave a brief overview of the dominant model, the critique of this model and explored reasons for my personal approach to peace and recovery. It asked questions about why certain voices and approaches to peace are marginalised in favour of legitimacy through the lens of a managerial logic of measures of success. I then introduced my research questions that would drive my investigation of people at the centre of peace in Bo. If the discussion around peace, recovery and development is closed then the only activity left for policy makers and scholars is perfecting the management of how these ready-made formulas are implemented. If, however, the liberal peace is one potential story of peace that has been ring-fenced for the "expert" then the opportunity for other stories is possible. This would have the impact of allowing a more nuanced approach to what it means to build peace post-conflict and a reflexive space where simple questions could be explored anew and the location of recovery can be seen in the context of diverse influences.

Chapter 2

In this chapter I will chart how and why the liberal peace became known as the dominant and only model of building peace. *A Story of Peace?* discusses the need for closure after conflict and the use of peace as a term to denote the next stage in a linear progression towards improvement. *Setting the Scene* charts the journey of peace and peacebuilding as a concept into a framework of intervention and implementation through UN documents and the merging of democracy, security and development with peace. In the section *The Main Character- The Liberal Agenda* I set out my perception of certain problems arising from the notion of the liberal peace as a unitary and stable model, a perception that I call "problematisation" in this thesis. Problematising the notion of peace is important for future chapters by opening up space for alternative perspectives through demonstrating the weaknesses within the dominant model.

The Illusion of Simplicity: Legitimacy and Graduations in the Liberal Peace Model suggests how the liberal peace can be interpreted by different actors with their own agendas. I describe how language can be used to deter alternatives by seeing anything not liberal as illiberal and therefore close down the discussion. *Discourses and Designs* dissects the graduations and versions of peace, it explores how and where they have been utilised and to what effect. This section highlights the complexity of the liberal peace model that finds it easy to adapt and adopt alternative meanings. *From Liberal Ideology to Free Markets* looks at the relationship between neo-liberal economic reforms and

the ideology of liberalism in achieving a liberal peace. This section examines the self-legitimising nature of the power relationship and the assumptions of "progress" that they rely upon. *Peacebuilding as Security* looks at what peacebuilding in Sierra Leone actually looked like, who the main actors were, what was prioritised, what reforms were pushed, and why. The *Conflicting Bodies of Knowledge* section explores the literature around the liberal peace, including those who support its aspirations, those who seek to reform it and those who are critical of its foundations. I locate my position with the latter and more specifically a foundational critique and its emphasis on the local and the "everyday".

This chapter will expose the narrow framing around peace and recovery as a result of its historical and political origins, as well as the rise in critical peace literature that tries to makes sense of these practices and the power relationships intrinsic to their legitimacy and sustainability. It is by challenging assumptions about the nature of peace that I am able to open up spaces for alternative voices.

II. A Story of Peace?

Watching the news often entails coming face to face with the latest conflicts or civil unrest that are deemed significant and relevant enough for a particular audience. The scattering of information would look chaotic without a

narrative, a point, or some sort of linear progression. For example, if there is a problem, how can we fix it and make the world a better place? Peace can be seen as that closure to an often violent chapter in a country's history, but who decides what peace should look like? How do you measure this peace? How do you know if a recurrence in conflict is simply a continuation of the previous one? If so, was it peace or simply the absence of guns on the street? These are some of the questions that make me see peace as a messy construction, at times being productive and addressing key issues but in the same context being absent or counter-productive in its liberal form (Snyder, 2000; Zakharia, 2003; Keohane, 2003; Paris, 2004; Krasner, 2005). Successes a few years ago in the name of peacebuilding are returning to haunt policymakers and the ghosts of Iraq and Mali are disrupting the linear narrative that made life a lot simpler and more convenient (Hoffman, 2009; Heleta, 2011; Whitehouse, 2012; Call, 2015; Lihony, 2015). Here there seems to be some discrepancy between what is reported and what is experienced.

A clash seems to arise between the liberal peace model and the complexity of people, their opinions, beliefs and stories. I believe this clash can be seen at its clearest when we look at the measures of success adopted by international development organisations that use a business logic for justification and legitimacy. For example performance evaluation and value for money indexes which do not allow for the recognition of recovery as a set of personal experiences. It seems difficult for actors working within the liberal peace

doctrine and structure to celebrate the different interpretations of peace (i) if they cannot be institutionalised or rationalised within its framework and (ii) more importantly, if it cannot be quantified in monetary terms. The revised discourse of local ownership and context specific approaches have been adopted by some international organisations including the World Bank without an acknowledgement that their understanding of context is different to the people that their assistance is supposed to empower.

The liberal peace and the personal exist at the same time in the same space and depending on the point of observation one can dominate the other and vice versa. Of course the liberal peace has the resources and structures to dominate on an international stage and this power is visible through the state-centric nature of international relations and what is deemed as important. This means anything outside of this narrow IR lens is left unexplored and its impact unrecorded.

III. Setting the Scene

The nature of current peacebuilding practices and its emphasis on democratisation, human rights, free markets and the rule of law are tied to the historical context from which liberalism emerged as a dominant approach to peace operations (Richmond & Franks, 2009; Richmond, 2011a). The end of the Cold War unfroze many protracted intra-state conflicts and released the Security Council from the paralysing power of the frequently used veto, and it

allowed the idea of democratisation to dominate and human rights to be considered (sometimes) above state sovereignty (Ryan, 2013):

> Orientation of international peacebuilding missions continues to be shaped by the historical moment of its emergence as a formal UN activity at the end of the Cold War- framed by liberal triumphalism (Paris 2004) and coloured by a reimagining of war (Kaldor 1998) (Brown, 2013: 134).

Within this context a number of UN documents were created to enshrine this new direction of the UN and the international community in peace missions. These documents created a framework with guiding principles about what peace should look like and how it should be implemented (Richmond & Franks, 2009: 19). The documents include:

- Agenda for Peace (1992)
- Supplement (1995)
- Agenda for Development (1994)
- Agenda for Democratization (1996)
- Inventories of UN peacebuilding Activities (1996)
- Brahimi Report (2000)
- Peacebuilding Capacity (UN 2006)

Boutros Boutros-Ghali produced "An Agenda for Peace" in 1992 which provided a technical framework for peacebuilding (Hunt, 2014). The Agenda for Peace equated statebuilding with peacebuilding and narrowed Galtung's original conception of peacebuilding (Paffenholz, 2013) as a tool for eradicating structural violence and creating a "positive" peace. This was followed by the Supplement in 1995 that further institutionalised peacebuilding procedures across the international system (Richmond & Franks, 2009; Maphosa et al, 2014: 4). The PBC was also set up in this year which currently only operates in African countries.

Moreover, the Agenda for Democratization in 1996 made the explicit link between democracy, security and development that characterise integral parts of the liberal peace (Philpott & Powers, 2010; Zanotti, 2011: 43-44). Thereafter, the Brahimi Report (2000) highlighted weaknesses in this emerging narrative and pointed out that peace should not just be the absence of war (Haastrup, 2013: 62; Sabiote, 2013: 91; Peou, 2014: 59). These texts have taken peace and peacebuilding from a conception framed by liberal values, post-Cold War, to an institutionalised and technocratic social experiment on a grand scale (Mac Ginty, 2006; Ramsbothan et al, 2011). These documents reveal the parameters within which peace operates as well as its relationship to democracy, security, economics and development.

IV. The Main Character- The Liberal Agenda

The historical belief that democracies offer the most conducive political foundation for peace (Doyle, 1983a, Doyle, 1983b) and the new flexibility within the Security Council allowed liberal values to dominate peace missions and post-conflict reconstruction projects (Abul-Husn, 2006: 100). The liberal peace as a label is an academic invention that accounts for the conflation of peace rooted in democratisation, the rule of law, free markets and neo-liberal development (Duffield, 2007; Pugh et al., 2008; Richmond & Franks, 2009; Selby 2013). However, this label is problematic as it hides a number of contradictions. Specifically, the label hides the spectrum of liberalism from the conservative end (statebuilding) to its potential as an emancipatory activity (Richmond, 2010; Ryan, 2013). The label hides differences between the values liberalism represents and the need to institutionalise and measure these values in practice on the ground. For instance, the way that different countries or organisations interpret the importance of these values and the way they should be implemented is important. Ryan (2013) demonstrates in his analysis how the United States uses hard power and a "grandiloquent" rhetoric in its peace operations that often cost more than UN operations. He notes that the UN's approach is often state-centric with a higher success rate than the US, whilst Richmond et al. (2011) see European Union (EU) operations as taking a post-Westphalian approach with collective security governance. The organisations/countries approach, the context, the order in which reforms are

implemented (even though they are under the same umbrella approach of the liberal peace) all have the potential for mixed results even if the same basic framework is employed:

> The most significant ideologies that shape contemporary peacebuilding are related to a liberal optimism that believes that human societies can be perfected, and a trust in institutional fixes. In many cases these 'liberal peace' interventions are well intentioned, but they carry along with them immense cultural baggage (Mac Ginty, 2013: 2-3).

The liberal peace presents itself as apolitical, a-historical and a-cultural (Campbell & Peterson, 2013: 340). By removing its association with politics, history and culture it creates a mythology of rationalisation that inhibits other cultures and their perceptions of peace and war. This process has a normalising effect where alternatives are silenced and de-legitimised seemingly creating what Laclau would call "objectivity":

> Objectivity is sedimented power where the traces of power have become effaced, where it has been forgotten that the world is politically constructed…Objectivity, then, refers to the world we take for granted, a world which we have 'forgotten' is always constituted by power and politics (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002: 38).

Liberal peacebuilding often forgets that it is itself an actor in the conflict through intended and unintended consequences, including its military presence and actors' activities in peace operations and later social, economic and political reform (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013a: 2). Intended consequences are highlighted as successes (these are factors of improvement that can be linked back to the original objectives) and could include progress in SSR, improved economic performance or reforms in gender equality law. Unintended consequences if they are picked up can be blamed on the implementation stage or on the country for not fitting the prescribed model of peacebuilding. Unintended consequences can be at an operational level, for example the British military operation in Sierra Leone which went from an evacuation mission to a full on engagement with the RUF, but it can also be the result of the exclusion of certain discourses. Another possibly unintended consequence is the fact that the UN arguably has more legitimacy than the government in Sierra Leone (Kaldor & Vincent, 2006: 5).

Under the Enlightenment and the influence of the positivist paradigm there is a belief that the resolution of conflict can be found through problem-solving exercises and getting the mechanics of the problem correct (Heathershaw, 2008, Richmond, 2011a). Conflict becomes an obstacle to the linear progression of humankind and its resolution becomes an act of civilising or maintaining the status quo (Richmond & Franks, 2009: 175). The perceived dysfunction and anarchy of conflict is used to legitimise the intervention of

peace as the preferred state of being but we are reminded through theorists such as Collier and Hoeffler (2000), Berdal and Malone (2000) and Keen (2000) that conflict can create its own logic, rationale and security:

> War-torn 'post-conflict' societies in which the distinction between 'peace' and 'war' is blurred do not collapse into complete anarchy. Alternative systems of coping, even governance, emerge that are built around bonds of loyalty, trust and mutual interest at a local level…Understanding them is likely to be a more useful starting point from which to begin to consider the challenges of peacebuilding than 'template missions' and the idea of a clean slate on which the future can be written (Berdal, 2009: 177).

The assumption in the liberal agenda that conflict in certain contexts is wrong, irrational, illegitimate or even barbaric (Kaplan, 1994; Peters, 1994; Gray, 1999) (but has the possibility of redemption through certain processes) is something that is rarely questioned (Jabri, 1996; Luttwak, 1999; Collier & Hoeffler, 2000; Berdal & Malone, 2000; Keen, 2000; Hoffman 2009). Liberalism in IR theory looks to the values within civil society to judge states behaviour with other states:

> Liberal IR theory accepts as axiomatic that the domestic "nature" of the state "is a key determinant" of its "behaviour" toward other states. This

> assumption rests on the centrality within liberal political thought of the view that peace is a quality achieved by civil societies within states, while the external world of relations between states remains an arena of, at least potential, conflict (Buchan, 2002: 407).

This means violence between states can only cease after the internal politics has been reformed. This normative superiority suggests war is demonstrative of a "lack" in a country's formation which is juxtaposed against the "complete" which is linked to liberal democracy and the democratic peace theory. Although the democratic peace theory states that conflict between democracies is unlikely it does not mean that liberal states are less violent. In fact they have been eager to enter into conflict or coercion with "illiberal" states:

> In theorizing the development of a zone of interstate peace, therefore, liberal IR theorists assume that liberal states are not the source of war; they may engage in war, but only because illiberal or uncivilized states pose a threat (Buchan, 2002: 414).

The internal conditioning of a population to create a harmonious civil society is personified in liberalism by a liberal democratic form of governance which can be implanted via peacebuilding in the "illiberal" "other" (Roberts, 2011). Thus as in Western countries, it is hoped that eventually Foucault's conception

of monarchical power will transform into the less costly disciplinary power, "…a system of surveillance which is interiorized to the point that each person is his or her own overseer. Power is thus exercised continuously at a minimal cost" (Sarup, 1993: 7). Conflict like crime provides the legitimacy of surveillance and the intervention of the dominant political imagining into the social and the human subject itself. These external interventions can be seen as an investment that will instil values and self-regulate once they firmly take root creating consent without coercion reflective of Gramsci's "consensual domination" within the theory of hegemony (Robinson, 2004: 161).

However, the liberal agenda is neither unitary nor stable, and it is this "sliding" signification of the term that I will explore through the liberal peace model.

V. The Illusion of Simplicity: Legitimacy and Graduations in the Liberal Peace Model

Consequently, the liberal peace is not a singular entity. It contains graduations and internal contradictions that are often difficult to separate from the overall structure (Richmond, 2011a). The liberal peace project becomes an evolving political project (Foucault, 1988; Rose, 1989, 1999; Lukes, 2005) that includes NGOs, donor countries; international financial institutions (IFIs), international development organisations, private business enterprises and civil society. A

number of these actors have agendas that reflect a baseline commonality with liberal ideas which fuse them together creating a peace industry (Richmond & Franks, 2009: 152). These actors and their agendas have emphasised certain aspects of liberalism and neo-liberalism which suit their agendas whilst reducing others. So how liberal is the liberal peace? The very notion of having a prescribed solution to another country's development and progression encourages dependency and a lack of independent reasoning and debate and points to a positivistic approach more akin to the natural sciences than liberalism. This is further complicated by neo-liberalism and its fervent focus on the economic organisation of a state which creates a monologism around the liberal peace:

> Monologism is a brand of idealism that insists on the unity of a single consciousness. It has been the guiding principle in a variety of modern movements, including European rationalism, the Enlightenment and utopianism. Wherever monologic perception dominates, everything is seen in false unity- as the spirit of a nation, of a people, of history. This unity is false because it is only an apparent oneness; in fact, monologism demarcates, abstracts, excludes, and it is only from within this closed lopped-off system that everything can be seen as one (Emerson, 1989: 151-152).

This monologism makes internal contradictions difficult to identify and its success difficult to measure (Foucault, 1981, 1986; Bakhtin, 1994; Viktorova, 2003). The sliding signification of the liberal peace can only highlight extreme differences which become the 'illiberal' other: hence the choice will be either liberal state/failed autocratic state or neo-liberal economic policy/corruption and ineffective economic policies (Tadjbakhsh, 2011). The context of Sierra Leone in terms of its existing political structure meant that political liberalisation and economic liberalisation would not only be incompatible but potentially contradictory when utilised together (Akokpari, 1996). The conflation of neo-liberal economic reforms and the liberalisation of the state within the liberal peace model created a partnership between political and economic reform. Alternative approaches to economic reform outside of this partnership could be seen as illiberal and potentially indulging state corruption. In fact neo-liberalism and corruption are not opposites and can work alongside each other creating a "shadow state":

> ...neo-liberalism is often presented as an alternative to state-based corruption, in Sierra Leone during the 1970s and especially the 1980s, the two tended to interact to the benefit of a small clique around the president and to the detriment of the broad mass of people (Keen, 2005b: 76).

The state is then used as a vehicle for private gain. What is often perceived as a problem with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) programmes such as structural adjustment is that they search for economic growth and development but not in an equitable way (Richards, 2007: 62). Economic growth that does not trickle down to the majority of the population could become a source of renewed grievance and exacerbate socio-economic problems. This distinction means that neo-liberal economic reforms have the potential to reverse growth as well as creating conditions that could cause the next conflict:

> ...economic policy for peace-building should not simply be concerned with general economic growth and poverty reduction, but with a specific type of growth which addresses imbalances. An economic policy that is concerned with overall growth as opposed to a more targeted or equitable growth may endanger the prospects for a long-term sustainable peace, particularly in a country with strong pre-existing socio-economic inequalities... (Ahearne, 2009: 13).

Two important developments in socio-economic factors which lead to war are relative deprivation (Gurr, 1970) and horizontal inequality (Stewart, 2000). Relative deprivation links the onset of conflict to an apparent inequality between one person and another and a change in expectation, and this grievance can potentially transform into violence in order to gain access to the

same wealth and opportunities. There is a difference here between what a person expects and what they are capable of achieving within society: "Actors perception of discrepancy between their value expectations and their value capabilities" (Gurr, 1970: 24). If IFI's support programmes do not allocate funds in a way that is accessible or beneficial to all then they can potentially exasperate existing tensions (Zack-Williams, 2010: 21-22). Horizontal inequality refers to disparities in wealth across different groups (Stewart, 2000). As we would expect the component parts of the liberal peace do not reflect or acknowledge their political nature, and economic reforms are presented as a one size fits all package (Tadjbakhsh, 2011: 46; Sandstrom, 2013: 39).

These extreme counter-discourses present the liberal peace as the only option with alternatives being viewed as "illiberal" with the multiple connotations that go along with that term (Tadjbakhsh, 2011). Within this framework corruption becomes a problem that must be eradicated, when in certain situations it acts as a custom that stabilises power relations with a direct link to ideas of authority, as Reno (2011) notes in his work on Liberia. In other contexts corruption can de-stabilise the country, it seems therefore that the organisation of corruption in different contexts becomes important. The fact that the liberal peace is sold as a package makes alterations to this model more convenient than alternatives that may produce an "illiberal" counter-discourse and further strengthens the monologism afforded to the liberal peace:

> To a large extent, Western peace support interventions often follow a formulaic path … It becomes peace from IKEA; a flat-pack peace made from standardized components. … off-the-shelf peace interventions reflect the accumulated skills and capacities of the intervening parties rather than the precise needs of the recipient society (Mac Ginty, 2008: 144-145).

The liberal peace therefore creates a partial narrative of the peacebuilding story. The appearance of the liberal peace as a closed system is limiting, and measures of success reveal this clearly. The way the liberal peace creates its universal legitimacy is based on its philosophical foundations, and a principal way that this framework legitimises claims to truth is by using positivist methods of analysis (Richmond, 2011a). The positivist base prioritises cause and effect models of war and peace, where predictions can be made through the analysis of interaction between structures such as the economic and political sphere. The claim that the liberal model can achieve an emancipatory form of peace through the universal application of moral norms and values constructed and legitimised in the West suggests a post-positivist strand that can only be achieved when seen through a liberal perspective of what peace and emancipation should look like (Richmond, 2005). If we look at national development the key indicators used by organisations are economic to discuss its success, mainly because the aim of development assistance is to reduce

poverty through a social project used to rebuild and modernise a society post-conflict. So if the aims and results match and are seen as successful then it is the fault of the country if conflict ignites again during this process:

> It is also clear that the internationals' representation of their achievements is often skewed in favour of what donors and the main actors in the international community want. The peace being constructed in the various contemporary conflict zones around the world looks very different from the perspectives of local communities, polities, economies, and officials. This is clear in the discourses about peace that are in evidence, and is emphasised by the fact that these discourses are so rarely acknowledged (Richmond, 2008a: 35).

I will now move from the agenda and model of the liberal peace to the discourses that are implicit and explicit in its institutionalisation and implementation.

VI. Discourses and Designs

The liberal peace is a broad term with its own discourses and ideological structures (Foucault, 1980a, 1980b; Lukes, 2005). In a broad sense it consists of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), SSR, good governance, democratisation, neo-liberal free market policies, humanitarian

intervention, the promotion of human rights and institution building (Richmond & Franks, 2009; Richmond, 2011a). These components of the liberal peace stem from four concepts of peace within the liberal peace model:

The "victors' peace"
The "institutional peace"
The "constitutional peace"
The "civil peace"

} These three versions of peace dominate the liberal model, as it is easier to measure success for NGOs and INGOs and therefore easier to justify and win contracts.

The first three ideas of peace inbuilt into the liberal peace model focus on macro reform to re-establish legitimacy, the rule of law and control in the political and economic spheres of society, a high initial priority is also the strengthening of the security sector. The victors' peace consists of external military intervention to create a winner and a loser, and this action was spearheaded by the UN, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the British in 2000. These interventions would later lead to SSR in the shape of the International Military Assistance Training Team (IMATT) and its successor the International Security Advisory Team Sierra Leone (ISAT). The institutional peace and the constitutional peace therefore introduce the liberal agenda into peacebuilding. The institutional peace introduces external agencies such as the World Bank and the IMF who influence post-conflict states through conditions attached to the money they lend. The constitutional peace goes back to the Western belief system that

democracy and neoliberal economic reform will secure development. All three of these versions of the liberal peace are present in one another and seek to secure each other's position whilst legitimising their own. However, the close relationship between institutional peace (where norms are incentivised through economic policy) often contains conditions regarding the constitutional peace and the implementation of democratic norms.

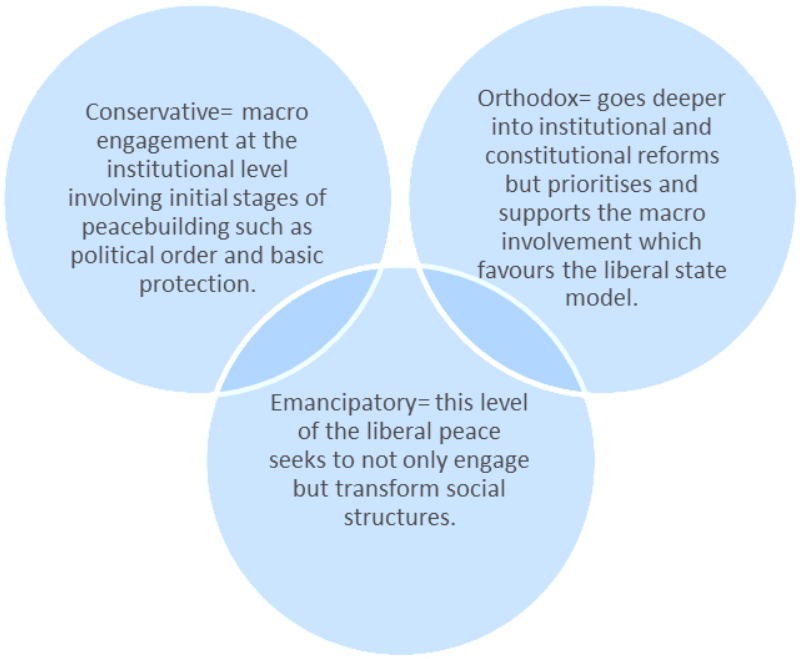
The "civil peace" is crucial to the liberal peace model as it is the foundation of its legitimacy through the support and participation of the local population. Otherwise it cannot be considered an emancipatory peace if its legitimacy does not come from the people. Instead it is a contractual prescribed form of peace (Richmond, 2011a).

The external Western organisations and institutions that have been involved in the process of peacebuilding in Sierra Leone are largely linked by their shared view of the liberal peace model as a framework through which to achieve peace (even though they all prioritise different sectors of society) and are part of the "peace industry".

The conservative and orthodox peace is characterised by the involvement of international actors over local initiatives and is linked to the victor's peace, institutional peace, and constitutional peace. These last two dimensions of

peace are considered prerequisites toward more local based approaches found in the emancipatory graduation.

Figure 2.1: Graduations of Peace



Source: [Original diagram Richmond 2011: 12]

All of these graduations of peace are part of the current knowledge base of peace that believes the liberal peace model is universally applicable and that its legitimacy relies on:

> …graduated approaches to consent and conditionality, but they all share an assumption of universality, which legitimates intervention, and of the superiority of the epistemic peacebuilding community over its recipients (Richmond, 2008a: 30).

So when we talk about peace in Iraq, Afghanistan or Sierra Leone we are not necessarily speaking about the same peace even though it is under the umbrella of the liberal peace model. Instead, we are talking about different graduations and therefore different approaches and end-goals to intervention, all within the same model (Ryan, 2013; Richmond, 2011a). The determining factor of whether the conservative peace could transform later into an emancipatory form is likely to be determined by how the population responds to international reforms and whether this transformative agenda is being pursued.

The conservative graduation is largely coercive and geared towards top-level reforms. The emancipatory graduation is a bottom-up approach with an emphasis on local ownership and not external intervention and eventual dependency (Richmond, 2011a). The priority of locally led social movements and reforms links closely with the idea of a civil peace, which is led by actors who are organised in trade unions or community based projects that strengthen the influence of civil society.

By contrast, the orthodox version has been used by international development organisations and elites in Sierra Leone and occupies the middle ground. It is state-centric in its approach but it engages with local needs. Although the orthodox version involves bottom up approaches it is largely dominated by top

down approaches. International organisations such as the UN have the resources and expertise in top-level reform to administer change which has developed from a specific knowledge base derived from the liberal peace ontology. This expertise is relied upon and as a result either intentionally or unintentionally marginalises other local initiatives.

The different graduations and versions within the liberal peace outlined above highlight different strategies of intervention. The conservative and orthodox approach along with the victors' constitutional and institutional version of peace are a negotiation of processes some of which immediately give the veneer of peace (Richmond, 2011a) and others which have the potential to impact society at a deeper level by transforming social structures.

As Richmond (2008) argues it is the liberal and idealist contributions to peace that have led to (i) the constitutional peace- democracy and free trade (ii) the civil peace- human rights and social movements and (iii) an institutional peace through legal international framework. It is these components that make up the dominant liberal peace used today.

Richmond (2011) identifies four generations of theory relating to peace:

1. **1st generation** theory reflects a realist view of peace. 1st generation approaches focus on conflict management. These approaches reflect a

state-centric perspective with mediation and negotiation centred on elites and high level diplomacy, and they prioritise a negative form of peace with no overt violence and a basic level of order.

2. **2nd generation** theory moves the focus from a state-centric perspective to include human needs and the removal of structural violence. This approach reflects a conflation of liberalism, idealism and structuralism and introduces a move away from conflict management to conflict resolution. This theory seeks a positive peace that addresses the root causes of conflict. By highlighting root causes it opens peacebuilding to include social, economic and political reform and bottom-up multi-track diplomacy and assumes that human needs are universal and that third party interveners in the form of donors or facilitators are neutral.
3. **3rd generation** theory reflects large-scale multidimensional approaches to peace that embody the activities of the liberal peace. It conflates conflict management, conflict resolution and peacebuilding behind the liberal peace project. Assumptions that are foundational to the liberal peace project are the belief in universal values and a version of peace that can be implemented and administered with scientific efficiency. There is a negotiation between the top down and bottom up vision but the framework is decided externally and the decisions of the elites still dominate.
4. **4th generation** theory relates to peace and involves various forms of peace that have emerged beyond the Westphalian forms of sovereignty

> (where each nation state has sovereignty over its territory and upholds the principle of non-interference from external powers). Ideas of various types of emancipatory peace have emerged from the critical literature including an everyday peace, a post-liberal peace, and a post-Westphalian peace. A local-liberal hybrid peace may develop from 4th generation theories of peace that aim to address the hegemonic nature of the liberal peace project.

These four generations of theory relating to peace suggest how the journey of thought and market practice have led to 3rd generation (the liberal peace project) theories dominating the peacebuilding agenda.

VII. From Liberal Ideology to Free Markets

Liberal democracy and free exchange have often been grouped together both ideologically and practically in terms of post-conflict reconstruction policies:

> …institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have tended to proceed on the assumption (central to the so-called "Washington consensus") that free markets facilitate not only growth, but also democracy and peace (Keen, 2005b: 73).

The idea of "free markets" as the panacea for post-conflict and developing countries has been the approach of IFIs in Sierra Leone from 1970s:

> The neo-liberal economic approach seeks to promote the development of a free-market economy by eliminating barriers to trade (within and between countries), stimulating the growth of private enterprise and reducing the states role in the economy (Paris 2004) (Ahearne, 2009: 16).

This vision of a free market included policies aimed at privatisation, cuts in public services and currency flotation (Keen, 2005b). These changes were adopted to improve the health of the economy but they did not calculate the impact on everyday life through cuts in public services. There is an issue here whether to weaken the control of the state (which would be the aim of implementing neo-liberal reforms) or strengthen the state but make it more accountable:

> Yet, IFIs have generally been predisposed to run down the state- both in the sense of denigrating it and in the sense of reducing its size and role. It should hardly be surprising that the problem of constructing a viable state is very difficult to solve with an ideology that pushes rigidly for a "free market" unencumbered by the state (Keen, 2005b: 75).

These economic principles are presumed to work on a typical Westphalian state, but when IMF programmes were being introduced into Sierra Leone it was a weakened, rent-seeking postcolonial country (Keen, 2005b). Poor governance and corruption ensured a decline in Sierra Leone's economy during the 1980s (IMF, 2005: 3), and subsequently conditions began to be imposed on loans, one condition being the implementation of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs):

> Throughout the 1970s Sierra Leone faced the problem of rapid economic growth combined with a declining economy. In the 1980s as expenditure continued to outstrip revenues the government turned to the IFIs for financial assistance and began to implement a series of structural adjustment programmes (Zack-Williams 1999:145). In the words of Zack-Williams (1999:145) the immediate effect of these programmes was to "worsen the economic and political situation, as devaluation and deregulation triggered off widespread inflation, unemployment and the pauperisation of the mass of Sierra Leonean people" (Ahearne, 2009:30).

The first IMF programme known as the Rights Accumulation Program was introduced in 1989 in order to reduce poverty, stabilise the economy and promote growth (IMF, 2005). When the civil war began in 1991 all progress

stalled and reversed (IMF, 2005). During the conflict the IMF introduced three successive programmes 1. The Structural Adjustment Facility (SAF), 2. The enhanced SAF and 3. Emergency Post-Conflict Assistance. From 2001-2005 the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) arrangement was established to replace the enhanced SAF and help economic development whilst reducing poverty (IMF, 2013). Unfortunately these programmes were more geared towards macroeconomic stability and their immediate social impact can be detrimental:

> In sum the immediate social effects of SAPs may be characterised as follows: sudden rises in unemployment, a deepening of poverty particularly impacting on the poor, a worsening of income inequality, and questionable longer term impact on poverty reduction (Ahearne, 2009: 20).

In order to attract funding leaders had to impose harsh measures, which potentially provided momentum for future problems (Kabia, 2013: 17). For example, by cutting public spending on health and education a new generation of dissatisfied youths grew up who could not contribute to future economic growth: “Ironically, the obligation of governments to service debt payments makes it impossible for structural adjustment policies to succeed” (Williams, 1994: 224). People who were victims of cuts in public spending would try to target the population, leading to resentment and emigration (Kabia, 2013). It is

argued that the logic of structural adjustment and the necessity for liberal democracy are not as compatible as they may first appear, with economic liberalisation not necessarily reinforcing political liberalisation in a weakened state with reconfigured political control (Hyden & Bratton, 1992):

> Any government seeking to implement structural adjustment is forced to maintain strict control of fiscal policy, and thus direction of the making and execution of public policy. It has to find ways of resisting demands to provide resources…These imperatives lead governments to adopt authoritarian measures and to limit the formation of social and political organisations autonomous of the state. Structural adjustment is therefore not easy to reconcile with the development of democratic politics (Williams, 1994: 224).

I will now explore how the liberal peace was implemented in Sierra Leone.

VIII. Peacebuilding as Security

Peacebuilding in Sierra Leone was framed as a security-first approach where the integrity of the state was prioritised above all else (UN, 2008; Paris & Sisk, 2009; Denney, 2011; Novelli, 2011). The problem with this approach in post-conflict states where civil war has occurred is that it often strengthens existing root causes of violence whilst neglecting the social side of

transformation including access to education, healthcare, employment and welfare (Pugh, 2000; Call, 2007; Rubin, 2008; Strand, 2008). This security-first approach comes from the belief that human security will organically grow out of a prosperous and functional state.

The Lomé Peace Accord was signed by President Kabbah and Foday Sankoh the head of the RUF on 7 July 1999. Although fighting continued with the war being declared officially over in 2002, the Lomé Peace Accord formed the basis from which peace would be formed. The agreement focused on power sharing, with the RUF being transformed into a political party, it also addressed the management of resources, DDR, SSR, and under Part 5 *humanitarian, human rights and socio-economic issues* concerns such as health and education were mentioned. The agreement gave the RUF blanket amnesty causing outrage amongst survivors. It was an agreement designed to stop the conflict and not to address the fundamental causes, and this outcome was exposed by the absence of promises for the youth in Sierra Leone, and the absence of equitable distribution of profit from natural resources and judicial reform (Gberie, 2005). Nevertheless Part 5 of the Lomé Peace Accord did set the foundations for addressing deeper socio-economic issues including child combatants, war victims, refugees, displaced persons and the establishment of the TRC.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report (TRC-R) is a comprehensive multi-volume report which comments on the causes, context, nature and actors involved in the conflict and draws conclusions in order to expose the fundamental weaknesses in Sierra Leonean society. The TRC-R made important recommendations to prevent another conflict from occurring in the future. Its objectives were to facilitate national reconciliation and restorative justice. As well as revealing underlying problems and human rights violations through a historical account of the conflict, the TRC also believes in the therapeutic power of "truth-telling". Through acquiring accounts of experiences throughout the war the TRC attempted to reconcile and heal the gap between victim and perpetrator and to build a more functional society in the future, "the Commission hopes the Report will serve as a roadmap towards the building of a new society in which all Sierra Leoneans can walk unafraid with pride and dignity" (TRC, 2004: Vol. 1: 2). The TRC-R found that the main causes of the conflict were "… endemic greed, corruption and nepotism that deprived the nation of its dignity and reduced most people to a state of poverty" (TRC, 2004: Vol. 2, C. 3: 121). The main recommendations from the TRC-R were as follows:

- Failure of leadership, corruption and nepotism were a central cause of the conflict
- Protection of human rights are necessary
- Suppression of political expression must cease

- The need for a new and equitable citizenship
- New constitution as the foundation for democracy
- Strengthen democracy and accountability
- A reformed security service
- The strengthening of local government and service delivery to all people
- The representation of marginalised groups are needed in decision-making

In conjunction with the TRC and the TRC-R, the Special Court of Sierra Leone was established by the government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) and the UN in January 2002 with substantially more funding and the power to prosecute those who were deemed to carry "the greatest responsibility for the commission of crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international humanitarian law as well as crimes committed under relevant Sierra Leonean law in the territory of Sierra Leone" (UN, 2000: 1). With a mandate that was supposed to cease after three years, the court officially closed in December 2013 at a cost of $300 million, this led to the indictment of 14 people and an attempt to restore the rule of law (Gberie, 2014). Although both the TRC and the Special Court focused on transitional justice there was tension between restorative and retributive justice with people worried that if they gave an account of the conflict at the TRC it could be used to prosecute under the Special Court (Berewa, 2011: 174). There was

also anger that Chief Hinga Norman, the Head of the CDF who had fought against the rebels to restore democracy, was indicted and arrested.

The National Recovery Strategy (NRS) created a short-term framework for recovery efforts broken down into four priority areas:

1. Restoration of State Authority
2. Rebuilding Communities
3. Peace Building and Human Rights
4. Restoration of the Economy

The NRS as a short-term assessment was an exercise in statebuilding. Statebuilding has narrower aims than peacebuilding as it focuses on capacity building, and the (re)building of institutions of governance linked to security, justice and the delivery of basic services with the hope of gaining legitimacy and securing a sustainable peace (Ramsbotham et al., 2011: 199). The NRS sought to extend the reach of the government by conducting needs assessment in every district and improving infrastructure, the rule of law, reforms within the mining sector and access to micro credit. The aim was to build national capacity district by district (NRS, 2002). An Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (IPRSP) was being prepared in 2001 even before peace was officially announced. The IPRSP along with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) grew out of the NRS, IPRSP focused on

restoring national security and good governance, restoring the economy and providing basic services. This was replaced by the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) which sought to take the gains made by the first and create more long term plans. The UNDAF aligned the goals of the NRS, PRSP with those of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), and its key difference from the NRS was its focus on macro-economic reform and the emphasis placed on the private sector for employment (Cubitt, 2010: 110).

The main actors involved with peacebuilding activities included DfID with the UK being the biggest bilateral donor, the World Bank, IMF, EU, USAID, UNDP, African Development Bank and a number of I/NGOs. DfID's country programme according to its evaluation report for the period 2002-2007 started with three pillars:

1. Consolidate peace and reform the security sector
2. Rebuild the state
3. Delivery of services to citizens

   (DfID, 2008).

The above list seems to be set out in an order of importance with the assumption that pillar 3 would to an extent be a by-product of the other two, "DFID held back from support to this latter role in the early years, arguing that other development partners would work in those areas; an assumption that did

not hold true" (DfID, 2008: x). A large amount of funds were allocated to SSR transforming the SLA into the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) creating an army capable of participating in peacekeeping missions in Somalia. However, this attention and funding was not equally distributed:

> There were several innovative features about the programme. Firstly, the commitment to consolidate peace led to substantial financial allocations to security sector reform…Secondly, efforts to rebuild the state concentrated on governance reforms and a bold political decision was taken to use budget support. A little over half of the total financial commitment was for good governance, peace and security. Budget support comprised 35%, with human development and pro-poor growth at much lower levels of 10% and 6% respectively… Much less attention in terms of funding and staff time was given to pro-poor sustainable growth and human development. Growth focused on supporting private sector development (DfID, 2008: x-xi).

The success of SSR is clear to see with RSLAF now involved in peacekeeping missions and through its positive public perception. The army reforms as part of the broader SSR had the resources, the political will, the human capacity and an end goal in sight. Security and statebuilding are important ingredients to creating an environment where development is favourable, but when funds

are disproportionately allocated and when success is measured through a narrow lens social reform and welfare tend to be marginalised:

> While this emphasis on security does not necessarily preclude a focus on redressing the huge geographical and social inequalities, poverty reduction and improving social services, it does, however, emphasize the chronological order of the importance of security versus social reforms: moving from conflict to security to development. Security, then, is perceived as the foundation upon which development can occur (Novelli, 2011: 23-24).

The immediate focus of donors was centred on an institutional approach to statebuilding and peacebuilding through programmes aimed at supporting good governance and transparency. This was achieved through Public Financial Management systems (PFM), civil service reform, the organisation of elections, the establishment of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the decentralisation of government through local councils (Tom, 2011: 188). Transparency and accountability is believed to come from state institutions such as the office of the Ombudsman, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and the National Electoral Commission. The security-first approach feeds into the liberal peace, where democracy and neo-liberal economic reforms are central components to security and stability that has the potential to then attract investment and economic growth. Non-violent elections

(representing democracy) and economic growth (representing prosperity) are easy to cite as indicators of success for the UN regardless of state legitimacy and the equitable nature of growth.

The macro-economic landscape was cultivated by the World Bank and the IMF through a comprehensive debt reduction strategy called Enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC). The completion point was met in 2006 under the following conditions:

> To reach the completion point, Sierra Leone met the following conditions: (i) preparation of a full PRSP and implementation for at least one year...(ii) maintenance of macroeconomic stability as evidenced by satisfactory implementation of the PRGF-supported program; (iii) completion of structural measures in the areas of governance and decentralization, private sector development, education and health; and (iv) an increase in spending on designated poverty reducing expenditure priorities that was proportionate to HIPC relief (IMF/IDA, 2006).

The completion of HIPC strategy required the utmost compliance from the GoSL to adhere to the recommendations set out by the World Bank and IMF (Keen, 2005a: 319). There were two triggers that had not been completed but given the overall success they were recommended to be waived:

> Two triggers related to the tracking of public expenditures and the number of teachers trained for secondary school were partially completed. Given the progress made to-date in the government's overall public expenditure management and in raising access to primary education, the staffs recommend that waivers be granted for non-observance of these two triggers (IMF, 2007).

Although progress had been made in public expenditure management the tracking of public expenditure was only partly implemented, and the number of trained teachers is still an issue today (Novelli, 2011: 51). The completion of HIPC demonstrated to the international community that Sierra Leone was on the right track by opening up the possibility of borrowing more money.

Although human security and social welfare may be included in the blueprint of peace, their prioritisation and the allocation of funds suggest that they are not necessarily seen as an essential precondition of peace and development (Milliken & Krause 2002; Plunkett, 2005; Francois & Sud, 2006; Cichon & Hagemejer, 2007; Call & Cousens, 2008: 9; Richmond & Franks, 2009: 214; Donais, 2012: 149).

IX. Conflicting Bodies of Knowledge

The existing body of knowledge on the liberal peace and its various manifestations on the ground such as statebuilding, peacekeeping and peacebuilding have arisen from observations that suggest it has fallen short of its self-referencing objectives in various contexts (most recently in Iraq), with mixed results (Paris, 2004; Jarstad & Sisk 2008; Doyle & Sambanis, 2006; Murthy, 2007: 47). Peacebuilding actors often fail to meet the requirements the liberal peace created as measures of success, such as a sustainable peace devoid of the structural violence, poverty and endemic corruption that led to the onset of conflict (Paris, 1997, 2009; Eriksen, 2009; Lewis 2010; Bishai, 2013; Twort, 2013). If this is the case, then what is missing? What is wrong with the core assumptions of building peace? Could it be that a myriad of factors outside of the narrow IR and policymaker lens exists that is not being utilised?

The liberal peace has its cheerleaders, its reformists and its critics within the academic community. The reformists and the critical scholars both see problems with the existing model of liberal peace but their response differs from alterations of the liberal peace model to overhauling the whole project. Reformists include Begby and Burgess (2009) and Paris (2010) who advocates institutionalisation before liberalisation (IBL). These scholars often adopt a problem-solving approach and generally believe in the liberal values and its

universal claims of legitimacy but by implication this view can be seen as perceiving the existing cultural context or organisational structure as a complication preventing the model's potential for success. There are those who acknowledge the improvements offered in terms of stability and an increased economic performance but highlight its failure to trickle down to the people who need it most (Salih, 2009; Castañeda, 2009). Other scholars such as Mansfield and Snyder (1995) see democratisation as a double-edged sword potentially bringing peace and potentially fragmenting society even further. On a more critical perspective scholars such as Roberts (2008), Escobar (1995), Duffield (2001) and Chandler (2006) see the liberal peace as a colonial or imperial project and reject its claims of legitimacy in the absence of local voices (Richmond & Franks 2009; Mac Ginty, 2011).

Broadly speaking there are two approaches to thinking about peacebuilding (Mac Ginty, 2013):

(1) The problem-solving camp (reminiscent of first generation theories of peace and the victors/conservative graduation).
(2) The paradigm (foundational) critique.

Scholars have noticed that certain camps are dominant in certain geographical areas, with broad exceptions; however it is interesting to see that the academic community in the United States has a strong tradition in the problem-solving

camp (Mac Ginty, 2013: 4). This literature tends not to question the location of power or challenge the existing norms and values (Pugh, 2013). The problem-solving camp is considered the dominant of the two, and this approach is favoured by policy makers and practitioners as it is concerned with making the current approach more effective and efficient:

> The problem-solving camp, generally, is not in the business of challenging accepted norms. The result, according to the critics, is 'epistemic closure' or like-minded academics and policy makers talking to each other and a continuation of policy regardless of whether it works or not (Mac Ginty, 2013: 3-4).

This "epistemic closure" means a continuing cycle of closed loop self-legitimation within the hegemonic discourse.

The two camps have fundamentally different foci. The foundational critique literature predominantly comes from Europe and the global south (see Richmond, 2005; Roberts, 2011; Chandler, 2010), with an emphasis on deconstructing the liberal peace:

> Foundational critique usually means questioning the assumptions that lie behind the practice of peacebuilding and the framework of ideas and implementations that make up the paradigm within which people think and

> act. In other words a foundational critique attempts to go beyond the limits of analysis established by hegemonic orthodoxies (Pugh, 2013: 11).

The foundational critique seems to provide a suitable framework that creates a space for a change that does not use the vision offered by the liberal peace as the only option and offers a framework for new understanding and a foundation in terms of theory and methodology (Millar, 2014). Within the foundational critique there are sub-groups that focus on different aspects of peace and peacebuilding, where the theoretical grounding alters the critique.

Critical literature goes beyond the existing framework and challenges the purpose and legitimacy of the liberal peace at its very foundation as well as considering the response of local actors to this particular type of peace such as Richmond's post-liberal peace and the concept of a hybrid peace that incorporates both bottom up and top down approaches. Tadjbakhsh (2011) describes this part of the debate "...as a clash between efficiency-based, problem-solving investigations and legitimacy-based critical approaches" (Tadjbakhsh, 2011: 2). However, the critical literature is by no means unitary in its approach or critique. Chandler (2010) helpfully categorises the critique of the liberal peace into two broad but often connected camps, the power-based and ideas-based critiques:

> The former approach tends to see the discourse of liberal peace as an ideological and instrumental one, arguing that the rhetoric of freedom, markets and democracy is merely a representation of Western self-interest, which has little genuine concern for the security and freedoms of those societies intervened in. The latter approach suggests that rather than the concepts being misused, in the discursive frameworks of the projection of Western power, the problem lies less with power relations than with the universal conceptualising of the liberal peace itself (Chandler, 2010: 3).

This research has more in common with the power-based approach although there are subcategories within this approach where the lines blur in relation to my research. The three categories within the power-based critique are largely but not exclusively:

1. The critical approach addresses neo-Marxist concerns over the structural constraints of neo-liberal market policies that create "hierarchies of power" with the potential to produce conditions for conflict.

2. Foucaultian structuralist approach considers the role of the liberal peace as a tool that perpetuates the liberal/neo-liberal interests of the capitalist West through dominance, discipline and bio-politics from within.

3. Critical theory and human security are concerned with liberal policies that are seen as political rather than neutral, and this approach focuses on Western knowledge and the marginalisation of local voices and experiences.

What these approaches have in common is their emphasis on the "local" as a marginalised element of the peacebuilding process, which is a consequence of the technocratic approach adopted by practitioners who design (within the framework of liberal values) their proposal for social transformation within another country. This focus on the "local" as an alternative discourse marginalised from meaningful collaboration becomes a key site for scholars to launch their critique on the perceived totality of the liberal peace (Mac Ginty, 2008; Richmond, 2011a; Tadjbakhsh, 2011: 3-4). This "local" turn came out of the work of scholars such as Lederach (1997) who sought to highlight the need for peace "from below" and the overlooked prospect of people being key drivers of positive change.

By pitching the local against the international we create unhelpful and simplified binaries that have the effect of re-enforcing the illusion of closure and totality around the liberal peace, therefore justifying its legitimacy. This "trap" also pushes scholars into a choice between two camps, the reformist (working within the hegemonic discourse) or the "hyper" critical scholar (who

sees no redeeming feature in the current model). How do I navigate away from these traps? Where will the literature let me fit in?

The liberal peace, like the "local" or the "international" is not a unitary entity. This trap of simplification for critique has led to some scholars romanticising the local and rejecting the fact that power is present in all forms at all levels (Richmond, 2008b: 113). The local like the liberal peace is a fluid concept, and there are various "locals" in different formats depending on the level and length of observation and engagement. Heathershaw and Lambach (2008) have emphasised the complexity in post-conflict environments and oppose the idea that a post-conflict country is a blank canvas waiting to be filled by external actors. Instead they see it as a complex web of varied and diverse agency where power circulates between the external and the internal.

"Local" perspectives of peace need to be more than rhetoric if they are to be seen as an integral part of the peacebuilding process as they have untapped potential for deep rooted change that harbours the possibility for sustaining peace at the local level. By marginalising people within post-conflict or fragile states from the peacebuilding process we reduce the possibilities of change and the creative ways to create and build peace. Therefore it is necessary to change the point of observation to witness what is occurring on the ground in everyday activities that work outside the liberal peace gaze. These activities could suggest new ways of seeing peace, the location of recovery and the

potential for positive change that is already present within the context. The issue here is one of restricted possibilities and the limitation of local people's agency. This alternative space introduces lived experience as a tool to measure and analyse peacebuilding on a local level and explore the network of relations that shape everyday interactions. These alternative discourses challenge the notion of peace, recovery and the framework of peacebuilding as a pre-determined process, and instead we have more than one definition competing in shaping the peace. By ignoring the dynamics on the local level we ignore opportunities to engage in a more sustainable way that interacts with international efforts in a complimentary way:

> In effect, liberal peacebuilding has been turned into a system of governance rather than a process of reconciliation. What this indicates, as has been explored by Pouligny to great effect, is a failure to come to terms with the lived experiences of individuals and their needs in everyday life, or vis-à-vis their welfare, culture, or traditions. There has emerged a monumental gap between the expectations of peacebuilding and what it has actually delivered so far in practice, particularly from the perspective of local communities (Richmond, 2010: 25).

X. Summary

In this chapter I have explored the evolution of our understanding of peace in theory and practice (Kaldor 1998; Richmond & Franks, 2009; Richmond, 2011; Paffenholz, 2013; Ryan, 2013; Hunt, 2014). This evolution has been influenced by the historical, political and economic context from which it was born which also affects the lens with which scholars and practitioners make sense of the world (Philpott & Powers, 2010; Zanotti, 2011; Haastrup, 2013; Sabiote, 2013; Peou, 2014). The historical and political origins of the liberal peace project reveal a model that is by no means stable, unitary or neutral in its assumptions and activities. The liberal peace contains its own internal contradictions and graduations of peace that means its "universal" values are not universally accepted. These mixed results challenge the traditional approach of the academy and policymakers by suggesting that something fundamental is missing in the process of building peace. There is a tension at the heart of peacebuilding under the universal aims of the liberal peace with the plurality and complexity of people's lives. This tension extends to the study of peace and the approaches adopted by scholars between the problem-solving camp and the foundational critique. I have located my own position within this debate under the foundational critique.

The political nature of the liberal peace is intrinsic to its inception, institutionalisation and implementation and is exposed in its measures of

success which act as its main legitimising tool. I also explored the roadmap to peace set forward by the international community and the government of Sierra Leone that favoured a security-first approach (UN, 2008; Paris & Sisk, 2009; Denney, 2011; Novelli, 2011). I have suggested that this is a partial narrative of the story of peace, development and recovery by exploring the reforms, their prioritisation and their justification which puts social reform and human development towards the bottom of the list.

The monologism of the liberal peace means that traditional IR approaches do not contain the tools to recognise let alone engage with a hegemonic discourse. I have identified a clash between the dominant discourse and the complexity involved in understanding peace as a subjective and experiential journey to recovery. In order to get beyond the dominant discourses around peace I have sought a critical theory that allowed me to escape the hegemonic power of meaning construction present within the liberal peace, and to define and access the "local". This approach allowed for the flexibility to engage and adapt with the complexity of cultural pluralism inherent in constructing meaning around peace and how this can best serve the local people.

Having set up the dominant story of peace thus far, in the next chapter I will explore the mechanisms of power that work to marginalise alternative stories of peace and recovery. I use a poststructural lens to open up the traditional space of peacebuilding and the meaning attached to the notion of "success".

Part I

Chapter Three: A Critical Re-evaluation: From Peacebuilding to Peace-shaping

***Dramatis Personae*: By Order of Appearance**

Francis *A male student in his mid-twenties with mixed tribal lineage.*

Banja *A middle-aged Mende man who is locally respected and holds a position of authority within the community.*

Norman *A Mende man in his late twenties who is active within the community and uses his voice to express what he believes is right and wrong in his country.*

I. Introduction

My view of the current approach to peacebuilding in the previous chapter as a political and partial project means that a critical re-examination of the liberal peace is required to explore the mechanisms and underlying power structures that allow this particular model to dominate the way we think and enact peace. The process of opening up the liberal peace to critique as one of many interpretations of peace

enables a first step in developing alternative perspectives of peacebuilding that allows activities outside the gaze of the liberal peace to be identified. Bottom up power and the "local turn" in peacebuilding relocates our understanding of agency and power away from an externally imposed macro view of authority and legitimacy towards a view of power as a tool of resistance and critique. The problem is how to practically administer a "bottom-up" approach. This chapter will outline the ambiguity of the liberal peace and the difficulty faced by critical scholars in attempting to investigate the limitations of this dominant view of peacebuilding. By exploring the theme of power, knowledge, agency and hegemony I am able to see Sierra Leoneans as decentred subjects not defined purely by their relationship to the liberal peace.

I will explore how the narrative has developed of Sierra Leone as a "success" story of peacebuilding. *The Narrative and Discourse of Success in Sierra Leone* examines the framing of Sierra Leone as a success story from the perspective of the international community. It problematises the label success in terms of the legitimacy of these institutions to bestow it and it asks how success is measured when endemic poverty remains in the country. *A Critical Re-evaluation* begins the process of changing the point of observation to broaden the discussion on peacebuilding away from an international focus towards a more local perspective. I mark my position within the liberal peace debate in *Liberal Peace and Quantum Mechanics* by not identifying with a particular camp but rather with a particular method of critique. In *A*

Poststructural Lens this method of critique is grounded in the work of Saussure's signifier and signified and the importance of language. This leads into a discussion on poststructuralism which sees the construction of meaning in a constant state of negotiation. Peacebuilding seen through this lens does not define itself within the liberal peace or its opposite camp. Instead, it recognises its importance but suggests a new entry point.

Now that I have the entry point, I require theorists and ideas to structure my engagement. In *Discourses, Myths and Imaginary* I use some of the main themes within poststructuralism, notably Foucault's exploration of the relationship between power, knowledge and truth to look at the construction of peacebuilding and the way we can explore alternatives through a multifaceted understanding of power. This allows me to start theorising peacebuilding anew with knowledge of the dominant approach but not the constraints of its approach.

The next section then explores the string that ties all my building blocks together, the narratives that add meaning to our experiences. This section dissects the mechanisms of power that suggest how: (i) a narrative comes to dominate, and (ii) the liberal peace contains no innate reality only a system of meanings and is therefore a partial narrative. *Empty Signifiers, Logics, Articulation and Rhetoric* explores the way stories are created and how they impact the "subject". Laclau and Mouffe then introduce to my work the

primacy of politics and offer an explanation of why one discourse has the ability to dominate others and by implication how new ones can arise. After the building blocks are established and there is a string that ties them together I am then able to explore the concept of hegemony and the role it plays in securing this position of power in *Ideology and Hegemony in Peacebuilding*.

In the section *Managerialism: Legitimacy through Performability* I explore the influence of managerialism on how peace and development are "managed". I draw on DfID as a case study to show how the framework in which they operate has immense power over how programmes are conceptualised, measured and legitimised. *Whose Success?* Provides room for alternative voices of success and asks what is allowed to occur and not occur and still retain the label "success". The section entitled *Ebola as a Social Critique* uses the example of the Ebola epidemic in West Africa to demonstrate how the narrative of Ebola has been used to see the epidemic as an outside enemy challenging the progress of peacebuilding when the extent of the devastation can actually be traced to the prioritisation of reforms and the exclusion of other versions of recovery during the peacebuilding process. This again pulls into question the label "success" and the limitations of the narrow focus of peacebuilding.

These themes, taken together, suggest a change in observation from a traditionally detached, "expert" view to an engagement with local experiences

and stories of peacebuilding. This alteration in perspective reveals the constitutive parts of the liberal peace as versions of peace-shaping as opposed to the unchallenged, closed, stable, or unitary signifier known as peacebuilding.

II. The Narrative and Discourse of Success in Sierra Leone

> "Sierra Leone represents one of the world's most successful cases of post-conflict recovery, peacekeeping and peacebuilding," the Secretary-General further added during his second official visit to Sierra Leone, pointing out that other countries now torn by war can draw hope from this example. He stated that efforts must continue to build upon the peace gained today (UNDP, 2014a).

This announcement was made in Freetown on March 5th 2014 at a press conference marking the completion of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL). The UN has now transferred its responsibility from a political mission to a more development focused UN country team (UNIPSIL, 2014). This press conference also served to further solidify Sierra Leone's transformation from a "fragile state" to the more progressive "low-income state" classification (Awoko, 2012). A few days after this announcement I was due to fly out to Freetown, but the one functioning fire

engine at Lungi airport was no longer working and all flights were cancelled. A few days later I managed to get a flight.

Sierra Leone became the "storehouse of lessons" (UN, 2014a), the proof that multilateralism can yield positive results (UN, 2014b: 11). In 2012 it was named one of the world's top reformers in the World Bank's Doing Business index. Improvements within Sierra Leone are often demonstrated by growth figures and percentage rises that offer a quantifiable narrative of success. The Agenda for Prosperity launched in 2013 by the government of Sierra Leone forecast a vision for the country for the next 50 years; one key aspiration was that by 2035 Sierra Leone will be an inclusive, green, middle-income country with over 80% of the population over the poverty line.

There is no doubt that visible, notable improvements have been made. For example, there have been three Presidential elections since the end of the conflict, and there have been reforms in the security sector and moves to improve human rights, economic growth and attempts to curb corruption. However, if we look below the surface we can see flaws in this story even when using the measures favoured by development organisations. As Sierra Leone is still heavily reliant on aid it is argued that international organisations such as the UN now have more legitimacy than the government. There is high youth unemployment (70%), corruption is rife, there is poor infrastructure, and it is unlikely to achieve any of its Millennium Development Goals before 2015

(DfID, 2012; Twort, 2013). Sierra Leone is still one of the poorest nations in the world, ranking extremely low on human development with 60% of the population living below the national poverty line (UNDP, 2012b).

So what warrants this label of "success"? Does this reveal something fundamental about what peace and recovery does not represent in this context? The feeling that the "job is done" was so prevalent during the early stages of my research that I felt actively discouraged. When emailing international NGOs to start networking on the ground and tapping into the existing knowledge base, an international NGO based in Freetown told me people were tired of talking about the conflict and that the "job had been done". For a few days this made me think twice about my plans regardless of the fact that my work was not aimed at the conflict itself, but rather what is happening now. I worried that I would receive the same hostility from Sierra Leoneans that I had received from my contact in the NGO in Freetown. However this individual was British and was based in the capital and her attitude to "peace" in Sierra Leone was exactly the reason why I needed to go. The belief that the job had been done in this instance referred to the end of the conflict and the drawing down of this individual's programme in Freetown; and any concern outside of this was beyond this individual's perception.

III. A Critical Re-evaluation

> One must lie low, no matter how much it went against the grain, and try to understand that this great organization remained, so to speak, in a state of delicate balance, and that if someone took it upon himself to alter the dispositions of things around him, he ran the risk of losing his footing and falling to destruction, while the organization would simply right itself by some compensating reaction in another part of its machinery – since everything interlocked – and remain unchanged, unless, indeed, which was very probable, it became still more rigid, more vigilant, severer, and more ruthless (Kafka, 1925).

When talking about an organisation in his great work *The Trial* Franz Kafka (1925) inadvertently sums up the resilience of the liberal peace to critique rather well. The complexity and graduations within the model along with the various actors it encapsulates make it malleable to change at different levels, while still retaining its original legitimacy and explanatory power.

The dominance of the liberal peace in shaping what a functional society should look like becomes a challenge for critical scholars who wish to explore and challenge popular assumptions on the nature of peacebuilding that has allowed for a universal model to be envisioned and largely unchallenged (Tadjbakhsh, 2011). Attempts at getting beyond the liberal peace have

included the post-liberal peace, the everyday peace, the virtual peace, the hybrid peace, and the indigenous peace (Richmond, 2005, 2008a, 2008b; Mac Ginty, 2008; Heathershaw, 2013):

> …the body of critical literature in this field promotes the assertion that the current asymmetry of peacebuilding power needs rebalancing towards a local approach. When peacebuilding does not achieve its objectives or substantiate its claims, what tends to happen is resistance, adaptation, or distortion- described elsewhere as 'liberal-local', 'post-liberal', or 'hybrid' forms of peace (Cubitt, 2013: 3).

In order to legitimise its claims of universal applicability, that is to say, to instil normative universal norms and values, the liberal peace model and the organisations that embody its doctrine have taken on too much responsibility and therefore the expectations placed on it are beyond its reach (Bishai, 2013: 58). This means (i) if it succeeds it legitimises itself, even though an array of transformative events are occurring outside of its gaze, and (ii) if it fails, then it is the country and perhaps the culture that is at fault. The model therefore creates a counter-productive narrative that has the potential to fail operationally but never ideologically. The immediate reaction to this narrative is to establish a critique that seeks to rebalance the perspective, but this often goes too far the other way (Richmond, 2011b; Nadarajah & Rampton, 2015). The critique in essence believes the bluff, namely, that the liberal peace is a

closed system. It falls into this trap by not recognising the complexity and positive influences of the liberal peace that allow its dominance to endure (Foucault 1980a; Gramsci, 1999; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). This critical rebalancing suffers the same ills as the dominant model. It too whitewashes any cracks in its singular narrative unable to accept any redeeming quality in top-down approaches with the result of romanticising the local and ignoring the benefits or nature of the current international system.

To rebalance the narrative of peacebuilding it is not necessary to find an opposite to the current model, and a critique should not have at its focus an opposition to something but a means of investigating a particular phenomenon. Whilst understanding the liberal peace is imperative, my research project wishes to start afresh and look at something in a fundamentally different way. Researchers may find more help in changing the point of observation by looking at the multifaceted and amorphous nature of power. Coercion and externally imposed reform is one form of power, but submission, indifference, cooperation, resistance and dependence represent power in a different guise exercised by a variety of actors including "locals". In fact it may be the case that real decisions are made in the everyday setting of restaurants, parks, churches or within communities. The "reality" is that actors involved in the peace epistemic community have a contract that will expire. Here it is the people who live in the post-conflict environment that are truly thinking for the long term.

This failure to see the complexity of the liberal peace and the different faces of power means scholars who attempt to engage with the liberal peace feel trapped and confined into camps (Lukes, 2005; Chandler, 2010; Tadjbakhsh, 2011). They are accused of not being critical enough within the domain of critical scholars or are accused of perpetuating a hegemonic order in the case of problem-solving approaches (Pugh, 2013). This narrative seems to have become counter-productive. Power circulates and the distinction between the international and the local is blurred. It is not simply that the external or international is oppressing the local. There are power dynamics within marginalised groups that can be equally oppressive. My critique of peacebuilding is in the dominance of a single story over other possibilities. The dominance of a set of beliefs and the way they are enacted in society is crucial in understanding how power is operating in a particular context. Indeed, this relationship between individuals and ideology was explored by Gramsci through what he termed "common sense", "…the uncritical and largely unconscious way in which a person perceives the world, often confused and contradictory, and compounded of folklore, myths, and popular experience" (Simon, 1982: 25). These contradictions and the uncritical acceptance of ideology is how a set of beliefs can become unitary. It is also the point at which we can begin to see gaps in this hegemonic discourse and critically explore our own assumptions and understandings:

> Common sense is the site on which the dominant ideology is constructed, but it is also the site of resistance and challenge to this ideology. Gramsci stresses that the consent which is secured by the hegemony of the bourgeoisie is an *active* consent, not a passive submission. It is not imposed; rather, it is 'negotiated' by unequal forces in a complex process through which the subordination and the resistance of the workers are created and recreated (Simon, 1982: 64).

Active consent comes from Gramsci's concept of inclusive hegemony that incorporates varied actors across classes into one system. The construction of a complex negotiation of power and resistance allows the researcher to guard against simplified binaries of external/internal and international/local. Paffenholz (2013) highlights the fact that critical scholars are aware of these contradictions and the need to change the point of observation, and yet many fall short of actually engaging with these alternative voices:

> However, even though the main focus of this discourse is on the local civil society and ordinary people, most authors do not actually analyse these alternative voices. This stands in direct contradiction to the very alternative discourse for which these authors advocate. Instead, the main focus of these studies is the liberal peace and actors of the international community therein, such as the Western governments and NGOs or the UN (Paffenholz, 2013: 350-351).

My ontology and epistemological position recognise the temporary but necessary existence of the liberal peace, its need for totality, legitimisation and closure. My critique of this system will come through the personalisation of peacebuilding and through the stories of recovery from the supposed beneficiaries of its practice (Duffield, 2007; Pugh et al., 2008; Brown, 2013; Millar; 2014).

IV. Liberal Peace and Quantum Mechanics

By using power as a way to understand the construction of knowledge and truth to guide my critique I am allowing contradictory narratives to coexist. In this way we escape binaries of local versus universal, and instead I depend on the experiences I have and the people I meet which overlap and gain new significance. It is useful to think of it in terms of quantum mechanics and the wave-particle duality where elementary particles exhibit properties of both particle and waves, depending on the experiment and when the observation is made (Van Rosenthal, 2011). It is the same for understanding peace, development and recovery, as the methodology and approach to building peace will determine how it is seen.

The task of placing the self within a camp is useful for a researcher who then uses this perspective to understand and interpret their findings. However,

distance is also important in order to let the stories speak for themselves, rather than making them say what you want them to. In this situation the power relationship between researcher and participant has the potential to become almost vampire-like where local legitimacy is being used to prop up personal views rather than equalising the dysfunctional representation of the general population within a post-conflict country.

The shift of thinking within peacebuilding coincides with the research paradigm of poststructuralism. I am referring to the move away from conceptualising power within the liberal peace as one dimensional, and from the idea that the West imposes itself upon a country that passively accepts this help. In this scenario power is both linear and reductionist. Yet, there are many levels and facets of power as contradictory, illusive and not always observable (Lukes, 2005). This has opened up a new space where power may be explored at the micro and macro level in its constructive and destructive form. Poststructuralism and critical theory have helped in the evolution of this type of thinking where progress is fluid and uncertain but through a bottom up approach a type of emancipatory peace can be envisioned.

Suggesting that bottom up approaches could be as important as top down is a statement that questions the current dominant version of the liberal peace model. This is where poststructural and post-Marxist arguments regarding

hegemony, discourse, subject position and power can be used to reveal why traditional IR explanations of the world are both limiting and dominating.

I seek to expose partial narratives of the every-day symbolic power that govern social relations and social order that are often ignored or underestimated by liberal peace practitioners. This move away from seeing the population as passive recipients of help to a more de-centred understanding of both subject and agency is one of the key roles of critical scholars (Siegel & Fernandez, 2002: 71). The aim of this research is not to offer a panacea to the problems faced by peacebuilding practitioners at different levels, but merely to open up the confined space of the "expert" to reveal the "excluded". Here lies my next challenge: how does a researcher achieve this?

V. A Poststructural Lens

In order to critique the liberal peace outside of its own framework I needed an approach that did not seek to alter the existing model or suggest an agent of change. Instead, I needed something that was anti-essentialist, non-reductionist, something that rejects teleology and embraces fragmentation and diverse voices. I needed these components to critique hegemonic practices in order to demonstrate the complexity involved in building a society post-conflict and the impact of relying on a model whose assumptions are rarely

questioned (Foucault, 1980b; Gramsci 1999). This is why I chose poststructuralism as my theoretical guide:

> …a poststructuralist approach is aimed at undermining, or at least making problematic, the claims to legitimacy and 'normality' of dominant political and social institutions, discourses and practices- those which we commonly regard as normal, legitimate and indeed, 'natural'. It does this by exposing or unmasking the violence, coercion and domination behind these institutions, showing how their consistency is maintained through the more or less arbitrary exclusion of other possibilities (Newman, 2005: 1).

Poststructuralism was influenced by the concepts and logics of Saussure's structuralism that mapped the relationship between language and society from a non-essentialist perspective (Choat, 2010: 12). This was explored through the separation of the signifier (the word) and the signified (the object the word is referring to) where meaning was established among the differences between signs. This approach suggests that the signifier had no inherent objectivity that meant sound images reflected reality, but instead that they created reality (Edwards et al., 2002: 20). Saussure saw this system of signs as closed and stable enough to form a generalisable framework of use and association involving the construction of general laws: "In Saussure's general linguistics spoken language is a closed system, the "center" of which is discoverable as a

set of structural codes relating to signs (i.e., words) to one another" (Dotter, 2004: 172).

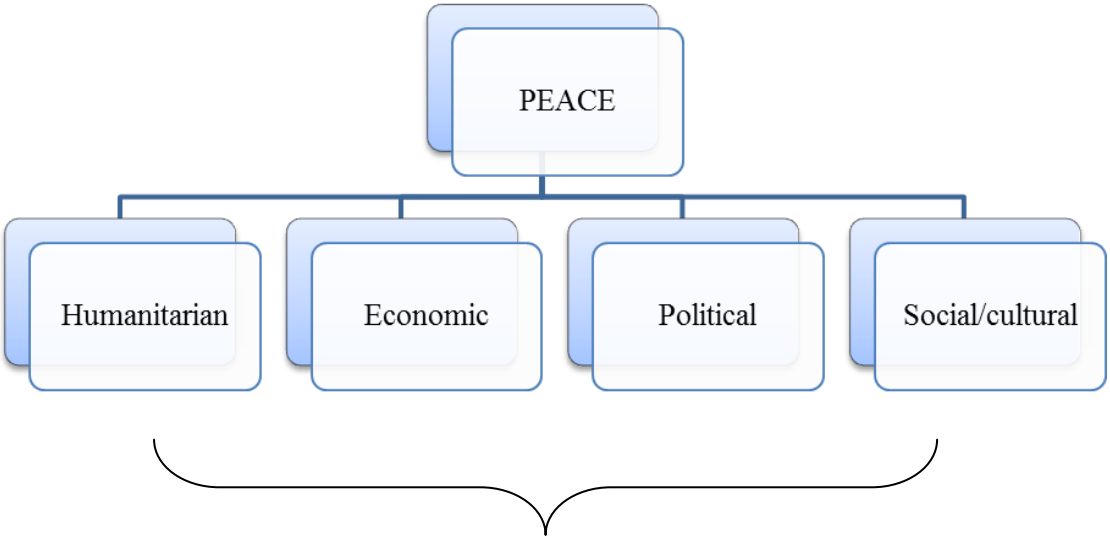
Saussure's structuralism provides the basis for examining the relationship between the signifier and the signified. Poststructuralists reject this idea of a meta-language, of somehow being able to stand outside of language (Žižek, 1989: 155). Saussure, on the other hand, sees the language structure as closed and therefore represents signs as end products rather than a continual process. Poststructuralists believe we are all constructs of the linguistic system and cannot stand outside of it. This point highlights the importance of language in meaning creation and the use of discourses to act as powerful tools in the formation of knowledge, truth and power: "'Truth' is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it. [leading to]…a regime of truth" (Foucault, 1980b: 133).

Poststructuralists see the relationship between the signifier and the signified as fluid with meaning in a constant state of negotiation, and this can be seen in empty signifiers such as progress and development as they all conjure different interpretations depending on culture, generation and personal experience (Spivak, 1992; Derrida, 1998; Murdoch, 2006: 8). Laclau uses empty signifiers and universality as theoretical tools but neither can really exist as development and progress are now intrinsically linked to liberal values

promoted by advanced capitalist countries. Likewise universality can never exist as a totalising concept since it can never encapsulate all particulars, and this is what causes antagonism and conflict.

The label of peacebuilding is used to pull all the particulars together under the category of peace as demonstrated in figure 3.1. These signifiers are no longer empty, for example peace becomes synonymous with the liberal peace as does politics. Economics under the dominant liberal peace is immediately recognised as a neo-liberal economic order. All these individual elements no longer exist independently of the liberal peace as these signifiers now contain values and meanings tied to the dominant discourse. Peacebuilding comes with an agenda associated with liberal values, varying agendas within different particulars i.e. the ethics in humanitarian intervention and some international non-governmental organisations (INGOs). The particulars are metaphors of peace that attempt to physically articulate their version of peace through their own normative and ethical agendas. This means that articulations of "peace" will be political and contingent with a number of ontic positions being adopted at any one time. The military intervention and subsequent peace agreements created a new environment of complexity which should form a platform for a conversation on peace.

Figure 3.1: The Construction of Peace



Source: [Author]

The Saussurian logic of a stable but arbitrary sign is characteristic of what the liberal peace project aims to do as it aims to create a closure around itself by appearing stable, unified and universal (Eagleton, 2008: 110). However, it can never be a closed system, it is by nature fragmented and it is this fragmentation which limits its reach, effectiveness, and applicability. This presumed totality is the illusion that policymakers, decision makers, international organisations and political parties seek to convey in order to

legitimise their actions whilst dominating the epistemic base of the peacebuilding community that disguises its ethnocentrism:

> Crucially, the liberal peace depends on external interventions, elevating external actors to an omnipresent (if not omnipotent) position. Indeed, importantly, the variants of the liberal peace are discourses that often silence discussion of other alternatives and place the options elevated by the capitalist core at the heart of discussion. In Africa this has meant that African input into the construction of peace has often been subsumed or ignored with the imposition of Western notions of what constitutes "real" peace- the liberal peace in other words (Taylor, 2013: 66).

So poststructuralists aim to take the focus Saussure gave to language over the Cartesian man and apply it to the wider social and political context.

VI. Discourses, Myths and Imaginary

As the concept of discourse has multiple meanings across disciplines I will explain the interpretation I have chosen and the implications for my theory and methodology. Discourse and discourse analysis have grown in popularity within the social sciences amidst the "linguistic turn" and dissatisfaction with positivist approaches (Neumann, 2009:82). For some discourse analysis can

mean the analysis of a text or conversation, but for this research I consider the scope of discourse analysis to penetrate the entire social system of interaction, meaning construction, and political functioning.

Foucault introduces power, knowledge and truth into the discussion of discourse. He also explores a two-way relationship between the creation of a dominant discourse and the construction of the individual's identity, with one affecting the other. In his early work Foucault investigates claims to truth that have become normalised in society through discursive practices and the effect this has on the subject. This is very important in my research where the liberal peace is seen as the dominant version of peace, but it is not simply imposed from external agents as its values are negotiated at the top level of society with certain features being watered down. The negotiation process can happen at all levels within Sierra Leone where these new peace actors influence the changing dynamics of the country. However when it comes to understanding the conflict and measuring success this is seen and reported through a liberal perspective including measures of human rights, gender equality and democracy.

The understanding of discourse that I have adopted is that of Laclau and Mouffe who accept Foucault's fusion of power and discourse but diverge from Foucault by rejecting the distinction between the discursive and non-discursive field (Torfing, 2005:159):

> Discourse is effectively equivalent to 'the social', the whole set of social regimes and practices; they reject any distinction between discursive and non-discursive practices. All objects are constituted as objects of discourse because their identity and meaning cannot be taken as given or arising from outside a discursive system (Barnard-Willis, 2012: 66).

The liberal peace is constructed from discursive practices. Its hegemonic status on the international level has come from its ability to merge different discourses such as democracy, good governance, security, development and peace. These discourses along with their binary opposites help to construct a version of knowledge and truth that appears fixed. This perspective is fixed through a practice of creating relationships which creates relations between elements that modifies their identity:

> Certainly, current peacebuilding efforts are grounded in the advancement of this liberal peace, reflecting the hegemony of liberal values that reigns in global politics. All inter-governmental organisations, as well as OECD states and other donor agencies, more or less accept as common sense the self-evident virtuosity and truth of the liberal peace project. This hegemony is reinforced and amplified by the fact that the liberal peace is the foundation upon which IFIs

> operate. This normative agenda is equally dominant within the UN system… (Taylor, 2013: 66).

Discourse is the structured totality of these elements as they contain a temporarily fixed meaning produced through the articulatory practice (Howson, 2006: 147). The process of fixing meanings within a discourse even if it is temporary results in other elements being dismissed. For example power used to be seen as intrinsically related to territorial acquisition, now power is seen in terms of "soft" power where coercion has been replaced with influence to serve a state, organisations or individuals' interests (Pahlavi, 2011: 141). The elements that are dismissed from the liberal peace such as "illiberal" regimes suggest vulnerability, and this is because liberal regimes can only be understood in relation to the "other". Illiberal becomes part of the "surplus of meaning" and demonstrates the partiality and contingent nature of social relations (Fields, 2000: 65). What does this tell us about the liberal peace project and its influence on peacebuilding?

This approach tells us that however much the liberal peace would like to consider itself a closed system with a proven understanding of what a "functional" society should look like it cannot because it is partial. It is partial in that its articulation through language and meaning is never closed because it cannot include every element into the discourse. This act of exclusion leaves some voices excluded and dominated, and the exclusion creates antagonism

and makes it vulnerable to opposing discourses. This is of course the same for any peacebuilding project which claims to have the "answer", and the purpose of this thesis is to suggest how the "liberal peace" may reflect on its limitations and to pave the way for other voices to be heard.

The primacy of politics is important in the work of Laclau and Mouffe in understanding why certain meanings become dominant:

> Reproduction and change of meaning ascriptions are, in general terms, political acts. *Politics* in discourse theory is not to be understood narrowly as, for example, party politics; on the contrary, it is a broad concept that refers to the manner in which we constantly constitute the social in ways that exclude other ways…Politics, then, is not just a surface that reflects a deeper social reality; rather, it is the social organisation that is the outcome of continuous political processes (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002: 36).

Laclau and Mouffe reject the idea that objects cannot exist outside of language but they do believe that their meaning is constructed through language. This suggests that there is no intrinsic meaning to objects, and that there is only the meaning that individuals attach to specific objects. Social relations gain meaning through political articulations where power is an essential ingredient. This approach rejects the Cartesian subject as a stable and complete entity,

resulting in the creation of a decentred understanding of the subject. This approach provides a rejection of Marxist thought where a subject must be fixed in order for there to be a true and false consciousness. If meaning is subject to interpretation then meaning is always political, and the act of exclusion creates the antagonism and the relation between knowledge and power. I sought to expose the antagonisms or "limit of all objectivity" (Laclau, & Mouffe, 1985: 122) in the current approach to peacebuilding.

How does antagonism threaten the dominant discourse? Laclau and Mouffe are considered post-Marxists whose discourse theory links closely to poststructuralism. They are post-Marxists because they reject the economic determinism that underpins Marxist thought:

> Once it is realised that the structure of society is the product of the political interaction of competing forces- the struggle for hegemony- rather than an expression of underlying economic laws, the deterministic verities of classical Marxism (the base/superstructure metaphor, the 'false consciousness' model of ideology, the notion of the inevitable and implacable progressive development of the productive forces, class essentialism) become untenable (Gilbert, 2001: 192).

With the primacy of politics comes a different type of antagonism in social relations: instead of a clash between a fully constituted working class and a

fully constituted bourgeoisie who own the means of production the clash is between subjects who are constituted through their "lack", namely, those subjects who are excluded and are vulnerable to the imaginary totality:

> Laclau and Mouffe conceive antagonism as both the condition and limit of political identities and structures. In their conception, antagonism does not designate a clash between two social groups with already fully constituted identities and interests, but rather defines a relation whereby the other's presence is experienced as preventing me from attaining a full identity. That experience is shared both by the antagonist and the object of the antagonism (Inston, 2010: 61).

In any act of hegemony there will be elements within the discursive field that are rejected in order to create what appears to be a totality or closure since no discourse can contain all elements (Boucher, 2008:102). This surplus will always exist since every element needs an "opposite" in order to be defined, for example liberal/illiberal, war/peace, functional/failed state. The surplus makes the hegemony vulnerable and social antagonism is born from this exclusion. Antagonism is the only way hegemony can be created by excluding alternative meanings but it is also the way it can be destroyed, by being vulnerable to these exclusions. This is the process of discursive construction and the limit of discursive objectivity: "The initial formulation of antagonism in Hegemony and Socialist Strategy is marked by a fundamental ambiguity: on

the one hand, it refers to a discursive construction; on the other hand, it refers to the limit of discursive objectivity" (Thomassen, 2005: 107).

One way to cover over a dislocated discourse (in other words, the crack in its perceived totality through internal contradictions or the presence of the surplus) is the use of myth and social imaginaries, and these tools also explain why some discourses attain the level of hegemony whilst others do not:

> Myths are new 'spaces of representation', which are designed to make sense of and suture dislocations. If they successfully conceal social dislocations by inscribing a wider range of social demands, they are transformed into imaginaries (Howarth, 2006: 261).

After a myth takes root and begins to define the "true" representation of events it turns into a social imaginary:

> A collective social imaginary is thus defined by Laclau as 'a horizon' or 'absolute limit which structures a field of intelligibility', and he gives examples such as the Christian Millennium, the Enlightenment, Marxism, and positivism's conception of progress… (Howarth, 2006: 261).

The most successful myth in our history is money. It transcends nations, cultures, gender, religion, race and sexuality, and the myth of money is based on a collective trust in its relevance and value.

> …money isn't a material reality- it is a psychological construct. It works by converting matter into mind…people are willing to do such things when they trust the figments of their collective imagination…Money is accordingly a system of mutual trust: *money is the most universal and most efficient system of mutual trust ever devised* (Harari, 2014: 201).

There is a prevailing and persistent myth that economic growth under the guise of capitalism is an indicator of "progress", and the road to a better future. This myth pervades measures of success in post-conflict peacebuilding and development:

> Its [capitalisms] principle tenet is that economic growth is the supreme good, or at least a proxy for the supreme good, because justice, freedom and even happiness all depend on economic growth (Harari, 2014: 351).

VII. Empty Signifiers, Logics, Articulation and Rhetoric

Understanding this process of meaning construction begins with exploring the role empty signifier's play in meaning construction. Empty or "floating"

signifiers allow for a multitude of meanings to be attached to a signifier, although the word stays the same the meaning attached to it can change dramatically, but nonetheless go unnoticed. War, peace, development, security and progress are all empty signifiers related to my research. War one hundred years ago would conjure up images of interstate conflicts with regular armies and a clear victor, but today its meaning includes intrastate conflicts with connotations of religion, ethnicity and terrorism. Progress for the inhabitants of a country post-conflict may look very different to the progress envisioned by external peacebuilding agencies, who must justify their investment and successes within a framework of narrow objectives (Donais, 2012: 7-8; Mac Ginty, 2012).

What are the implications of empty signifiers for my research? Any research on peacebuilding comes in contact with a number of ontological, epistemological and methodological ambiguities that can be taken for granted in certain research paradigms. My research is concerned with the ambiguities inherent in meaning construction and the power relationships that thrive within this space. It is through tracing the genealogy of peace, conflict and certain aspects of peacebuilding within the context of Sierra Leone that this complexity can be explored and exposed.

The logics and parameters of equivalence and difference were devised by Laclau from Saussure's work on paradigmatic and syntagmatic categorisation

of language (Howarth, 2015: 11). They use the relations between signs as a way to describe its discursive formation and modification which forms discursive practices. These chains of equivalence or difference form a structured or "nodal" point where meaning seems fixed. The logic of equivalence unites people and creates a fixed point or universal notion where people can construct their identity, usually in relation to the "other" or a common threat. This process reduces the complexity inherent in the logic of difference and simplifies the realm of the political which explains the common use of metaphor and metonymy within this logic. This logic can be used in this research by looking at the West as the provider of development and knowledge and the post-conflict country as the passive recipient of this. The logic of difference highlights elements that cause divergence amongst subjects in the construction of meaning, identity and political frontiers. The logic of difference interrupts the strict "us" and "them" dichotomy, and through complexity it opens up the space for subject positions to be constructed.

For me, the logic of equivalence and difference works well with discourse analysis as they can reveal inconsistencies in both interview transcripts and policy documents, where a subject's position can be contradictory and counter-productive. An example of this could be someone who believes that neo-liberal economic reforms are crucial for development, but acknowledges that the distribution of wealth in Sierra Leone has not improved. This may lead to a participant blaming the country, and if so then they must accept that a

one-size-fits-all model is not appropriate in this context. Perhaps there is a veneer within an organisation that resembles the logic of equivalence, and this would simplify a person's role in the peacebuilding process; but the veneer is likely to crumble under interrogation.

Articulation refers to the result of a mixture of elements coming together and partially fixing meaning. Discourses are formed out of the articulatory process:

> [W]e will call *articulation* any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice. The structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice, we will call *discourse*. The differential positions, insofar as they appear articulated within a discourse, we will call *moments*. By contrast, we will call *element* any difference that is not discursively articulated (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985: 105).

Articulation allows for the existing social relations to change and new forms of social organisation to emerge from different power relationships (Zylinska, 2005:19). In order to account for why at certain points social change manifests, Laclau (1985) and Howarth et al. (2000a) point to rhetoric as a key tool in understanding these dislocatory moments and in explaining the dominance of certain discourses over others. This process of domination links

to the idea of the subject as contingent and opens up space for a hegemonic order to take root. In Hegemony and Socialist Strategy (1985) Laclau and Mouffe explore the role of rhetorical tropes such as synonymy, metonymy, and metaphor and how they constitute the social: "Synonymy, metonymy, metaphor are not forms of thought that add a second sense to a primary, constitutive literality of social relations. Instead these tropes are part of the primary terrain itself in which the social is constituted" (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985: 110).

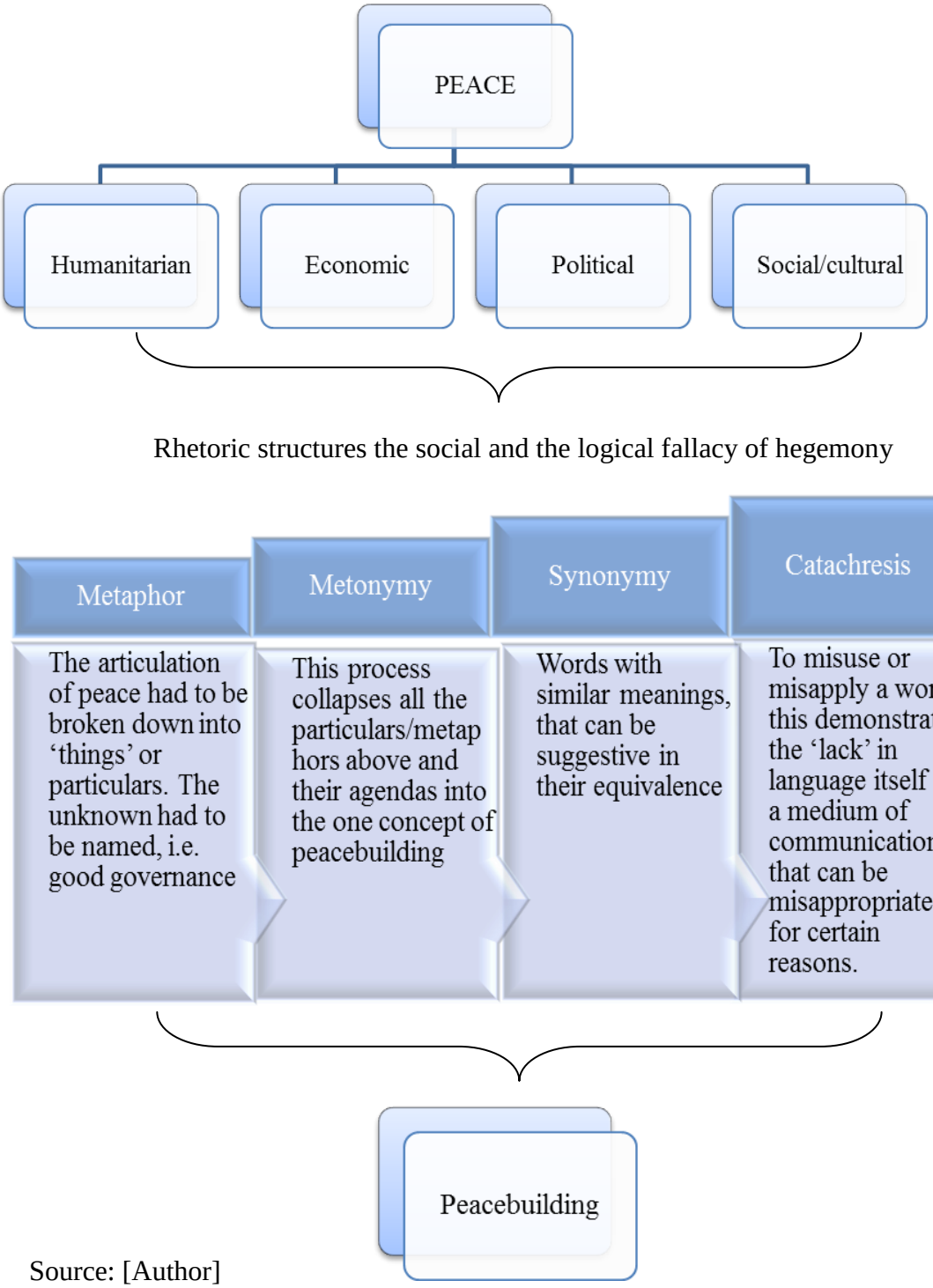
The exclusion of discourses opens up space where a totalising discourse is impossible and can only be stitched together using rhetoric:

> For Laclau, "rhetoric" refers to the contingent, discursive, and fundamentally tropological process that brings objective reality into existence by imposing on an array of heterogeneous elements the semblance of a structure within which they acquire identity/meaning (Kaplan, 2010: 258).

To give the impression of universality and hegemony, a "catachresis"- a figurative rather than literal term- may be employed to create and temporarily sustain this reality. The transformative power of rhetoric is present in the process of catachresis, and the incompleteness in a system of meaning allows the subject space to manoeuvre within the symbolic order (Howarth & Griggs,

2008). Figure 3.2 extends Figure 3.1 by suggesting mechanisms that create meaning around peace and peacebuilding. Rhetoric can be used to attach liberal values to signifiers based on Laclau's ontological position that the social is discursive.

Figure 3.2: The Mechanisms of the Construction of Peace



Source: [Author]

VIII. Ideology and Hegemony in Peacebuilding

Ideology is largely associated with terms such as fascism, Marxism and other "isms" that claim to offer an understanding of the world that is somehow closer to reality. In the case of Marxism it is through revealing the "false consciousness" contained within the base superstructure model which self-perpetuates the capitalist system and its exploitation of workers (Berman, 2003:112). However for Laclau and Mouffe a "false consciousness" developed through a false ideology suggests a true consciousness or a space outside of ideology, this is problematic and it implies an ultimate truth exists. The problem, according to Laclau, is that there is no space outside discourse to construct meaning; therefore "truth" cannot escape ideology in some form through the process of meaning construction. This leads to Laclau and Mouffe giving primacy to politics in their exploration of the subject rather than the social. Politics in this sense has a different definition from the common usage:

> By 'the political', I refer to the dimension of antagonism that is inherent in human relations, antagonism that can take many forms and emerge in different types of social relations. 'Politics', on the other side, indicates the ensemble of practices, discourses and institutions which seek to establish a certain order and organize human coexistence in conditions that are always potentially conflictual because they are affected by the dimension of 'the political' (Mouffe, 2000: 101).

The relationship between discourse and ideology is not a linear one: the two feed each other and through the process of articulation and antagonism discourses are adopted, transformed and rejected through meaning construction, all to produce the desired stability that dominant discourses and hegemonic practices require. Anything that claims to be universal, timeless or which escapes critical re-imagining and is thus normalised is considered ideology. Ideology acts as a tool to create a closure where there is always a "lack": society cannot ever be closed or full and must be recognised as such:

> Full identity is never achieved, just as the subject of Lacan is defined through lack. Identity requires acts of identification, and this, in turn, implies agency and process. The social subject can take responsibility for his or her own history, though not to achieve 'fullness'. It is this incompleteness which creates the social imaginary', which, in turn, is the sphere of representation (McRobbie, 1994: 49-50).

Laclau and Mouffe's use of hegemony that is taken from Gramsci's work has informed the universal investigation of the liberal peace in my research. Hegemony is a way of organising the subject in a way that does not require overt violence or direct coercion:

> ‘Hegemony’ is similar to ‘discourse’ because both terms denote a fixation of elements in moments. But the hegemonic intervention achieves this fixation across discourses that collide antagonistically. One discourse is undermined from the discursive field from which another discourse overpowers it, or rather dissolves it, by rearticulating its elements…Thus ‘hegemonic intervention’ is a process that takes place in an antagonistic terrain, and the ‘discourse’ is the result- the new fixation of meaning (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002: 48).

The work of Althusser and Gramsci paved the way for post-Marxism and the move away from the determinism and the working class as the agent of change:

> Political subjects are no longer classes but social alliances, which do not take power, but become the state by becoming hegemonic, that is, the historic bloc controls the normative and institutional framework of society by maintaining relations of consent and coercion throughout society (Boucher, 2008: 89).

Gramsci still retained an element of essentialism which Laclau and Mouffe reject and replace with the primacy of politics over class. They justify this emphasis as they see the economy as subsumed within the political space, but they recognise economics as a key feature of the current historical period.

Gramsci saw ideology as the process of fusing diverse social elements that act as an agent of social unification (Simon, 1982: 60). Hegemony for Gramsci was the spread of a small group of people and their ideas into a large movement of ideas adopted by a number of people. Laclau takes these ideas out of their state-based context and demonstrates how hegemony is formed and transformed by the clash between antagonistic forces which seek to establish empty or floating signifiers. The subsequent struggle for certain signifiers to dominate leads to the re-articulation of the political space and the meanings attached. The liberal peace needs to retain its hegemonic space in the post-conflict setting, and it does this by creating extreme binaries (liberal/illiberal, functioning/failed, peace/war). Its hegemonic status is evident by the reluctance of academics and the recipients of this form of development to imagine any alternative interpretations of the liberal peace, leading many to suggest alterations in implementation rather than fundamental weaknesses in its structure and ideology.

Power according to Gramsci is not just present in the apparatus of the state. Instead Gramsci saw power as an element that flowed throughout civil society. Civil society according to Gramsci consisted of private organisms such as the church, schools, trade unions etc. It is in civil society that the ideological and the political coincide and the battle for hegemony takes place. This understanding of power acknowledges the influence of locals especially as a collective force in shaping peace. The relational and fluid nature of power

means that the dominance or hegemony of the liberal peace is not to be taken as static as there is an ongoing struggle to retain its prominence and justify its legitimacy:

> What Gramsci wishes to stress is that the current situation is to be understood, not only in terms of the immediate economic and political problems, but also in the 'incessant and persistent efforts' which are made to conserve and defend the existing system… if the forces of opposition are not strong enough to shift the balance of forces decisively in their direction, the conservative forces will succeed in building a new system of alliances which will re-establish their hegemony (Simon, 1982: 38).

The dominance of the liberal peace over alternative conceptions of recovery does not necessarily mean that peace will eventually fail to take root. This point is important as it highlights that it is not the only actor in the process of post-conflict recovery. There is an absorption and rejection of external and internal elements of social re-imagination (Selby, 2013: 78-79). What is crucial is that there are better ways to engage to reduce the risk of marginalising the population.

One of the popular alternatives to the liberal peace used by critical scholars is the hybrid peace, an acknowledgement of interplay between the liberal peace and the local context:

> It is argued that hybrid peace results from the interplay of the following: the compliance powers of liberal peace agents, networks and structures; the incentivizing powers of the liberal peace agents, networks and structures; the ability of local actors to resist, ignore or adapt liberal peace interventions; and the ability of local actors, networks and structures to present and maintain alternative forms of peacemaking (Mac Ginty, 2010: 392).

If this is the case then it is clear that the liberal peace is itself already a hybrid, and the use of this concept comes in acknowledging this. The idea of a hybrid peace stops the researcher relying on strict binaries of Western/non-Western, global/local etc. and adds a necessary grey area where external peacebuilders are restricted by actors on the local level in a similar way to how individuals can feel coerced by the powerful "expert". Hence the degree of the perceived restriction/coercion will also be fluid. This approach acknowledges that agents at different levels of peacebuilding have an impact on each other (Höglund & Orjuela, 2012). Yet how do you determine the power relationship between the actors, and how do you know if the spokespeople are representative or hold legitimacy? The event of a civil war can change a lot of things: perhaps the

previous structure of authority and legitimacy has changed, perhaps not. Who has the power? Will they retain this during peacebuilding?

Gramsci's work on ideology and hegemony helps to explain how a hybrid peace might materialise. Gramsci argues that opposition to a hegemonic order does not mean one ideology is destroyed and replaced, that there was a reason why a particular set of values and practices became so dominant, and therefore there is an act of transformation where certain aspects are absorbed. If we equate this to the local turn then complete destruction of the liberal peace is not necessarily desirable:

> Thus the nature of ideological struggle is not to make a completely fresh start. Rather, it is a process of transformation in which some of the elements are rearranged and combined in a different way with a new nucleus or central principle. A process of this kind is necessary because, if the old ideological system was a genuinely popular one, then the elements (or at least some of them) to which this popularity was due, need to be preserved in the new system even if their relative weight and some of their content is changed (Simon, 1982: 61-62).

This negotiation of power that creates the hegemonic system is enacted in everyday life. Figure 3.3 shows the potential path of peace under the dominant liberal peace model and its different manifestations. The Figure contrasts this

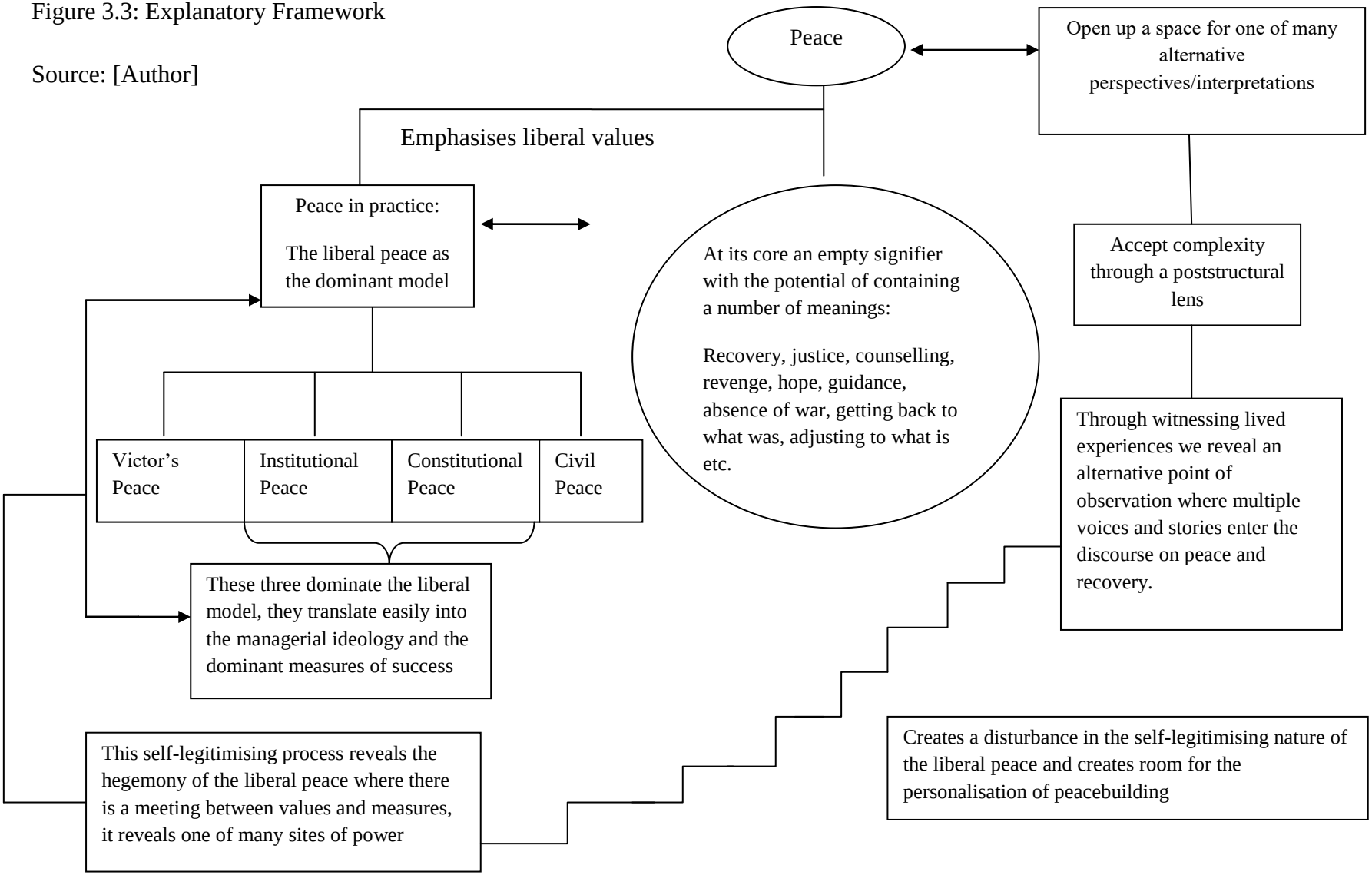
dominant model with the change in observation on the right hand side and the tension that potentially arises in trying to reconcile the two. What the change in observation allows is a subjective understanding of peace and recovery, and this subjectivity comes from people's experiences in everyday life living in Sierra Leone. The result focuses on individual well-being, the pursuit of the good-life, what this looks like and how this can be attained.

Figure 3.3 demonstrates a different approach to peace, and is one potential alternative perspective amongst many others. This exposes the dominant liberal version of peace as a political project rather than any reflection of "truth", human nature or "reality". The suggestion here is not that the liberal peace is in any way untrue but that it is just one of many possible approaches to peace.

Liberal peacebuilding has its own apparatus to influence behaviours as it contains its own rationale and technologies that reach beyond the political to the social body. One of its main apparatus for gaining and retaining legitimacy are its measures of success.

Figure 3.3: Explanatory Framework

Source: [Author]



IX. Managerialism: Legitimacy through Performability

Explanations of social phenomena as complex, personal, experiential and subjective as peace and recovery are often simplified through the process of quotas inbuilt into development organisations around the world. It is through this process that these complex concepts are able to fit a managerial framework that may be quantified in order to be compared and measured for the purpose of being properly managed (Mac Ginty, 2012). The definition of managerialism I have adopted is taken from the work of Klikauer (2013) and extends the structure of organisations into the organisation of society toward managerialism as an ideology:

> Managerialism justifies the application of managerial techniques to all areas of society on the grounds of superior ideology, expert training, and the exclusive possession of managerial knowledge necessary to efficiently run corporations and societies (Klikauer, 2013: 2).

This repackaging, a one-size-fits-all approach, that facilitates grand explanations and ideas of success are essential if we are to believe that the liberal peace has the seeds of universal values built into its programme that will eventually make the world less prone to violent conflict. The problem comes with ring-fencing these ideas as a totality and as a model when they are not ideas floating in a vacuum

and are attached instead to political motives. In terms of measures that provide legitimacy we may see the political in the form of managerialism. The use of PBR has infiltrated nearly every part of the public sector, and international development is no exception:

> DFID's move towards Payment by Results is part of broader reform to make sure we get good value for money from the development budget, including stronger programme and commercial management. By paying on delivery of outcomes, Payment by Results can be used to directly drive DFID's priority results, such as economic development, empowerment and accountability, and improved outcomes for women and girls...Payment by Results is part of cross government reform, and several other government departments are using Payment by Results to transform the delivery of public services (DfID, 2013: 8).

The dominant approach used to demonstrate and justify success in terms of a programme intended for a post-conflict country or the post-conflict country itself is an approach related to performance evaluation. These processes are more akin to project management with an emphasis on lessons learned and VfM rather than political context (Jackson, 2015). In this environment it would be seen as unnecessary to ask big questions like what does peace mean in this particular context? These questions are not prioritised because stability is believed to come

from a functional state with the benefits trickling down to the population, and not the other way round.

Value for money in terms of development in the UK consists of three key elements in the report *Guidance on Measuring and Maximising value for Money in Social Transfer Programmes*, cost-efficiency (which focuses on administrative costs and programme outputs), cost-effectiveness (claims to look at the outcomes and impact of programmes) and cost-benefit (which quantify costs and benefits in monetary terms) (DfID, 2013: 8). Cost-effectiveness is the measure most open to context, but it falls short as it sees the inability to quantify this measure as an inherent weakness and reveals its preference for numbers over opinions by marginalising the voices of the intended beneficiaries.

Development financing through agencies such as DfID are dominated by the "payment by results" (PBR) logic, and this can be seen in DfID's 2014 policy paper *Sharpening incentives to perform: DFID's Strategy for Payment by Results*. DfID adopted three key elements of PBR in 2013:

i. Disbursements tied to the achievement of clearly specified results
ii. Recipient discretion
iii. Robust verification

Out of the three key elements the recipient discretion (ii) claims to allow the recipient "space" for innovative approaches although this is restricted by the parameters of measurement that puts outputs and quotas before long-term transformation. The British government does not seem completely happy with this logic either:

> The evidence base on the efficacy of PBR is as yet weak, but theory suggests that if designed and delivered well, potential benefits of PBR centre on improving results by transferring risk from funder (principle) to recipient (agent)...PBR is largely an unproven tool. Poorly designed PBR could increase costs if risk and other payment considerations are designed or managed poorly; or risk perverse incentives if results are poorly chosen (as what gets measured gets done, risking unintended effects such as "cherry picking" or "short-termism") (DfID, 2013a: 1).

DfID have now introduced Results Based Aid, Results Based Financing and Development Impact Bonds all under the banner of PBR:

> DfID differentiates Payment by Results by the type of organisation payments are made to as different approaches are needed with different organisations:

- Payments from funders to partner governments are categorised as Results Based Aid
- Payments from funders or government to service providers are classed as Results Based Financing
- A newly emerging form is Development Impact Bonds where investors are paid for delivery of results (DfID, 2014).

The overt invasion of managerial rhetoric and logic into development, peace and recovery through development organisations such as DfID has led to measures being manipulated as described in a report by the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI):

> We are concerned, however, that the emphasis on headline targets is distorting the way results are reported. In our review of education in East Africa, we were concerned at the narrow focus on enrolment (which in bureaucratic terms means only that a child attends school on the first day of the year), rather than on measures such as pupil or teacher attendance, which are key to learning outcomes. Likewise, in the 'DFID's Education programmes in Nigeria' report, we saw that a DFID-funded programme defined 'literacy' as the ability to read a single sentence, which appeared

> to indicate a desire to hit large results targets rather than meaningful ones (ICAI, 2014: 29).

The ICAI, an independent body responsible for the scrutiny of UK aid, criticised this over-reliance and distortion on the way results are reported, and emphasised that the intended beneficiaries are neglected by DfID: "We often find that DFID staff do not have the time to engage closely with programme implementation and to interact with the intended beneficiaries" (ICAI, 2014: 44).

When dealing with numbers and quotas to justify programmes and measures of success in a post-conflict setting peacebuilding and development agencies often forget that all recovery is a personal journey for the individual and any notion of success cannot claim legitimacy if it ignores the voices of the people it claims to help (Millar, 2014).

When we talk about any notion of success we immediately make assumptions about what should be prioritised and represented in measures and what should not. The "should nots" are therefore unmeasurable and fall outside of the paradigm of "event" or "intention" characterised by the outputs creating a series of "non-events" (Visoka, 2015).

Francis, an interviewee from Bo, told me what he would do if he had access to the money and resources that DfID possess:

> If the money we had like DFID, if I had that as a citizen what would I do? Well I think one I would just follow our late President and try to build structures…like talking about the social security, pensions, so you can be secure your whole age, give 5% every month to go from your salary, you will be able to survive on that pension. As for me as a Sierra Leonean I think I will try to build, work on just to revive more of these infrastructures… (Francis, Bo, March 2014).

Francis believes that building up social security, basic infrastructure and social welfare should be a priority of peacebuilding activities, and as a citizen carrying out this belief is his main concern.

X. Whose Success?

> So the white man says this is sustainable peace, I will say it is fragile peace, it is not sustainable peace because for other countries who can pray we say let them join us to pray because beyond the mandated five year period and they want to stay a day after that… So how sustainable is the

> peace, it is not, it is very fragile, very volatile, it can break anytime (Banja, Bo, March 2014).

It is hard to judge the success of anything that claims to be preventive such as peacebuilding. For instance, the liberal peace could have caused a decline in conflict but why in some places and not others? If a country does not return to conflict then the model succeeds but if conflict returns to a country then the universal claims of the liberal peace model have failed. If the burden of failure is placed on the shoulders of the population in the country or the culture that nurtures illiberal values then the model is never at fault. In this scenario the liberal peace model becomes impervious to critique and self-reflection.

According to Heathershaw (2008) the problem-solving perspective enshrined in a universal ethical framework is present in the strategies of neo-liberalism and its rhetoric of "good governance", "civil society" and "structural adjustment". This "rational" and "objective" understanding of what a post-conflict society needs is characteristic of a patient seeing a doctor, where the doctor will look at a list of symptoms and make a decision regarding the problem. In this scenario the cure is based on a framework of pre-existing knowledge, however the feeling of the patient is also of vital importance. Just as a doctor will decide what a healthy body should look like and then judge what is wrong, the liberal peacebuilding project

has already decided what a society should look like based on imported Western experiences of Western peacebuilders.

One way of understanding how success is understood and applied is not necessarily to look at what has been done but what has not been done. In other words what is allowed to be missing in a liberal peace success story? Here is UNIPSIL's answer:

> Notwithstanding the aforementioned achievements, challenges linked to the root causes of the conflict continue to require attention. Among the challenges are the high poverty rate, corruption, youth unemployment, mutual distrust between APC and SLPP… election-related tensions and perceived ethnic and regional imbalances and political exclusion. The enormous economic opportunities created as a result of the discovery and exploitation of vast mineral resources must be managed if the country's development aspirations are to be realized and if all Sierra Leoneans are to experience tangible improvements in their standard of living (UN, 2014b: 10).

XI. Ebola as a Social Critique

The existing weaknesses of Sierra Leone mentioned earlier including the poor infrastructure, high poverty rate, corruption and political exclusion were fully exposed by the outbreak of the Ebola virus disease (EVD). The link between the prioritisation of peacebuilding and the extent of the devastation caused by Ebola is yet to be made explicitly in the mainstream media.

When I was in Sierra Leone in March 2014, Ebola was making its way from Guinea through to Liberia, and as the months passed it eventually entered Sierra Leone. What I find revealing is the way Ebola seemed to mimic the conflict as it entered into the country in Kailahun, which was where the rebels entered from Liberia and the location of the headquarters of the RUF, where the slaughter house resides. Ebola made its way across the country and concentrated its devastation in Freetown. The response was initially headed by the health minister but President Koroma securitised the response by shifting responsibility to the Defence minister, creating the National Ebola Response Centre (NERC). Not only does Ebola mimic the conflict in terms of its course into the country but its securitisation also mirrors the response with the headquarters based in the former War Crimes Tribunal (Special Court) for Sierra Leone (Oor, 2014).

The language used by the international community and the government sees this disease as a war to be fought from an invading force, unavoidable, unforeseen and unprovoked. It was an external force that is threatening the progress that Sierra Leone has made:

> **"War against Ebola in West Africa remains a tough fight." (Zoroya, 2014)**
>
> **"The Ebola Wars: *How genomics research can help contain the outbreak.*" (Preston, 2014)**
>
> **"Dr Charles Heatley: The GP off to do battle in the war against Ebola." (Cooper, 2014)**
>
> **"A CDC Epidemiologist Talks About Life on the Front Lines of the War Against Ebola." (Stolley, 2014)**

The doctor/medical professional is the saviour/warrior with the patient becoming the site of the battle. This language hides a deeper discussion about internal issues that have allowed the disease to be such a devastating force. Why was the health sector so inadequate? Why were the healthcare workers so poorly resourced? Why are people still so distrustful of their government? These questions are vital

in understanding the extent of the devastation in Sierra Leone. During the outbreak rumours and conspiracy theories dominated the way people understood and treated Ebola at home, leading to more deaths:

> …so even international world they want job, which is even why you talk about Ebola, you know the second day you had it in BBC it was on the internet because they also look for opportunities to kill us quietly and don't defend us, so those things are all bad signals still and people are sitting on those like a time bomb… (Norman, Bo, April 2014).

Norman along with other interviewees in Bo saw Ebola as a conspiracy between the international community and the government to prosper from Sierra Leonean deaths by creating job opportunities for internationals. This reveals disease as a social as well as a medical problem. Medical professionals are not trusted in the same way as in the UK and attempts to transfer knowledge about prevention and treatment was not always successful. This is because language must also fit a narrative that makes sense of the present. In a time of peril and uncertainty people are more likely to rely on their own knowledge and tried and tested mechanisms of comfort. Information was lost when it came from a government that people didn't trust, medical professionals and practices that were foreign, and a situation where their only forms of comfort centred on traditions around death and burial

were being threatened. International organisations and the government had not yet built up the trust that led to cooperation.

This separation between Ebola and the lack of attention to social welfare in peacebuilding activities makes disease an invading force with the battlefield relocated to the body rather than a lesson in priorities.

XII. Summary

In this chapter I have attempted to answer my research question: how is the dominant approach to peace, recovery and success created and legitimised? I have explored the narrative of success around Sierra Leone as a model of liberal peacebuilding (Awoko, 2012; UN, 2014a, 2014b; UNDP, 2014a; UNIPSIL, 2014). I have outlined the ambiguity of the liberal peace and the challenges faced by critical scholars in attempting to expose and explore certain limitations of this dominant view of peacebuilding, and I have discussed alternative conceptualisations of peace (Lukes, 2005; Richmond, 2005, 2008a, 2008b; Mac Ginty, 2008; Chandler, 2010; Tadjbakhsh, 2011; Cubitt, 2013; Heathershaw, 2013; Paffenholz, 2013; Pugh, 2013; Nadarajah & Rampton, 2015). Specifically, I have explored the role of poststructuralism and its emphasis on themes such as power, knowledge, agency and hegemony as conceptual tools in suggesting how the liberal peace has come to dominate our understandings of peacebuilding

(Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Žižek, 1989; Foucault, 1980a, 1980b; Spivak, 1992; Derrida, 1998; Gramsci, 1999; Edwards et al., 2002; Siegel & Fernandez, 2002; Dotter, 2004; Newman, 2005; Torfing, 2005; Zylinska, 2005; Howarth, 2006; Howson, 2006; Murdoch, 2006; Boucher, 2008; Howarth & Griggs, 2008; Neumann, 2009; Choat, 2010; Höglund & Orjuela, 2012).

By expanding the concept of power with the perspectives of Foucault (1980) and Lukes (2005) I have been able to see Sierra Leoneans as decentred subjects in their own right and not as a reactionary force at the mercy of the liberal peace. This has allowed the movement of my analysis away from popular, dominant understandings of peace and recovery.

Saussure's analysis of the relationship between the signifier and signified demonstrates the importance of language in meaning creation displayed in regard to the liberal peace in figure 3.1 and 3.2. Poststructuralists would contend that language creates reality with Laclau and Mouffe offering insights into the process that allows certain discourses to dominate and be destroyed through antagonism (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). This process is an attempt to unite elements together under one master signifier but by nature it must exclude others. A level of weakness is exposed in the dominant narrative of the liberal peace that questions its representation as a closed system or totality. Gramsci's concept of hegemony argues that organisations create dominance over other organisations by building

public consent that is resilient and is absorbed into a widely accepted framework of understanding. As the liberal peace appeals to a large number of people in the global north and the global south it would be important to open up the nature and processes of the liberal peace for discussion, including discussions by marginalised voices to understand where and why they are excluded. How this hegemony is maintained is therefore important to their and our understanding of what the liberal peace in fact means. Additionally, side-by-side with public notions of the liberal peace, my discussion in this chapter has suggested that managerialism is also an important ideology (DfID, 2013a, 2013b; Klikauer, 2013; DfID, 2014; ICAI, 2014). The fusion of these two dominant discourses enables a link to be drawn between the way the world is understood through these lenses and by implication the way these ideas are practiced on the ground. The gap between "common sense" in the Gramscian sense and the practice of peacebuilding is the concern of this research project. I explored the restraints within organisations such as DfID through the PBR and VfM framework that their activities are bound by. I ended the chapter by looking at the devastation of Ebola as a real-life consequence of the security-first approach and the measures that determine success.

By evaluating the dominant approach to peacebuilding in Sierra Leone I have exposed a discourse of ideological and organisational preference around managerialism and security before development. It is under this umbrella that

measures are used to create and legitimise the narrative of success that then reinforces this approach and shields itself from change that goes any further than rhetoric. In this way peacebuilding can be seen as a practice of agenda setting, managing and controlling whose voice is heard on the journey to peace and development.

Laclau and Mouffe show how this process of hegemony develops within the discursive field, through meaning construction. The use of empty signifiers, articulation, antagonism, the logics of equivalence and difference and the fixture of meaning around nodal points help explain the mechanics behind the link between knowledge and power (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Gramsci, 1999; Edwards et al., 2002; Dotter, 2004; Torfing, 2005; Zylinska, 2005; Boucher, 2008; Howarth & Griggs, 2008).

By using the themes of power, discourse, agency and knowledge production these theorists allow my research project to avoid simplified binaries by revealing the transitory nature of language/meaning, truth/knowledge. This approach has enabled me to de-emphasise traditional themes such as SSR and state-building in my project. The space that is opened up will provide a room for different understandings regarding the location of recovery as an experiential and subjective process, helped and shaped by diverse influences.

This shift in thinking was needed in order to move the point of observation from a detached, "international" view to an engaged and local perspective of peacebuilding. From this theoretical position I developed a tool kit through which to engage with the people on the ground in Bo to see how the constitutive parts of peace and recovery are understood and enacted through community and ideas around well-being. To understand this required me to go, see and be, in short it requires engagement with the local community and local ideas. This will be the focus of the next chapter.

Part I

Chapter Four: The Researcher: My Place in the Space

I. Introduction

Now that I have problematised the notion of a single story and offered a theoretical basis for opening up the space of peacebuilding, I will now present and draw on the toolkit I used to capture the voices of people from Bo, Sierra Leone.

This chapter is concerned with "the researcher" and the method. The dilemma of operationalising a foundational approach has left critical scholars within the domain of theory with the "local" still marginalised in policy and academic literature. This problem may be alleviated by adopting an interdisciplinary approach and by borrowing and reformulating methods from disciplines such as anthropology in order to engage with people.

This chapter demonstrates how the theory of poststructuralism can be used when investigating peacebuilding at the local and familial level. By using the main themes of power, discourse, agency and knowledge production as a foundation I created a tool kit that allowed the voices of the people to dominate my work. This diverse approach allowed for traditional themes such as SSR and statebuilding to take a back seat to

themes growing out of my everyday interactions. This change of perception and approach to peacebuilding affects the way we see a country post-conflict as it challenges the traditional agents of change as well as the way we measure success.

To change the point of observation in peacebuilding away from the structure and priorities of the liberal peace towards processes enacted in the everyday I needed to clarify my own cultural baggage and the space(s) I occupy within the research. *Putting the "I" into Research* is a section that recognises the importance of my presence within my work. I am a part of the "field" and the research environment, and my interviewee's stories are mediated through my analysis. The recognition of my presence as an integral part of the research project requires a reflexive approach with a methodology that not only compliments but positively reinforces it. *Care Ethics* builds on this idea of reflexivity and looks at ethical considerations from a relational viewpoint that uses empathy as a guiding principle in interactions that go beyond the researcher and researched relationship. *Spaces: From London to New London* explores the concept of "location" and geographical space and how it interplays with ideas around identity construction.

The *Methodology: Getting Stuck In* section looks at the reason for adopting poststructuralism as my theoretical framework and continues by documenting my initial trip to Sierra Leone in *My Initial Trip and General Observations,* the

themes that emerged in *Reflections from my Initial Trip* and later my main field work in *Preparing for the Main Trip*. The section *What's Happening? Witnessing Lived Experience* is the result of my research trip to Bo, seeing what happens in an everyday setting and being physically there to witness these experiences. In *Operationalisation* I demonstrate how I used Millar's (2014) four pillars to explore peacebuilding as an experiential process, Geertz (1973) thick description and Brown's (2013) "ethic of attention" to build an "ethnographic approach" to peacebuilding. In *Making Sense of the Trips* I use Laclau and Mouffe's emphasis on politics within the "Essex School of Discourse Analysis" and Glynos and Howarth's (2007) *Logics of Critical Explanation* to analyse and make sense of my findings.

This chapter therefore merges my theory with a toolkit that consists of an "ethnographic approach", the ethic of attention and discourse analysis in order to report and reflect on everyday experiences that offer a personalised and subjective story on the journey towards peace and recovery. This approach has enabled me to expose the way we understand ourselves and our environment in relation to social values and how certain discourses come to dominate, it also re-defines the way we attempt to capture local voices in a partial but ethical way.

II. Putting the "I" into Research

When discussing myself in relation to this research the first question that comes to mind is why I am doing this particular research project. What has led me here? My background in international relations (IR) was very traditional and based on macro explanations around states and international institutions with poststructuralism being something that was mentioned but not embraced in lectures. My journey towards poststructuralism came after my interest in conflict resolution and transformation during my double MA, which included a year in Moscow. It was during my year abroad and my exposure to history, economics and politics from a Russian perspective that I saw the way history was a matter of perspective rather than a fixed narrative. My MA dissertation looked at the economic rationale of shadow economies during civil wars and the way they could prevent peace or a "ripe moment" in favour of an environment of conflict. This environment became an incentive to allow access to valuable resources, and my two case studies concerned diamonds in Sierra Leone under the RUF and opium in Afghanistan under the Taliban. This was my introduction to Sierra Leone but I felt these studies' reliance on economics although interesting was limiting given my interest in studying the nature and possible multiple processes of conflict and peace where my approach might need to be inter/transdisciplinary.

Chapter 4

After returning from Moscow I secured a job at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI). This was to be a joint partnership with Roehampton University where I would be a PhD candidate with the Business School. RUSI is one of the oldest defence and security think tanks in the world based at the centre of politics in Whitehall, London. My interview was conducted at 61 Whitehall, the main RUSI building. Before my interview I had a quick look around the building and was in awe of the RUSI library, one of the most beautiful I had ever seen, filled with insights and propaganda. At this point I was quite intimidated by its history, expertise and reputation. After a while it became normal to see work colleagues on the news or hearing them on the radio as a key component of public debate. My own department the Defence, Industries and Society Programme (DISP) consisted of a small close-knit team including two other PhD candidates, so this research never felt like a solitary endeavor.

At this point my interest had moved away from how to get a peace agreement towards the process of recovery for people after conflict. Belonging to the business school became a great advantage, it opened up the logic and business of peace, and how this could work or contrast with local subjective understandings. It was at this point that my traditional IR approaches became too restrictive and their explanations too general and exclusionary. It was these paradigms that had structured international organisations engagements and led to the marginalisation of local approaches. I therefore turned to poststructuralism to alter the point of

observation and escape reliance on “common sense” explanations of peace and recovery.

Whilst being engulfed in the peacebuilding literature I attempted to make links with the current security context in which I was writing about peace and recovery in 2014. It was a year of reflection, with the withdrawal of British troops from Afghanistan after a dubious 13-year campaign and 100 years since the beginning of the First World War. Although these wars have little in common, they enter the public narrative as a reminder of the human cost of war and whether any gains might outweigh the cost. In the case of the First World War we have a conflict that has changed its meaning significantly over the course of a century. Originally known as the “Great War” or “the War to end all wars” it was a rallying cry for peace when it ended. Its meaning has been altered to account for the Second World War, even its renaming suggests it left things undone that the Second War rectified. I have no doubt that the war in Afghanistan will go through similar transitions, not in order to get closer to some sort of truth but to make more sense about the present time we live in (Freedman, 2006; Melvin, 2012; Petraeus, 2013; Alderson, 2014; Clarke, 2015).

When I started this PhD Sierra Leone was the success story of peacekeeping and a potential model for peacebuilding, this narrative still stands largely because the

peacebuilding effort is seen as largely separate from the devastation caused by the Ebola virus (this was explored in Chapter 3). Narratives around "success" and the changing symbolism of past wars to fit our current purposes highlight the fact that research often says more about the researcher and the time they live in than the subject of their research.

The concept of positionality plays an important role in this research in recognising that who I am and what space(s) I occupy correlates to the extent of my understanding of others (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). I hope to limit this asymmetry by immersing myself within a different culture for the duration of my research. By exploring my positionality I hope to recognise my own limitations (Kirby et al, 2006:37). The reader may have realised that I have brought the "I" suggesting the personal into my work. This was a conscious decision to explore the subjectivity of the researcher by acknowledging my presence in the research, and this realisation came largely from my reading of feminist poststructuralist work whose authors struggled with the difficulty of reconciling the fact that the "self" is multifaceted and difficult to define let alone represent. This being said, the self was still crucial to the construction and interpretation of their environment and that of their respondents:

> In any recreation of a narrative of self, we call upon previous narrative selves that we may have created, or have received from others in the form

> of attributions, archetypes or stereotypes. An autobiography is always a retrospective - prospective account, recreating who we were in terms of who we would like to be. As such, when we write we cite the various selves which may be wholly or partially available to us as we rewrite them into our self-story (Linstead, 2005: 33).

Reinharz (1997) identified a difference between the research-based selves, the brought selves and the situationally created selves. This fragmentation of the researcher's identity is another argument for bringing the personal voice of both the researcher and the various participants into the writing stage. This fragmentation also reinforces the importance of reflexivity in research; how I am changing in my environment is important as it changes the way I relate to the world around me:

> Reflexivity implies a shift in our understanding of data and its collection-something that is accomplished through detachment, internal dialogue, and constant (and intensive) scrutiny of "what I know" and "how I know it." To be reflexive is to have an ongoing conversation about experience whilst simultaneously living in the moment (Hertz, 1997: vii-viii).

When giving the reader information on your "brought self" (the way you identify yourself in your everyday context prior to conducting your research) the writer

may offer information that shows her in the best light most appropriate to the narrative she wishes to sustain as the "researcher". In this instance important topics of consideration may be gender, class and sexuality not because I think about them but because I am told they are important. There is a negotiation by bringing the personal into the research. Do I talk about what I believe the reader would like to hear and reformulate the "I" to include the fact I am a woman, not because I believe it is important but because I believe other people would? Yes, because I create my world not only through my own eyes but the eyes of others, therefore the fact that I am a woman (something I rarely consciously think of) becomes important because it is an immediate identifying characteristic of being "me" to other people and it shapes their interpretation of who I am. The limitation comes in realising that although the author's voice is essential it is not a unitary voice and will change throughout the research. Equally it should not dominate the research but remain a methodological tool to ensure that the self is not externalised to create a façade of objectivity and neutrality. It is the voices of the respondents that should retain centre stage and this requires a careful consideration of the researcher's ethical position.

III. Care Ethics

When conducting a research project and collecting data there is a need to be "ethical" in the approach adopted and take into consideration the well-being of the

researcher, the participants and the wider community that the research may affect. I think most people as well as researchers believe in acting ethically and intend to be ethical, but what does that mean? Although my interview questions did not deal with the atrocities of the Sierra Leonean civil war they are present in the memory of the conflict which could cause distress to participants. There is a possibility of harm as I am interacting with people, asking them to reflect on their views and opinions of a social event that can alter their relationship with the external world and must be taken into consideration. My main concern was the way the interviews were conducted, and there was a need to address the power relationship and build trust between the participant and the researcher. I achieved this by explaining my research, explaining that this is a very open interview more akin to an informal discussion which they can lead. After the interview I always offer to send the participant a copy of the transcript with any comments and await their feedback so the participant can feel part of the research project as it progresses.

In order to reduce harm to myself I took various precautions, including informing a least one other person of where I intended to go. If I met a participant and felt uncomfortable I decided early on that I would listen to my instincts and determine the risk factors. One way I reduced the possibility of harm to myself was by asking questions about the people and terrain before the meeting.

Another overall consideration of my research is its impact on the research community. My responsibility to the research community is to make sure I conduct this research ethically and thoroughly, backing up all my claims with evidence.

The first process to ensure that I was an ethical researcher in the domain of academia was the completion, submission and approval of my ethics form. The process can be seen as a nuisance to many researchers as most people will acknowledge the need to act ethically especially with the number of abuses that have been reported through previous notorious projects (Humphreys, 1970, Milgram, 1963, Wallis, 1976). The problem with getting ethical approval in this manner is you feel as though the job is done. Ethics is seen as a static managerial concept rather than an ever-evolving dilemma.

A way to expose ethical implications or weaknesses in the researcher's outlook is by being reflexive, by asking yourself why you are doing the research. What purpose will it serve? What purpose do you want it to serve? A personal statement at the beginning of a project will help the researcher reflect on her own sense of responsibility. However our fractured identities make it impossible to firmly locate where our ethics originate. Sometimes we are not even aware we feel strongly about something until we are put in a certain situation, which is why it is imperative to always reflect throughout the research.

An approach which I feel more inclined towards is care ethics which puts relationships at the forefront. Care ethics developed in the 1980s out of feminism and takes into consideration emotions such as sympathy and empathy to form genuine attachments that go beyond the formation of a relationship based on the researcher and the researched:

> Not all emotion is valued, of course, but in contrast with the dominant rationalist approaches, such emotions as sympathy, empathy, sensitivity and responsiveness are seen as the kind of moral emotions that need to be cultivated not only to help in the implementation of the dictates of reason but to better ascertain what morality recommends (Held, 2006:10).

The ethics of care seeks to limit the attempt made by other normative theories to prescribe a universal rule for ethics and moral action, where the concern of the subject is to preserve a relationship through care which involves themselves and a specified other. The importance of viewing the subject as a relational being rather than as a fully constituted being that is separate from others is central to this view of ethics and my own approach to research.

In my research I seek to build relationships with the people I interview and therefore my ethics should follow by preserving this relationship through a

genuine care which becomes part of my own well-being. Care ethics links closely to Foucault's "care of self". The "care of the self" refers to a social art of self-mastery through an open communication with oneself and the pleasure of self-mastery, but it is a social process: "Here we touch on one of the most important aspects of this activity devoted to oneself: it constituted, not an exercise in solitude, but a true social practice" (Foucault, 1988: 17-18). Therefore you constitute your selfhood through your environment and your interactions as ethical actions are not produced in isolation from others.

The relationship between a person as a being with itself could be explored, questions could be asked such as what part of my behaviour is linked to my moral code? Which sources of authority have led me to conceive of my morality in these ways? What do I aspire to and how can I achieve this? These reflective and challenging questions create a self-knowledge from within rather than from prescribed social roles (although these may still be present in aspirations). This distinction is important as it does not isolate the ethics from the person in a contractual form. In line with this view the person must live ethics as an integral part of their daily interactions through self-reflection. Ethics is not something that can be added on to a person when they choose to research, it is an internal process of self-improvement. As a researcher I sought to be aware of the changing dynamics within a research environment that may test my ethical stance or require a different approach.

IV. Spaces: From London to New London

During this research I occupied a number of spaces. I was a full time PhD student at Roehampton whilst also working at RUSI. RUSI has a reputation in impacting and influencing public debate mainly due to the presence of their experts and their analysis of current international security trends and threats to defence via the media. Being at RUSI you are close to those in power, and there are networking events that decision makers regularly attend. As a critical peace scholar my views are non-traditional and difficult for some people to absorb as it asks them to question fundamental assumptions that they have held most of their lives. This liminal experience has taught me as a researcher to become a translator when inhabiting more than one space at any given time. The experience would also become crucial during my main research trip.

Another space with multiple implications for my research is the "field". As a researcher entering the "field" I arrived with a number of selves that battled for the most coherent and simplified narrative that incorporates myself with an unfamiliar setting. As the field is more of a performance then a discovery it was integral that I kept a diary of my own experiences. This was important as my changing identity affects the way I perceive and interpret my environment. I always felt closer to my university identity than my RUSI identity as the researcher was always more dominant than the policymaker. This was due to the

fact that I had been a university student for over five years at this point and my employment at RUSI was still in its infancy. I believe the dominance of my particular researcher identity meant that I was more inclined to accept my own ignorance and to be open to other people's stories rather than trying to prescribe solutions and themes onto my interviewees.

One of the first themes that stood out other than the challenge of identity was location. I went from London, UK where political decisions with far reaching consequences are made to New London in Bo where I lived for two months. This transition represented a new place with its own rules, networks and history where power was exercised in different ways for different ends. The contrast between the two London's was something I came back to frequently in my research diary as I struggled to make sense of certain aspects of my experience.

There are many foundational features of ethnography as a method that suited my research, in particular its open-ended, iterative process of discovery, its creativity and its focus on context and meaning construction (Whitehead, 2005). I have relied on literature from the discipline of anthropology to try and be reflexive and ethical when engaging with my participants, especially the "ethic of attention" and being aware of others on their own terms (Brown, 2013: 142). What I mean by this is not judging other cultures in relation to my own; instead I will see how these activities came to be and what purpose they serve within the context.

Although my work drew on methods from anthropology such as ethnography, it is not ethnographic in the anthropological sense. I was only in Sierra Leone for two months and therefore I could not draw on long-term observations, which are a key attribute of classic ethnography (Mitchell, 2012: 7-8). I did not speak Mende or Temne which prevented a deeper immersion into the culture and created a barrier between my understanding and those of the local people I engaged with.

The reflexive relationship between the "self" (researcher), the "self" (informant) and my chosen approach was aimed at ensuring that the representation of my participants' stories are constructed and deconstructed in an ethical and empathetic way. This approach relied on the opinions, insights and prejudices of people from Bo as well as my own experiences in order to construct meaning from diversity and fragmentation through my observations and informal interviews. This process of witnessing lived experience in an empathetic and engaged way allowed me to gain an insight beyond an exclusive reliance on the heavy weight of previous literature and to engage with processes and networks which added meaning to my everyday interactions with people.

V. Methodology: Getting Stuck In

The local turn within peacebuilding and my own reservations regarding the limits of traditional IR approaches in understanding and interpreting the social world led

to me distancing myself from my scholarly roots. The paradigm I needed to frame this research had to build on existing literature whilst challenging its foundations. The contested fields of power, knowledge, agency and discursive practices that are present in peacebuilding practices kept taking me back to Foucault's capillary form of power and poststructuralism as a whole. This perspective was different from other critical theories as it inverted the universal/particular dichotomy and did not suggest a universal agent of change. Power, voice, reflexivity, knowledge, subject-position and ethics are some of the key concerns that will be explored in this chapter:

> Poststructuralists argue that knowledge is inextricably bound up with power, where power is understood not as the possession of material resources but as representational power… many poststructuralists have returned to diachronic analysis…in the form of genealogical analysis, which examines the contingent power struggles through which (arbitrary) meanings are imposed on the world around us. Third, many poststructuralists, notably in IR, have rediscovered the role of agency in social life… (Merlingen, 2013).

Poststructuralists contend that signifiers contain no innate meaning in themselves, and it is only through their relationship and non-relationship with other signifiers that meaning can be attributed and shared. This link between knowledge and

power is present in our own notions of identity and agency. This relational view of knowledge and meaning is best described by a feminist scholar, who like Foucault makes the link between knowledge and power:

> Epistemologically, feminist political theorizing suggests that "whatever knowledge may ostensibly be about, it is always in part about the relationships between the knower and the known." If the relationship between the knower and the known is a central feature of knowledge, then (all) knowledge building is a political enterprise… (Sjoberg, 2013: 66).

As stated, I have chosen poststructuralism as my theoretical framework as it is flexible enough to celebrate complexity at the local level. It allowed me to have the space to let themes develop out of my experience and offered a critique of the liberal peace through exploring its representational power as the only viable option in pursuing peace. Other critical theories focus on an agent of change with a deterministic logic or do not give an emphasis to power and its relationship to knowledge and truth. By interrogating the liberal peace through this framework I was able to perceive where meaning was fixed and how this play of signification was intrinsically linked to notions of "truth". Genealogical analysis complimented this theoretical foundation and problematised what other theories take for granted as "truth". One of the important aspects of studying the local is taking what you see and trying to understand it on its own terms rather than as part of a project to

generalise or correct existing systems. Poststructuralism allowed me to have the freedom to explore phenomena that did not fit into the usual remit of IR as a discipline.

The rest of this chapter builds on my poststructural theoretical foundation, by mixing my experience on the ground with a toolkit designed for investigating and analysing social phenomena in an ethical and reflexive way.

i. My Initial Trip and General Observations

As I left Britain for Sierra Leone for the first time I was troubled by my lack of direction. I had broad research questions that recognised the local subjective nature of recovery and the contrast of this experience with normative peacebuilding but I did not know what form local engagement might take. Should I compare international versus national peacebuilding efforts? Should I include the efforts of internationals in my interviews? Who should be included in my definition of the "local", who am I targeting and why?

These were questions that acknowledged the importance of the local turn but showed reluctance for people to be the focus of my study. People in terms of "locals" as a definition was too vague, too heterogeneous, and too unpredictable. These concerns seemed valid as people do not exist completely separate from

institutions or the presence of international organisations involved in the process of peacebuilding. Institutions do impact social relations and if the binary between international and local is blurred then surely the international is important in any notion of a hybrid peace. However, I soon realised that these questions represented a lifelong research project pulling all the strands together, and I had to decide what was important for this project. Therefore I resolved that the initial trip would help me be realistic about my project and reveal themes and limitations in access that would help me to refine my research. These initial doubts and concerns meant that my initial visit to Freetown was one of navigating through and observing the environment, which essentially formed the purpose and substance of my pilot study.

Whilst preparing for my trip I began emailing a number of organisations to use their expertise to help me build on the ethnographic material I had encountered and better prepare me for the current dynamics on the ground. Whilst attempting to contact NGOs and other organisations I encountered resistance especially from international NGO workers who warned me that the population is frustrated about being asked the same questions about the conflict, as far as she was concerned the job was done and her organisation was withdrawing along with a number of others. This was in the context of the change in Sierra Leone's categorisation from a "Fragile State" to a "Low Income State" by the IMF and the launch of the governments Agenda for Prosperity in 2013. After a day or two I reflected on this

email, and it was at this point I realised that this attitude of an NGO worker from Britain operating in Freetown was exactly the reason why this research was necessary. I didn't want to take her word for it, and at this point I realised I was contacting the wrong people. Towards the end of my main research trip I would tell my Sierra Leonean friends about this encounter and they would point to the mass poverty and corruption as an indication that peacebuilding (as far as they were concerned) was not complete. Perhaps people were tired of the way research was being conducted, Sierra Leoneans I interviewed liked the conversational nature of our interaction where they could ask me questions and the conversation was not pre-determined, I was asking what they thought and why. This highlights the importance of ethical research not just in terms of the age of the participant but also in terms of the power relationship and the expectations of the participants.

I arrived in Freetown still confused about the direction of my research, I had not gained the contacts I needed for local engagement so I used my connections at RUSI to organise interviews with employees of the British military reforming RSLAF which quickly snowballed into a number of other interviews with military personnel. Although my interviews with the British military on my initial trip were not the focus of my main study, I wanted to briefly reflect on their importance in making me understand the necessity of reflexivity as a British researcher in Sierra Leone. These encounters acted as a mirror highlighting my

own implicit assumptions about who I was and what I was doing there through the various themes that arose such as location, identity and cultural baggage.

ii. Reflections from my Initial Trip

The idea of location and the "field" bring to mind fixed geographical spaces whose truths seemed to be waiting to be uncovered. Yet it seemed that the British military were occupying two spaces. The military were separate from the ordinary population in a physical sense as they lived and worked in the military compound built after the conflict for the reform of RSLAF. When they did venture out they would always travel around in white 4x4 still separated in a physical sense and identifiable as British and military. The interviewees were in Sierra Leone but they had brought their own space with them. They were also occupying another less physical space that of a British citizen in a foreign land. In the mess was a picture of the Queen hanging on the wall, and this residence was restricted to a limited time frame which made full integration difficult when they knew they would be returning home. I wondered whether I would mirror this experience as a British citizen abroad where I would create a British space within Sierra Leone.

This idea of space and more specifically the "appropriate" space to occupy was highlighted in another situation. I was walking along Lumley beach when a man approached me asking why I was not with my own kind. Whether "my kind"

related to the colour of my skin or my foreignness I was not sure, and he then informed me that "my kind" all went to this place on this day and this place on another etc. It was clear there was a community of peacebuilders, NGO workers and possibly researchers who all knew each other and presumably stuck together creating a new space within Freetown.

These encounters made me reflect on my own sense of identity and location: I work in Whitehall where the policies that frame British engagement abroad are decided, and I wondered how much of Whitehall thinking I would bring with me? Would I also carve out my own space? What was my hierarchy of identity? These questions began to occupy my thoughts on my return.

The liberal peace makes a lot of assumptions about a functioning society, one being the clear establishment of a state within which to engage with the population and individual citizens. Sierra Leone's post-colonial past and its founding as a state today have been written by the outside and therefore understood through an external lens, but we are reminded by Benedict Anderson (1983) that nations are an "imagined community":

> Think of the nation as a grand historical narrative- both mythical and real- written in the memories of generation after generation of a people. The

> state is the cover and binding that harnesses that narrative, creating a readable book (Aslan, 2010: 20).

The state and the security sector are readable for donor countries especially Britain who set up Sierra Leone's army and police based on its own model. This makes the reform of these institutions accessible and understandable and may be the reason behind IMATTs success in reforming RSLAF. A member of the British military in Sierra Leone offered this perspective:

> …it was bringing the British way of doing business. Bear in mind it was a British colony until 1961, so the country felt a great deal of affinity to the UK. And, indeed some people would say, "You're our colonial masters", and I've had that even in my time here, with locals saying to me, "Well, you're my colonial master, you tell me what to do". And you say, "No, I'm not your colonial master" (John, Freetown, 2013).

I also encountered situations where people would talk about colonial rule in a positive way, which made me feel uncomfortable. This feeling of discomfort shows the gap between the way I have come to understand colonialism and the perspectives of some people in Sierra Leone, and was an example of my own cultural baggage that I was bringing along to the "field".

What is interesting about the interview extract above is this idea of "bringing the British way of doing business". If we look at development agencies engagement with state apparatus we see an engagement that fosters a similar language, that of the technocrat, the accountant or the manager. However, this public domain of "doing business" is only one way of seeing peacebuilding in practice. There is also an interconnected symbolic, informal and imagined narrative at the "everyday" level. The reliance on one viewpoint at the exclusion of others suggests a weakness in the peacebuilders' engagement in a location that they felt to be foreign to them and inaccessible.

Upon reflection I began to see how the main themes coming out of my trip, identity and location became interrelated, and my identity through my own eyes changed depending on where I was and what I was doing. Was I an employee at RUSI, a student at Roehampton University, a white British person, a researcher, a woman, a friend, a foreigner, a stranger? I was all of them at any one time through my perspective and my respondents. I also projected onto myself what I believed people were thinking: Was I being rude? What is the protocol? These questions were constantly in my head especially as this visit was my first to Africa, let alone Sierra Leone. I found this constant questioning useful in my research but restrictive in my interactions. I became a two-dimensional person with a bland personality unable to engage meaningfully as long as I held the role of the "researcher" too highly. What I realised was that the researcher was a part of me

and could not be the whole me, and therefore it was ok to be at ease whilst at the same time being observant. After this I started to use my weaknesses as strengths, and rather than seeing my youth and inexperience as a disadvantage I began to see that I could engage with youths in Sierra Leone very easily.

My choice of Freetown for my first visit seemed obvious; it was the capital of Sierra Leone. This was where a lot of the recovery agenda had been implemented, the city was a major casualty of the war and it was the centre of politics. This opinion changed when during my interviews I noticed myself thinking of Freetown as Sierra Leone by not mentioning if programmes were replicated or implemented with the same rigour outside of the capital. This weakness on my part led to my decision to leave the capital where the international presence is overwhelming and to choose a location outside of the direct international gaze. This concern was legitimised by my interviewees in Bo who complained that people viewed Freetown as Sierra Leone especially when judging its progress in development:

> Like most of the NGO, like most of the international NGOs whenever they come to this country they will always stop in Freetown and in Freetown they will see Sierra Leonean citizens driving those big jeeps. So they will just go back and say right there Sierra Leoneans are enjoying, you know, but if you go to some of these remote areas Kailahun, Pujehun, also Sierra

> Rutile just see … the people are suffering and those are the things that bring on war so our government or our leaders must go back to revisit those things (Ansu, Bo, April 2014).

> …development is not coming because when the development comes in fact generally it is regarded that Freetown is Sierra Leone, generally that Freetown is Sierra Leone and that is not true it, is not true (Banja, Bo, April 2014).

However, I still needed somewhere that had access to ATMs so I could withdraw money, and it was for this reason that I decided to conduct my main research outside of Freetown but in the second largest city, Bo, where I hoped the international experience would not distract my attention.

iii. Preparing for the Main Trip

Once I returned to Britain I had to process everything I had witnessed. I think the open nature of my initial trip had the adverse effect of making my interviews too structured. I noticed that I wanted to be perceived as professional more than I wanted to really comprehend what was being said.

Chapter 4

For my main research trip I spent two months living with a host family in Bo whilst conducting interviews with a view to understanding day-to-day life. The main focus of the interviews and my observations was to hear the accounts of recovery and the future aspirations of the people who lived there. The main issue the trip highlighted was the difficulty in not only identifying what I meant by local but also how I intended to translate that into writing. There is no such thing as purely local; my interaction with community led projects showed me that many people had links to international organisations. A hybrid existed where funds for local NGOs were linked to international organisations and donors. This meant that proposals had to fit with the goals, priorities and language of the "expert" international.

I had to be careful as a scholar critiquing the liberal peace not to simply attack what is there in favour of what could be, making a judgement of the current system based on a theoretical alternative. In this scenario I would undoubtedly fall into the trap of romanticising the local by ignoring the injustices and power struggles that happen on the local level and at the same time ignoring any redeeming feature present within the liberal peace model.

In relation to my own position as a researcher it became clear that being associated with the "right" person was essential for access and trust, and this would save me a lot of time within an already tight research time frame. There

was a temptation to create a "little Britain" in Bo where even though I was physically abroad I could potentially retain an environment that meant I continued living a Western lifestyle. I took precautions against such a scenario by conducting my research on my own whilst living with a host family.

I wanted to live with a family in Bo whilst conducting my research but I had no local contacts. Whilst attending a conference in Manchester I met another PhD candidate researching Sierra Leone who kindly put me in touch with a Sierra Leonean friend who had helped him with his research. This person asked me where I wanted to live in the country and for how long and promised he would connect me with a trustworthy individual. A few months later I was introduced via email and telephone to a Pastor living in Bo, and he kindly allowed me to stay with him and his family whilst I conducted my research. What I did not know was how well connected and respected he was throughout the Southern and Eastern provinces, and this came to my attention slowly through acquaintances and their personal stories of the Pastor. During the war he played a pivotal part in saving and comforting members of his community whilst his own property and church were destroyed. He told me one night the RUF came for him but luckily he wasn't in, and it turned out his name was on a list to either be captured or killed. Having a respected religious figure in the community symbolically adopting me and calling me his daughter meant that my access to individuals whether they be women, men, amputees, students, business people, young okada drivers, imams,

pastors or paramount chiefs was limitless. I believe the Pastor connected with my work, he saw the potential in putting people as the focus of development, peace and positive change. His connection with the whole strata of society gave a beautiful mix in the interviews and made every day an adventure. The rest of this PhD is a result of this trip, but first let me outline the context and mood of Bo when I arrived.

My initial visit helped structure the next stage of my research and showed me that the personal voices of recovery were contradictory, complex and multi-dimensional. Voices, however, are not the only clue. The physical, emotional and intellectual landscape of Bo can reveal an added dimension regarding the people who live there.

iv. What's Happening? Witnessing Lived Experience

The process of witnessing lived experience is an essential component in understanding local forms of recovery and the process of building peace after conflict. Attitudes, events, rumours, practices and memories give a location and a past its meaning. These factors also help create a vision for the future, but the present is also of interest to me as a researcher.

Chapter 4

The idea of acting as a witness to lived experience, of having unique experiences on the ground means you can never prescribe your direction or themes. The experiences you have are almost completely born out of your interaction with the people that gives your analysis a very personal and fluid form. Whilst I was in Bo I was aware of the particular context in which I was working and of events that featured in conversation or altered the routine of everyday life. I made a list to capture this snapshot in time:

Key events whilst in Bo 2014:

- Former President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah who is credited with bringing peace to the country dies
- On my arrival into Bo there is a student riot at Njala university
- It is the dry season and electricity is scarce
- There is the opening of the United Brethren in Christ church
- There is a famous Sierra Leonean singer coming to Bo to perform called Emerson
- There is a fuel crisis nearly every week
- The first signs of Ebola appear spreading from Guinea
- The stadium in Bo has its opening attended by the President on Independence day

- It is Easter

These were the key events that shaped my interaction with people and often crept into my interviews. The identification of this context on the ground shows that individuals are not waiting to be researched, and there are events happening outside of the focus of IR and scholars that shows a vibrant life after conflict.

Living in a home for two months with a family I had not met before my arrival was not always easy. Looking through my research diary I saw my daily frustrations and my attempts to continue living a Western life in Africa. After a while life got easier and I thought this was a sign of me becoming part of the Mende community or going "native", but in retrospect this was a process of understanding the rules and accepting my role and where I fitted in. For some I was as a "big woman" or patron, a novelty from the West with white skin that they wanted to touch and for others I was considered family. This change in how I believed my identity was being perceived was captured in various entries within my research diary:

> I've started writing less in my diary, maybe things are starting to just seem normal now (Twort, diary entry, March, Bo, 2014).

This entry was written in the early stages of my research and on reflection reveals a familiarity with routine rather than any meaningful assimilation into another culture. A few weeks later I came to this conclusion:

> Not going native- pumoi-just slotting into the structure- white-patron- Big woman (Twort, diary entry, March, Bo, 2014).

This was a summary of how I felt, a realisation that I was accepting my place within an existing structure, it was that of the white stranger and patron. This became clear when I went to a friend's sports day and I was unable to enjoy her big race. I was surrounded by people who wanted to touch me and talk to me because of the colour of my skin:

> I would always be a stranger- never one of the crowd- they made it clear I would never just be a person watching a race-I was a white person…This isn't negative discrimination it's a weird feeling of almost being famous- strangers wanting pictures with you, people wanting to touch you (Twort, diary entry, April, Bo, 2014).

Finally I reflected on the impact that these changing feelings and expectations had on me.

> The longer I stay here the heavier the research feels- I guess substance- contradictions and frustrations and clash of cultures means you start feeling comfortable and BANG it's different- exhausting…I have to change my expectations they are making me rigid and judgemental, I know how it works- it would just be easier for me to ignore and place my customs on top of these- but you can only play ignorance for so long- that's where the heaviness comes from- I think (Twort, diary entry, April, Bo, 2014).

This particular entry came after an interviewee asked me for money for food after the interview. I declined as it was a breach of ethics, I could not be seen to be paying for my interviewees opinions or set any type of precedent. After that I decided to provide food and drink at the interviews as they could often exceed an hour. It also comes from a frustration with friendships that eventually fell into a patron/client relationship rather than a relationship between two equals. The frustration came when I did not want to accept this relationship because I felt used as the patron. This was certainly true especially as I did not call on the client to undertake any particular task on my behalf, but that was my choice.

As my method and analysis are inextricably linked to my various experiences in Bo I will briefly recount the following section and develop its themes in Chapters 6 and 7.

v. Operationalisation

Poststructuralism investigates how the self is constituted through discourse, part of the answer to this lies in the relationship between power, knowledge and the creation of truth. Foucault explored the technologies of power that shape a subjects behaviour and identity formation. I began by utilising Foucault's method of archaeology on the evolution of the liberal peace and its progression into policy documents, its institutionalisation and eventual implementation. This process suggested a hierarchy of values that mixed with the ideology of managerialism at once constricting the extent that the liberal peace could be liberal whilst also exposing the limits of the measures of success. This shaped the narrative of what is considered important in terms of quantifiable evidence, and by association what is considered outside of the measures or a "non-event". These non-events are networks outside of the gaze of the international personnel who report on success and impact. This raises new questions about how people chose to recover, what they prioritise and whether their priorities are central to understanding the aspirations of people in their journey of recovery.

After identifying these "nodal points" (what I characterise as privileged signs within a discourse) I then used genealogy to understand why these contradictions occur. Here I explore the relationship between knowledge and power and not whether something is true or false but how a particular "truth" is created in

discourses through discursive processes. This method exposed limitations and holes in a model that claims legitimacy and opened a closed door into a critique which acted as a justification for changing the point of observation. Since the blueprint for peace has mixed results at best then this cannot be the full story. This move reopens the question, what and who shapes peace? If peace is formed or negotiated at the local level then what are the dynamics and networks that make this possible, what informal processes of everyday life are occurring outside of the traditional lens, and what can we learn from this?

The basis of this research is that peacebuilding is experiential, and that personal accounts of recovery are crucial to understanding the wider development issues and holes in current measures of success. If peacebuilding is for the people then how do you give not only voices but experiences a platform? How can you take it and place it onto the pages of a research project? On this point I look to the work of Millar (2014) in his book *An Ethnographic Approach to Peacebuilding: Understanding Local Experiences in Transitional States***.** In this work Millar helpfully divides the task up into four pillars that I have adapted slightly to fit with this research project:

(i) Peacebuilding as a process includes individuals whose journey to recovery is both personal and subjective. This may be taken into

account in measures of success that currently rely too heavily on institutional reform that is characteristic of statebuilding.

(ii) The researcher should understand the context through ethnographic preparation in order (in my case) to compare the rationale of international organisation and the everyday life of the local population.

(iii) The "Local" must be defined if they are to be engaged with and must include those who are intended to be the beneficiaries of interventions i.e. women children, former combatants, youths, those who wish to start a business etc.

(iv) The researcher must interrogate her own positionality and identity before engaging and trace their own changes throughout the research process (I have already begun this process in this chapter which continues throughout my work but I specifically return to it in chapter 8 in the section *How have I been affected by my Research?*).

These four pillars helped me structure my engagement and I will explore them in turn.

I achieved Pillar 1 through my review of the literature and by positioning myself firmly within the local turn in critical peace. My approach to collecting personal stories and analysing their content was formed as much by my initial experience in Freetown as by my wider reading on various research methods. First of all, I

noted that the voices that are presented will be partial in terms of what is included from my transcripts and partial in that they can only represent individual stories and not a collective representation of the "local" in Bo. My interview transcripts were part of the process of collecting local voices but the symbolic interaction and landscape would also be important to painting this picture of everyday life after conflict.

One of the core ways of capturing a partial glimpse of this world is through what Geertz (1973) called "thick description". This involved not only keeping notes on myself, my environment, and my interviewees but also attempting to understand how my respondents see their actions. Therefore as I observed my surroundings and interpreted the responses of my participants I kept in mind a simple question that Geertz puts forward, "what manner of men are these?" From this starting point as well as my emphasis on reflexivity and positionality I could take into account questions such as how do my participants make sense of their world? What are the formal and informal structures that make their world comprehensible after a period of turmoil?:

> Analysis then, is sorting out the structures of signification- what Ryle called established codes… What the ethnographer is faced with is a multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange,

> irregular, and inexplicit, and which he must contrive somehow to first grasp and then to render… Doing ethnography is like trying to read (in the sense of "construct a reading of') a manuscript- foreign, faded, full of ellipses… but written not in conventionalized graphs of sound but in transient examples of shaped behavior (Geertz, 1973: 9-10).

I relied on secondary reading and my initial research trip to Freetown to identify some of the "webs of significance" that help structure meaning, for example football and religion stood out in many of my interactions as well as in the language and conversation used on a daily basis. I also noted the international perspective conveyed through the media especially from the UN to highlight where and how it engaged at the more personal level.

Pillar 2 was all about preparation, so I could do as much as possible to prevent misreading or misinterpreting my environment. After reading ethnographic material on Sierra Leone specifically Ferme (2001) I conducted a pilot study that acquainted me with the terrain and led to my decision to do my main fieldwork in Bo. This experience reinforced my view that local engagement and the personalisation of peace was of key importance to a rethinking of the peace project. As I returned from Bo and started drawing out some themes that stood out I would then return to the ethnographic literature to see if anyone else had explored these themes and what conclusions they had drawn.

Pillar 3 was harder to achieve as I knew that to immerse myself I wanted to be on my own in the "field" (without research assistants) so I didn't feel tempted to retreat to familiar faces. It was of immense importance to me that I lived with a family as I knew this would force me to interact and be within the community as well as creating those vital first contacts. My initial time in Sierra Leone revealed the importance of access through association and I knew my limited time would be put to better use if I could be seen with someone already trusted and known in the community. My initial visit to Freetown revealed to me the importance of association after encountering a member of the British military in Freetown I was offered a lift into town, which I accepted. As I exited the vehicle which was clearly marked as military I noticed the number of eyes on me and I am aware how fast information and rumours are transmitted. This association may have changed the type of access or the nature of the information that people felt secure giving me.

Pillar 4 was not an afterthought it was a constant challenge before, during and after I collected stories and opinions that engaged in an everyday setting and reflected on my experiences. These concerns were of paramount importance if you accepted that the self, society and the way we relate to the world around us are culturally constructed and subjectively understood. My positioning in my research was extensively explored in my work as an employee at RUSI, a student

at Roehampton University, a white British person, a researcher, a woman, a friend, a foreigner, a stranger, and I embodied all of these identities.

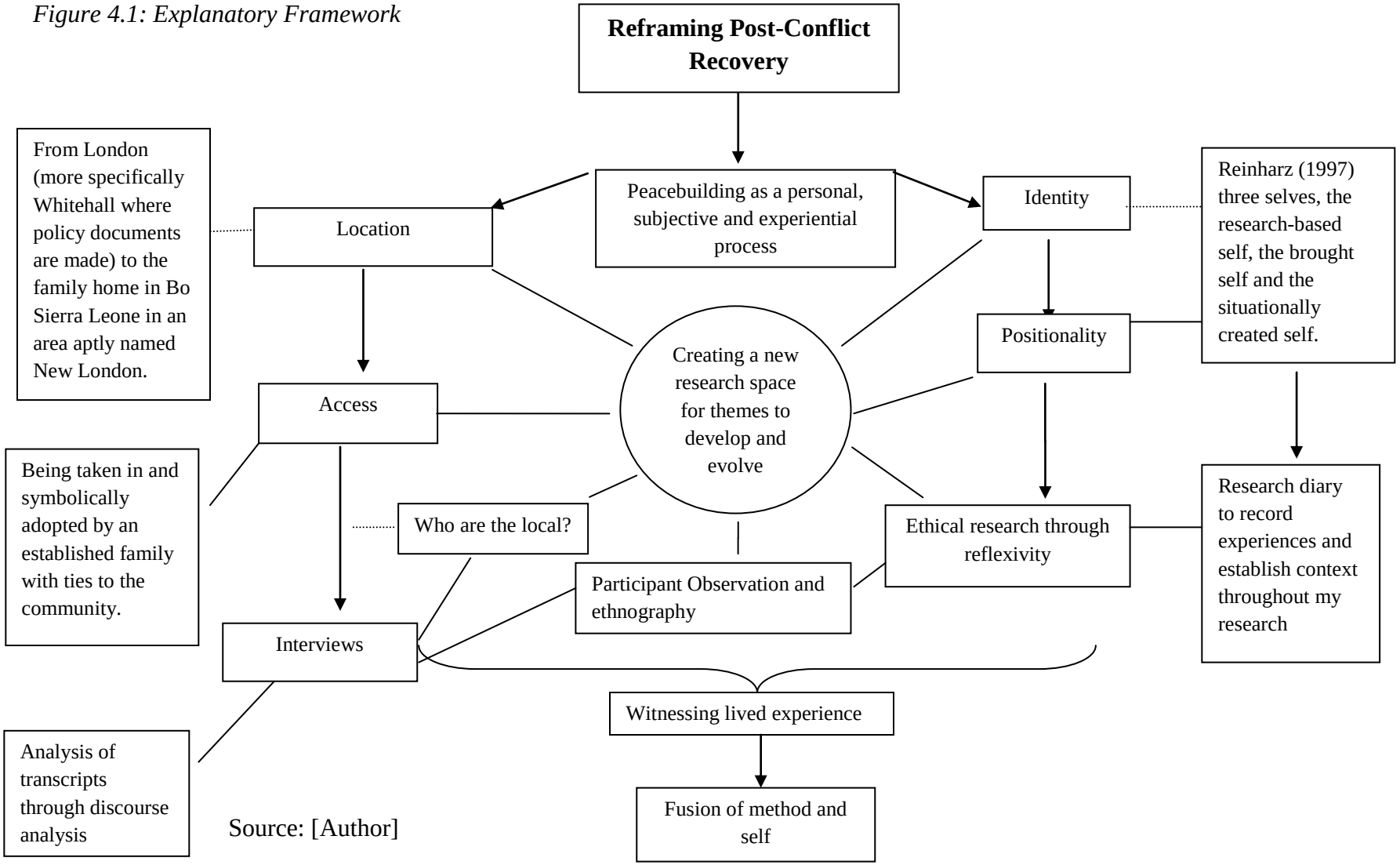
Although the pillars offered some structure to my engagement with the people I interviewed in Bo I also kept in mind a term which M. Anne Brown (2013) called the ethic of attention, namely of being aware of others on their own terms by making sense of experiences within the context. This is my aim by using poststructural theory and the four pillars I hope to open a space constructed through stories, experiences and self-reflection rather than relying on prescribed knowledge. This space gave me room to observe and listen whilst others speak (Brown, 2013: 143). The process of witnessing lived experience was an essential component in understanding local forms of recovery and linked with the "ethnographic approach" and the ethic of attention. I was acting as a witness to "lived experience", having unique experiences on the ground which through interaction developed my direction and themes and gave my analysis a very personal and fluid form.

Figure 4.1 suggests how a foundational critique could be operationalised for those who sympathise with the "local turn" in critical peace studies but find little theoretical or methodological guidance in terms of a research framework. It charts the main components and themes of my journey to Bo and details the guiding principles I followed in attempting to engage with people in an ethical and

reflexive way. This framework was important for changing the point of observation (as demonstrated in figure 3.3) and in expanding the space of peacebuilding to include the intended beneficiaries by asking them questions regarding their lives that could potentially influence the way we think about and operationalise peace on the ground.

My poststructural theoretical grounding has informed the final design of my research toolkit that (i) matched my intention to alter the point of observation (Newman, 2005) and (ii) allowed me to look at peacebuilding from the local level, through everyday interaction and witnessing lived experience (Geertz, 1973; Brown, 2013; Millar, 2014). The next section will look at how my poststructural foundation informed the analytical stage of my research which allowed me to expose the ways we understand ourselves and our environment in relation to social values and how certain discourses come to dominate (Foucault, 1980b, 1988; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Gramsci, 1999). Not only did this help when interviewing my participants and analysing the results, but it was also a useful exercise to perform on myself to expose the reason/s why I adopted certain views. My hope was that this approach would help me to become a more reflexive and ethical researcher the result of this is discussed in my concluding chapter where I reflect upon the impact of this work on me and consider my broader contribution to the evolving body of knowledge.

Figure 4.1: Explanatory Framework



Source: [Author]

vi. Making Sense of the Trips

The Essex School of discourse analysis can unpick a number of different forms of data including speeches, institutions, case studies, economics and empirical data as it all relates to the construction of the social world, "…empirical data are viewed as sets of signifying practices that constitute a 'discourse' and its 'reality', thus providing the conditions which enable subjects to experience the world of objects, words and practices" (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000b:4). This basis allowed the research to form a critical exploration of the ideological foundations of peacebuilding whilst using a case study to examine its impact on the ground.

Interviews from my initial visit were collected and analysed using a poststructuralist form of discourse analysis developed by Laclau and Mouffe (1985) known as the "Essex School of discourse analysis". The content as well as the repetition of words, the flow of conversation including pauses and laughter were analysed to detect patterns of representation or themes that held some commonality amongst participants. I also kept note of things that did not seem to fit anywhere for instance a shock in expectations. Once these key points had been highlighted and coded through themes emerging both from the text and from experiences that stood out I referred back to my research diary to explore emotions or encounters in my everyday experiences to shed new light or explain phenomena.

Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis was chosen specifically due to its focus on political discourse. This approach allowed me to explore the gap between the "universal" and the "particular", in other words the research could examine the impact of the dominant version of peace and local versions. Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (1995) was another option. The separation in CDA between the discursive and non-discursive field allowed a space to go beyond ideology, but I do not believe this space exists as politics and discursive practices are key in shaping what we perceive as the norm, and therefore I adopted Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis.

There is a danger of the double hermeneutic when studying the social world and asking subjects to reflect on their experiences. This consists of self-definition, interpretative and interactive processes and how the understanding of your world informs and shapes your social practices:

> Interpretation means not only drawing inferences from data, as even diehard positivists do, but also recognizing (and taking advantage of) the fact that 'an important part of the subject matter of social science is itself an interpretation- the self-interpretation of the human beings under study (Neufeld, 1995: 76).

There is a chance that the interpretations I developed may leak into the discourse in Sierra Leone and reframe people's understandings. As a researcher but more importantly perhaps as the author of a text I should acknowledge that I am constrained by expectations regarding the style and format of an academic study. I am problematising dominant discourses in seeking to expose and explore marginalised ones but I cannot escape how this research is framed and directed by existing knowledge and expectations. As a researcher I also understood a need to be aware of these risks throughout my research and to de-centralise the construction of my perceived reality of my research without enforcing it.

Poststructuralism has been critiqued for not proposing solutions to the problems it identifies, and in my research I am problematising an existing framework without suggesting an alternative. I believe this is a necessary process that is never-ending. It is the job of poststructuralist research to expose power relationships and regimes of truth that regulate and shape behaviour (Cary, 2006: 8), thereby allowing alternative explanations the space to stake a contributory claim.

On my return from Bo I immediately wrote down themes, interviews and experiences that stood out to me as important. I focused on things that felt uncomfortable and did not fit nicely into my understanding or expectation of Sierra Leone, for example the concept of a "stranger" in the Sierra Leonean sense, namely, the difference between an indigenes (local Sierra Leonean) and strangers

(not considered original inhabitants, Manning, 2009b) and how this could apply to peacebuilders as "strangers". I then used my interviews, my observations, my emotions and reflections to piece together my time in Sierra Leone. What I needed now was a method of analysis that was consistent with poststructuralism and the way I gathered information.

Discourse analysis was an attractive choice as discourse theory formed part of Foucault's method of archaeology (Philips & Jorgensen, 2002: 12) and was already part of my toolkit from the beginning:

> Discourse analytical approaches take as their starting point the claim of structuralist and poststructuralist linguistic philosophy, that our access to reality is always through language. With language, we create representations of reality that are never mere reflections of a pre-existing reality but contribute to constructing reality. That does not mean that reality itself does not exist. Meanings and representations are real. Physical objects also exist, but they only gain meaning through discourse (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002: 8-9).

After picking out themes that stood out from my experience I went back through interview transcripts and looked for patterns to see if this correlated or jarred with my expectations. I looked to Laclau and Mouffe's for guidance on discourse

theory and drew on a number of their concepts to help structure my approach. Laclau and Mouffe do not distinguish between a discursive and non-discursive field (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985) and this allowed all my experiences and the discourses I identified to be part of my analysis, which covered not just language but all social phenomena. These discourses were organised around nodal points within a particular discourse. The use of nodal points was beneficial in understanding the evolution of peacebuilding and the dominance of the liberal peace but was much harder to use in the local context to identify key narratives as they have been marginalised in the literature. The way this technique of nodal points helped in the local context was by highlighting the immense difference between signs such as "peace", "development", "progress" and "success".

Analysis of the "Other" which is always created together with the creation of "Us" can give some idea of what a given discourse about ourselves excludes and what social consequences this exclusion has (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002: 50-51). As we are reminded by Brown (2013), engaging with other cultures can make us reflect on our own positioning:

> While we may accept in principle that we shape our reality, it is extremely difficult to comprehend the extent, subtlety and logic of differences that can be in play without seriously engaging with at least careful accounts of other ways of life. The active awareness of culture offers an antidote to the

> naïve universalism that continues to characterize much peacebuilding (Brown, 2013: 138).

This difference could be explored through a number of Laclau and Mouffe's ideas around antagonism, hegemony and the logics of equivalence and difference. Antagonism acts as a method for identity formation where the realm of discursive differences (a surplus of meaning with signs outside of the discourse) becomes homogenized (Critchley & Marchart, 2012). Their theory of social antagonism is crucial in understanding where transition between discourses is possible and how certain discourses come to dominate whilst others are marginalised (as described in Chapter 3).

The idea of a discursive struggle demonstrates that meaning is never truly fixed and helps to explain how the liberal peace became the dominant approach to peacebuilding practices. The logics of equivalence subvert the differential nature of signifying elements, creating the difference which is "the excluded" and lies beyond the system. By applying this logic to my work it seems that measures of success formed around the narrative of universally applicable norms as part of the liberal peace attempt to create a linear narrative of meaning ascription that leaves the local voice in any legitimate sense "excluded". This partial fixation of meaning around the dominant discourse can amount to a hegemonic discourse, where the "local" acts as the dislocation and alternative to this hegemony.

Although I did not find clear instructions on how to conduct discourse analysis I used these ideas around nodal points and the wide definition of discourse to help shape the way I approached and understood the stories I had gathered. An extension of this method to help researchers who wish to use Laclau and Mouffe or similar methods whilst having more guidance would be Howarth and Glynos' *Logics of Critical Explanation in Social and Political Theory* (2007), to which I refer throughout my work.

A number of logics have been used to give the researcher direction whilst retaining the flexibility that is one of the main strengths of poststructuralist methods. The logics include: the *social* (this refers to the rules of the game and self-understanding of how meaning is constructed out of events, and could be linked to pillars 3 and 4), *political* (linked to Laclau and Mouffe's concept of equivalence and difference, which allows us to understand how and why a social practice emerges and the tensions this creates), and *fantasmatic* logics (which allow the researcher to understand why a certain social practice has survived and continues to influence our social relations), and which are all used to construct critical explanations of discursive practices. This approach builds on Foucault's method of genealogy and archaeology, Millar's "ethnographic approach", Brown's ethic of attention, and Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis. This is the start of a process that brings people from the outside into the centre of the

debate concerning the future of their own country at a decisive and traumatic time.

VI. Summary

Part I set up my research questions and the main subject of my research, namely the exploration of the experiential and subjective process of peace and recovery through witnessing lived experience in Sierra Leone. Chapter 2 looked at the dominant discourses surrounding the liberal peace, the historical and political origin, the liberal agenda, the graduations of the liberal peace, the conflation with neo-liberal economic reforms, the implementation of the liberal peace in Sierra Leone and the conflictual bodies of knowledge surrounding its existence. Chapter 3 used a critical re-evaluation of the liberal peace to alter "common sense" assumption regarding the nature and purpose of peace. In Chapter 4 I introduced myself as a researcher already occupying certain spaces preceding my trip to Bo as an active part of creating the "field", which was an exercise in reflexivity to firmly place myself within my research.

This chapter offers a new way of conceptualising and operationalising research into peacebuilding by embracing the "local" turn in critical peace studies. The process of adopting a theoretical and methodological framework that attempts to capture local subjective experience meant accepting that my own subjectivity

would feature in my research project. This realisation requires an in-depth examination of my own positionality. This was explored by revisiting my road to RUSI and the PhD subject area more generally. By reflecting on my past and documenting my personal journey I became aware of my own cultural baggage and the importance of identifying the potential effect this might have on my beliefs and behaviour whilst conducting my research. This led to the decision to keep a research diary and note down my thought processes and how they change.

I have suggested how a researcher who follows the sentiment of the foundational critique through a poststructural theory can operationalise their ideas and build a methodological toolkit that meets their ethical and practical requirements. I began by locating my presence within the research and exploring my own ethical position. My research has utilised the core elements of care ethics and its guiding principles of empathy and the building of genuine relationships where applicable and appropriate between the researcher and her participants. This ethical approach links positionality and reflexivity with ideas around identity formation as it reflects a continuous journey relating to notions of "self" rather than another tick box on a university form. I have attempted to minimise the power asymmetry between the researcher and the researched by being reflexive throughout my work. During the course of this research "I" will be present and so will the voices of my participants. They will shape the way I prioritise and speak about the

history of the country and they will infiltrate my critique of the dominant story of peacebuilding.

I reflected upon my trip to Freetown and on the themes of location and identity as central in exploring my own implicit assumptions when entering the "field". These themes coalesced at different points in my research where my own identity was influenced by where I was, who I was with and what I was doing. The exploration of different space(s) revealed a plurality of stories and meanings that reinforced the necessity to see the field as a performance rather than as a fixed geographical location. This trip also informed my choice of Bo as the location for my main study and the importance of gatekeepers in accessing the wider community within a restricted time period.

I demonstrated how I used Foucault's concept of archaeology and genealogy to explore the evolution of the liberal peace. My theory, methodology and interactions were all developed from a poststructural foundation that allowed themes to develop through what I witnessed and the stories of my participants. My main intention in adopting this approach was to avoid being trapped within a narrow framework of meaning, truth and knowledge already dictated by traditional IR literature that endorsed the liberal peace model and the managerial logic. This is why positionality, reflexivity and the concept of space were vital to explore.

My next step was going, seeing and being through witnessing lived experience, with Millar's four pillars (2014) and Brown's ethic of attention (2013) helping to structure this engagement by putting social relationships and personal stories at the centre of peacebuilding as an experiential process. Finally on my return I used Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis on my interview transcripts guided by the logics of critical explanation to expose and explore patterns and disruptions in the notion of peace, recovery and development and how this related back to the vision of peace prescribed by the liberal peace.

I have opened up space for a change in observation to occur where the liberal peace does not dictate the parameters of knowledge or truth and where there is space for alternative approaches to be envisioned and operationalised. Part II will change the point of observation with the context and the people being brought to the forefront of ideas around peace, recovery and development and what it means to build peace.

Part II

Chapter Five: Finding Bo

Dramatis Personae: By Order of Appearance

Soloman *An older Mende man in his 50s married with children. He worked as a social worker before getting involved with a local NGO. He fled to Bo when the war began.*

Amidu *A Mende male working in a local NGO.*

Isata *An older married Mende woman in her 70s who used to be a teacher. She has a wealth of knowledge about the changing state of Sierra Leone. She has adult children that are at university. She had encounters with rebels during the war but emerged largely unscathed.*

Hinga *Hinga is a Mende by tribe in his late 40s to 50s. His father was executed by the RUF during the war so he joined the CDF.*

Salia *A female Mende survivor of the war in her 40s. The RUF amputated both of her lower arms. Her husband was also killed during the war.*

Almamy *An older Mende woman living in an amputee community in her late 50s. She is a survivor of the war but bears the*

psychological and physical scars from her experience. Her children were her motivation to carry on.

I. Introduction

Part I introduced the evolution of peacebuilding through its historical context and ideological beginnings. I examined the liberal peace literature and the way the liberal peace model was implemented on the ground in Sierra Leone. I then explored the critical literature that broke down common sense assumptions regarding peace and recovery as well as my chosen theoretical and methodological approach to my research.

Part II moves away from the dominant model as the focus of my investigation. It is a change in observation towards what is there and what was there. *Finding Bo* will be used to explore the history and context of Bo and its place within Sierra Leone up to and including the civil war. The purpose of this chapter is to detail who the "locals" are for this research and to recognise some of the dynamics that caused the onset of the civil war in order to contextualise my two findings chapters. As peace and war are interrelated and the primary goal of building peace is to create a stable environment from which to begin I would like to revisit some of the issues that incentivised the war. This is by no means a detailed or exhaustive look at the history of Sierra Leone, it is a brief

overview of key events mixed with quotations from interviewees in Bo to personalise the history as it was experienced by the people I saw and as I experienced it from those that I spoke to.

The first section *Where is the Local?: Bo* locates Bo both geographical, historically and politically as an important place to seek refuge and an area of resistance during the civil war. The reputation of Bo as a safe place during this period is also the reason why many interviewees settled in Bo after leaving their place of birth. *What is the Local?* Explores the problem of using an ambiguous term such as the "local" and the need to define exactly what criteria I am following. *Who are the Local?* describes my criteria for targeting and reporting the stories of "locals". It defines the local in accordance with my research and some of the obstacles in collecting stories as well as alternative interpretations of the "local". *Mende People* describes some key characteristics of the Mende people and their relationship with other ethnic groups. It reflects on some of my encounters with traditional practices such as an initiation ceremony and other everyday activities. I then extend my focus out from Bo and explored the wider historical and social themes that have led towards the construction of modern day Sierra Leone.

For the wider history I use my experiences to structure important historical events that help to contextualise my research and findings. *"You're British? You Used to Rule Us [laughs]"* explores the colonial period and the presence

of the British in the country. This section feeds into Chapter 6 and the meaning attached to "strangers". *"You People [British] Brought Independence to this Land with No Preparation for Us [laughs]"* this section looks at the process of decolonisation and the path taken by the country. *A New Era of "Leadership"* documents the impact of different leaders on the current state of the country. It explains some of the ethnic divisions that will be mentioned by my interviewees in the findings chapters which has infiltrated education and employment in the country. This section also explains the lack of trust exhibited by people during the Ebola epidemic. *Youth, Gerontocracy and Generational Conflict* demonstrates how youths are marginalised in Sierra Leone through their exclusion from power and authority, and how this group became further marginalised if they fell into the category of "stranger" which I will explore in Chapter 6. *Civil War* is the culmination of the political, social and economic factors described as well as many others that led to the civil war. This is the complex history that peacebuilding actors must contend with, and it is the paucity of complexity behind universal models that allow development organisations and their personnel to act quickly but not necessarily in the interest of the people.

Figure 5.2: Map of the Districts in Sierra Leone (27/03/2014)

II. Where is the Local?: Bo

This photo of a map was taken in Bo. It is used by a locally established inter-denominational NGO to display the Districts of Sierra Leone and separate their workload. Bo is located in the Southern province and after Freetown it is the largest city and educational centre in Sierra Leone. It contains Njala University and was the capital of the Protectorate under British rule. Although the Mende are the largest ethnic group in Bo it is culturally and ethnically diverse (Taylor, 2014). English is the official language and the professional language of the country, Krio is largely spoken in Bo and across the country. Even though on average there is a higher population of Muslims in Sierra Leone, Bo and Kenema are districts where Muslims do not dominate (Gow et al, 2013). Religious intermarriage and tolerance is an enviable trait of Sierra Leone where Muslims and Christians live peacefully. Bo District has

traditionally been a supporter of the opposition party the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), and this allegiance has led to opposition rallies that have previously turned violent.

Bo is an important location for understanding the civil war and the subsequent process of peacebuilding for a number of reasons. It was the place that according to Gberie (2005) Sankoh stated he started organising the revolutionary movement. Sankoh went to Bo, traditionally a SLPP area where resistance to the current government was rife and dissident meetings could be held outside of the capital's gaze. As an SLPP stronghold the opportunity for change that the RUF offered in the early stages of the conflict was often welcomed. This perception is directly linked to the ethnic divisions between the two main parties the SLPP (Mende dominated) and the APC (Temne dominated). It was in Bo that the radical students and lecturers from Fourah Bay College who formed the Pan African Union (PANAFU) met Sankoh.

In 1994 the RUF started to creep nearer to Freetown taking up strategic points along the Makeni-Bo highway and increasing their sporadic assaults on the surrounding cities. Bo was a target for the RUF between 1994-5, which included Njala University. Previous to these attacks Bo had become a place for chiefs and the general population displaced by the RUF to flee, in fact a few of my interviewees moved to Bo during the civil war for refuge and ended up settling. Due to Bo's high population and location it became a headquarters

for the "Southern-based Mende militia known as the Kamajors" (TRC, 2004: Vol. 3A, C. 1: 33). Bo had managed to recruit a number of young and displaced people seeking refuge for its Civil Defence Force (CDF), "…because I know a lot of people came to Bo to escape, it was like a place, Bo was like a place to escape from the war, a lot of people came here for refuge" (Soloman, Bo, April 2014).

So who are the people of Bo, who are my interviewees?

III. What is the Local?

Definitions of the "local" and their place within the context of critical peace studies has provided space for an interesting debate. A lot of the debate seeks to correct what the local is not and what it has been mistaken to represent:

> The local is assumed to be a near empty space, willingly subservient to Northern models and interests. For these reasons debate about the local tends to drift into debates about the state and international intervention, and how state building and international assistance can assist local communities to achieve security and well-being… It is assumed that political liberalism is immutable and should be defended because there is no better universal objective. Finally, it is often pointed out that there is no real 'local', as the world is globalised and networked (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013b: 765).

When describing the "local" I refer to Sierra Leoneans who are the intended recipients of peacebuilding and beneficiaries of the activities of international development agencies (see following section). To my mind, the local and international exist to the extent that they are useful in loosely categorising groups but when the local becomes a big part of the new critique then the term must be taken seriously. Of course as Richmond (2013) suggests the international and local are not distinct spheres after all the men and women

who make up the international are themselves part of some kind of "local". The term becomes incredibly important when it is used in research, for example if I claim to represent local voices or adopt a local perspective we run into problems. As I see the local as fluid and ever-changing I do not seek to represent the local, instead I chose to give a platform to individual voices from a particular location at a particular moment in time.

IV. Who are the Local?

In 2013 Sierra Leone had an estimated total population of just over 6 million, with Lebanese, Europeans, Indians, Pakistanis and Liberians making up 15% of the total population categorised under "Other" (CIA, 2014). The term "local" reveals more about who I am not targeting, for example employees of international organisations, NGOs, non-Sierra Leoneans who have not lived in the country for a long period of time. However the term leaves a large spectrum of society within Sierra Leone unaccounted for, namely those with connections to the international but are still considered local. Rather than seeing the "local" as a category or group in opposition to the "international" I see it more as a fluid network of interactions between people who are established within a particular community within the country. It is those people who have long-term links and interests, and could range from elites to young women trying to start a business. My interactions were constrained by ethical guidelines; therefore my "local" had to be over 18. I had no interview

prearranged before I arrived in Bo, and I relied on my host to introduce me to people who then introduced me to other people and it snowballed from there.

The definition of the "local" in my research in terms of my participants mainly relied on:

- Access- which because of my geographical location in the Southern and Eastern provinces meant mainly locals from the Mende ethnic group
- Word of mouth
- Over 18
- Sierra Leoneans

I had friends who translated Mende so I was able to speak to those who spoke English and those who did not. I managed to conduct 52 interviews including one focus group. However the majority of these interviewees were men. I found access to women more difficult, with many more women requiring a translator. Although all of my interviewees were anonymous, to make them more relatable I have given them a pseudonym related to the history of Sierra Leone. There is a brief description of my interviewees in my *dramatis personae* section at the beginning of Chapter 3, 5, 6 and 7 where my interviewee's voices appear. A collection of all my quoted interviewees with a brief profile can be found in my appendix. All of my interviewees signed a

consent form (this can be found in the appendix) or for those who didn't or couldn't write I gained recorded verbal acceptance after I had read them the form. This form gave them the contact number and email of myself and my supervisors should they wish to retract their participation.

For Millar (2014) the term "local" is defined in conjunction with a particular project, and thus the local are the intended beneficiaries of the project being evaluated. In my case I do not have a particular project through which I am comparing the local response. My research explored themes that emerged regarding peace, recovery and development in the everyday lives of people living in Bo and the Eastern provinces among Mende people. The main concern of my research was identifying what was important to them. This led to themes emerging around religion, sports, corruption, education and peacebuilders as "strangers" and how these became legitimate facilitators of narratives of peace and recovery. Aspects of these themes certainly interact with the international community and can be used to encourage peace and stability but it is the hidden transcripts, the practices in everyday life that escape the measures of success and the typical concern of peacebuilders that I am interested in. In this way, the local for me was difficult to define. I was very open with who I spoke to in the community, including religious leaders, who could be classed as "local elites" to amputees still trying to rebuild their lives after the conflict known as local non-elites, or what Richmond (2011: 14) might term local-local. My reason for this was simple: I did not have any

interviews prearranged prior to my trip and they came by chance and acquaintance. I did not know the family I was going to live with because it is difficult to prearrange these sorts of things in Sierra Leone, as you often have to be there to make it happen. This difficulty in pre-planning may be due to the fact that people tend to move around depending on day-to-day demands, and it may also have been a question of trust. My host was (quite rightly) less inclined to make plans and commit to helping me until we had met face to face. Another reason I was open with who I spoke to was because I didn't know exactly what I was looking for! My plan was go, see and be, keep a diary, transcribe my interviews, put all these diverging experiences and voices together and see what patterns emerge.

V. The Mende People

The Mende and Temne are the two dominant ethnic groups; together they make up approximately 60 per cent of the country's population (Ayissi & Poulton, 2006: 21). The Mende are mainly located within the Southern and Eastern provinces of Sierra Leone. Although my host family and the surrounding community spoke Mende to each other they often switched to Krio a common tongue amongst Sierra Leoneans from different parts of the country. The language shows the mixed influences of the past with European and African words intermingled. Krio would frequently be spoken on the phone, and in these instances they may have been talking to Sierra Leoneans

from a different ethnic group. Many of my friends in Bo spoke English, Mende, Temne and of course Krio.

The traditional occupation associated with the Mende is farming and the cultivation of crops such as rice, palm oil or cash crops such as coffee or cocoa. The importance of rice should not be underestimated, there are 20 Mende words for the different ways to describe rice, for example the way it is cooked (Manson et al, 2012: 106). I would often hear that if someone hadn't eaten rice then they hadn't eaten. The President even gave the armed forces a guaranteed supply of rice to avoid instability and dissatisfaction (Awareness Times, 2010). After rice the next staple food is cassava, and friends would talk about eating gari (processed cassava) as a cheap meal when they couldn't afford anything else.

The importance of rite of passage ceremonies was demonstrated on a drive to a village outside of Bo when I saw a procession of women walking along the road with white faces. I had seen this in my ethnographic reading and knew it was part of the Sande initiation ceremony. The white clay that covers the girls symbolises their entry into Sande society and the beginning of their ascension to adulthood. The male version is the Poro society where men are prepared to be leaders in their community.

One other observation that I made during my time in Bo was the importance of (head) hair to the women I met. One of the women I lived with (the daughter of my host) was always asking to play with my hair and complimented me on its length and texture. Before her sports day she spent a lot of time and money at one of the hair salons in town to get her hair looking perfect. I found this strange to do for a sports day but it seemed to be mimicked by other girls attending:

> Hairstyles are very important in Mende society. A Mende woman's hair must be well groomed, clean, and oiled. Hair must be tied down under strict control and shaped into intricate, elegant styles for the sake of beauty and sex appeal. Dirty, disheveled hair is a sign of insanity. A woman who does not groom and maintain her hair has neglected the community's standards of behavior. Only a woman in mourning can let her hair loose. The Mende finds unarranged "wild" hair immoral and connects it to wild behavior (Taylor, 2011: 98).

This section has explored a few of the many characteristics of the Mende people, although I have only mentioned characteristics that have stood out for me.

During my time in Bo I witnessed the commemoration of Sierra Leone's 53rd Independence anniversary on April 27, otherwise known as Independence

Day. The day was full of jubilation and reflection; in fact I attended a church service where volunteers spoke about the history of Sierra Leone and its political parties. I will briefly recount some of the threads of history that are often attributed to the onset of the civil war and how the past features in the present in the path to Sierra Leone celebrating its 53rd birthday.

VI. "You're British? You Used to Rule Us [laughs]"

This quotation came from an encounter I had with a Sierra Leonean man after I first exited Lungi airport. I was talking to a local man when he asked where I was from. When I told him I was British, he and some friends laughed and said "You're British? You used to rule us". Immediately I felt terrible about being cast as the coloniser as soon as I had landed. It was clear from his tone that this was meant as a joke with no intended malice but I still felt the need to apologise. They made me feel a bit ridiculous for apologising, as if this was just an historical fact and not an open wound. This encounter and the remarks of my respondent made me question the way I would be perceived in Sierra Leone and how the past is seen and understood by Sierra Leoneans. This observation would prove crucial in Chapter 6 in understanding the role of the "stranger" in Sierra Leonean society.

The context I was entering in Bo was steeped in the wider history of Sierra Leone and its place in the world. The journey from colonisation towards post-conflict recovery will be the focus of this chapter.

In 1808 the British government declared the coastal area of Sierra Leone a Crown Colony. The inhabitants of Freetown were under direct rule from the British Governor; they were considered British subjects and were obliged to abide by English common law (TRC, 2004: Vol. 3A, C.1). Western education within Freetown flourished along with economic prosperity. A community of professional Krio individuals were produced with Western values: "They developed their own social structures and peculiar culture and identity and are referred to as "Krio". They were, by and large, homogenous and cohesive, anglophile and Anglo-centric" (Berewa, 2011: 1). The colony created a small group of intellectuals and professionals that became the "elite" but the rest of Sierra Leone known as the hinterlands was largely beyond the reach of British governance: "As a result of the Creoles' western education and embracement of Christianity they became assistants to European missionaries, and sometimes acted as agents for the British colonial authorities in the hinterlands" (Kargbo, 2006:37).

The inhabitants of the hinterlands consisted of Mendes to the south and east and Temnes to the north but the "westernisation" of the Krio meant that a division occurred. "This gave the Creoles a preferred caste-like status in

relation to the indigenous Africans who resided in the colony and their status was supported by the colony's government throughout the nineteenth century" (Kargbo, 2006: 37).

These uneasy beginnings and artificial borders created feelings of insecurity and superiority amongst many Krio. The lack of interest in the hinterlands led to separate communities developing their own culture, traditions and customary laws: "The British did not encourage the development of a single unitary state and a sense of nation, describing the Protectorate as 'foreign countries adjoining the colony'; they justified its annexation as 'in the interest of the people" (Gberie, 2005: 19). These tensions were increased when in 1898 the hut tax (a tax based on the size of a hut) was introduced by the British in order to raise revenues for administrative costs. The Hut Tax War ensued when Bai Bureh, a Temne chief, along with members of the Mende community challenged the authority of the British.

The Hut Tax War and Bai Bureh specifically were represented in the 53rd Independence Day parade as a symbol of Sierra Leone's distinct identity. The revolt continued for nine months with attacks targeting Krio's who were seen as colonial collaborators. Eventually the British managed to defeat Bai Bureh, and instigators and tribal leaders were put on trial with the majority being executed, the British then sought to re-establish their authority by marching to the villages with a British flag (Woods, 2010).

The Chiefs were set up by Governor Cardew in 1896 as part of the British tactic “divide and rule”. They exercised their power over local governance through their close ties with Chiefs whose legitimacy and accountability lay with the British District Commissioner, and this arrangement was so effective that they often strengthened their powers. The British decided to create an aristocracy where only members of the “ruling families” could be eligible to become Paramount Chiefs.

These chiefs are elected by the “Tribal Authority” and retain this position for life, only to be succeeded by another member of the aristocracy (Reed & Robinson, 2013). This form of governance according to Berewa (2011) formed a legacy of patrimonialism and clientelism still seen in Sierra Leone today:

> Thus, the British colonial administrators failed to build, or encourage the building of, a democratic culture in Sierra Leone. Rather, they administered the country through a form of neo-patrimonial and clientelistic system by means of which a relationship of patron and client was established between the colonial administration and the Paramount Chiefs, with the colonial administrators being patrons and the Paramount Chiefs, clients (Berewa, 2011: 8).

Tony Blair is regarded as a national hero for his role in the civil war, and as a symbol of gratitude he was given the honour of becoming a Paramount Chief with his official title being "Chief of Peace". This link between the British and Chiefs who are often seen as the traditional leaders is still present to this day.

The Enlightenment concepts of "progress", "reason" and "knowledge" through the advancement of science led to the eventual abolition of slavery in Britain, although assumptions of civilised nation building were to create future problems in post-colonial states. The British navy took freed slaves from England to settle in the coastal areas of Sierra Leone in 1787, which was subsequently named Freetown. In the ensuing years freed slaves from other parts of the world were also introduced. The diverse languages and cultures were dominated by the introduction of Western language and religion.

VII. "You People [British] Brought Independence to this Land with No Preparation for Us [laughs]"

> So that is why poverty is everyday increasing in Sierra Leone because they will not allow the young mind to grow, so what we are saying…you people [British] brought independence to this land with no preparation for us [laughs] (Amidu, Bo, April 2014).

Sierra Leone gained independence in 1961. When I had conversations with Sierra Leoneans about independence there was a conflict between recognising that some things were better under the British rule but being very proud of being independent and having the capacity to rule themselves. Many reconciled this conflict of opinion by saying that independence came too quickly and without the required preparation.

The Atlantic Charter 1941 marked a change in the international arena. This Charter affirmed the right to self-determination and rejected "territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the people concerned". Out of this political atmosphere and the historical background of Sierra Leone came two political parties, the National Council of Sierra Leone (NCSL) who represented the Colony and the SLPP for the Protectorate.

The SLPP was a Mende-dominated party led by Milton Margai (also a Mende). A western educated doctor, he became Chief Minister, then Prime Minister and later won the 1962 elections to become the first Prime Minister of Sierra Leone. Tensions within the party led to one of Margai's former ministers Siaka Stevens forming the All People's Congress (APC), which was a separate (Temne dominated) political party and a challenge to Margai:

> Like this last election…because we knew Ernest Bai Koroma was doing very well and we said not for anybody but Ernest Bai Koroma,

> we will vote for him. We will vote him in again because he has started very well, and we want him to continue for another term and people said to my son ah your parents are now APC. I don't know what is wrong with that, all of us cannot be SLPP and so our education has made us understand what is good and what is not good. If SLPP is not good, it is not good, if APC is good it is good, if APC is not good it is not good…So to me if APC is doing well I can't press APC, if SLPP is doing well I can't press SLPP. But naturally they say SLPP is our own because of the South, that is our own party, but not everybody even in Bo, we had APC voted here (Isata, Bo, March 2014).

Isata, a Mende woman from the south, was speaking about the stigma of voting for APC in the last Presidential election. There is pressure to automatically vote SLPP but her education taught her to look beyond tribal allegiance to what is best for the country.

VIII. A New Era of "Leadership"

The colonial legacy of ethnic division and over-centralised government as well as foreign interest in natural resources became a dangerous mix which could either be remedied or exasperated by Margai's successors. These ethnic divisions are present to this day through stereotypes and will be explored in Chapter 7 in relation to business, education and employment. Sir Milton Margai died in 1964 and was replaced by his younger brother Sir Albert Margai (a western educated lawyer). After this watershed moment Sierra Leone would be plagued by military coups and coup attempts linked to bad governance.

Sir Albert Margai proposed the idea of a one-party system in order to form a republican constitution, and this move was an attempt to centralise the government away from the direction of (limited) democracy to a form of governance reminiscent of the authoritarian colonial government that would restore full state sovereignty (Dumbuya, 2008). The proposal was never enacted, but as Dumbuya (2008) explains the fallout caused the disintegration of any realisation of parliamentary democracy. Margai's pursuit for power resulted in the resurgence of old ethnic North/South tensions threatening Sierra Leone's national unity. Margai was accused of creating a Mende dominant government, civil service and army, which was a move that would

further isolate him from the opposition as well as chiefs and make him more reliant on his relationship with the army as an ally. The perceived tribalisation of Margai's party created a breeding ground for the subsequent divisive and toxic political environment with the fusion of a civic-military relationship.

Margai groomed Brigadier David Lansana, Force Commander and Head of the Sierra Leone Armed Forces, a Mende with connections to the SLPP. In the general elections of 1967 it seemed Stevens APC had won but at the swearing-in ceremony there was a coup headed by Lansana. These relations between political parties and the military became characteristic of many post-colonial countries where the line between politics and military were abused leading to the abundance of coups found in countries such as Sierra Leone: "…porous civil-military boundaries are a common phenomenon throughout much of the developing world. This porosity seems capable of coexisting even with the disdain which military officers typically have for politicians" (Horowitz, 2001: 464).

A day after Lansana declared a coup, fellow officers planned a counter-coup, and they arrested Lansana after three days and formed a military government, the National Reformation Council (NRC) in 1967 consisting of senior military figures and police officers. The NRC stressed that they were acting as an interim government to help restore the country's failing democracy and would leave once the political environment had calmed and fair elections had been

conducted. The NRC set various Commissions of Inquiry to investigate government misconduct from corruption to election rigging.

The NRC remained in power for a year when in 1968 they were replaced in another largely non-violent coup by non-commissioned military officers (NCOs) of the Sierra Leone Army who called themselves the Anti-Corruption Revolutionary Movement and later the National Interim Council (NIC). The NIC were determined to separate the military and political arena and put power back into the hands of civilians, and they had Stevens sworn-in and he became Prime Minister.

Stevens had the support of the Temne and Limba groups of the north, and this support was gained through his socialist rhetoric and propaganda regarding Margai's Mende hegemony within politics. Stevens governed Sierra Leone for over 17 years, a length of time in politics that could have influenced the country's future and made real long-term positive changes. Stevens's socialist rhetoric meant that supporters were anticipating reforms that would introduce a type of welfare state to ensure basic needs were addressed across ethnic, religious and economic boundaries.

The reality was very different. The political insecurity created by Albert Margai's actions led Stevens to focus on his own self-preservation rather than his electoral promises. The first step to secure his own power was to change

the status of Sierra Leone from a Dominion of the British Commonwealth to a Republic. The notion of "us and them" was utilised by Stevens but this time it was Sierra Leoneans against the British. Stevens used the One-Party Bill that Albert Margai pushed through (which he opposed) as it had already been through many processes leading to a speedy implementation. This step was an important one to secure power for himself in order to make the changes that would ensure his political survival.

Sierra Leone was named a Republic on 19th April 1971. Stevens then continued to transform the symbolic and ceremonial status of the Head of State into a more formal one making him the First Executive President. This title allowed him to gain more power and begin to stretch the rule of law and the boundaries of good governance. Stevens extended his term of office and was entitled to govern without the threat of opposition for as long as he deemed fit. The structural violence created by Stevens ended the concept of multi-party democratic politics by using the law to block the way for change. He prohibited oppositional parties such as SLPP and began to form a One Party State. Stevens became a dictator who had more or less complete control over the political arena. The one-party system was developed to ensure loyalty and control, but to retain this control Stevens needed to keep this loyalty through a system of patrimonialism, endemic corruption and the neglect and reversal of long-term developmental projects.

There is an observable trend between countries that contain valuable natural resources and the onset and duration of conflict, although observable trends are not always linked to direct cause and effect. The role of diamonds in Sierra Leone has received a lot of attention in reference to the "resource curse", where countries of abundant, profitable natural resources exhibit poor economic growth and weak infrastructure (Sarraf & Jiwanji 2001; Bannon & Collier 2003; Sala-i-Martin & Subramanian 2003; Rosser, 2006). Alluvial diamonds are crucial to understanding Sierra Leone's story; the greed versus grievance debate readjusts the importance placed on diamonds depending on the positions adopted by theorists.

The nature of alluvial diamonds meant that proper supervision and deterrents of the land from "illicit" mining was near impossible. Alluvial diamonds are location-bound and extracted through digging and filtering using rudimentary equipment. The appeal of diamond mining for the rural population came with the hope of finding a diamond that would elevate them out of poverty.

The role of diamonds was key to Stevens' system of governance and the acquisition of his personal wealth. Stevens decided to create partnerships with Lebanese merchants, taking the business of exporting out of the hands of Sierra Leoneans. Consequently, there is a lot of resentment even today towards the Lebanese and their role in Sierra Leone's history, and this resentment was evident in my interviewees' stories in Chapters 6 and 7. In

1971 Stevens created the National Diamond Mining Company which took over a majority share of SLST, and this move effectively nationalised the company as well as the mining and selling of diamonds in Sierra Leone.

Momoh decided to introduce a democratic constitution but the only candidates that were eligible were from the same pool of corrupt politicians, which suggested that Momoh was attempting to change the structure of governance within the structure of a one-party system. This attempt failed and Momoh was deposed in 1992 by disgruntled military officers who formed the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC).

IX. Youth, Gerontocracy and Generational Conflict

> … the youths of this country you have already witnessed the restlessness on their faces, you can really see that they are disgruntled, they are not happy but among the stupidest group of people, sorry to say, that I can come and dangle a few Leones before them and…satisfy them for one hour and they mortgage their future for twenty years, they really don't care (Hinga, Bo, April 2014).

When we speak of youth in Sierra Leone we are not just talking about age but social status. Local governance is gerontocratic, justice and authority is largely held in the hands of the male elders in opposition to the more marginalised groups which consists of youths, women, strangers (non-indigenes) with weak family lineages. When looking at definitions of youth in Sierra Leone's government's documentation we can see a difference between domestic and international definitions, '…the Sierra Leone government's official definition: male and female individuals aged 15-35. This is considerably broader than international standards' (Manning, 2009a: 2). However Manning (2009a) states that the general public's understanding of the term is even broader and tied to social status rather than just age:

> Among the general public, however, and often among individual representatives of the government or civil society, youth is a much

> more ambiguous category, and one that is socially rather than age-defined. A "youth" is someone in a particular stage of life: typically unmarried, landless, and without economic or political power…This is a particular issue for men, which is perhaps one reason why the term "youth" is usually understood to refer more to men than to women (Manning, 2009a: 2-3).

The lack of opportunity for men before and after the war means "youth" has developed to contain negative connotations which emphasises their danger to society. The dominance of elders in the chiefdoms can be linked to their age and the time they have spent acquiring assets and building their status which separates them from the youths. The TRC found that 'the majority of the fighting forces were composed of the young, the disgruntled, the unemployed and the poor' (TRC, 2004: Vol. 2, C. 2: 36). It is believed that this tension between the generations was the source of some rebels targeting chiefs and other elders in the village to exact revenge in a state of anomie: "In the war, youths in particular often sought revenge against a system of chiefs and elders that excluded and exploited them" (Keen, 2005a: 67). It was only in a state of war where rigid societal structures were broken down that these young men could feel the type of power that had been kept from them.

Many youths leave their villages because they are fined heavily by their chiefs for not participating in "town work" (Manning, 2009: 14) and usually go to

mine diamonds. This activity reduces the labour available for agriculture. Mining as we explored earlier was an extremely corrupt business that robbed the country of its chief, natural source of wealth and created a shadow economy while acting as a prime recruiting ground for the RUF. Ideological and radicalised students fled with some going to Libya for military training to become revolutionaries. However the ideology was diluted in favour of militarisation, and this was the beginning of the RUF.

X. Civil War

> … I was just talking this morning towards my colleagues about before the war, you see before the war, to be honest with you, there was no peace due to bad governance…The bad governance brought about this, this war and there were a lot of grumble …so it means there was no stability, we talk in terms of security…there are several aspects which we have to look at, the security at that time was very fragile the insecurity within the country due to several factors, bad governance, corruptions so I cannot say how can I conclude that there was peace… war is not only meant when you take up arms to fight … you see it was actually on the intense stage when Foday Sankoh came in with the rebels and people were yearning for that then because it was time, they felt it was time for them to change the entire situation and stand

> out…So it was welcomed by them, before they started amputating people… (Soloman, Bo, March 2014).

The war officially started on 23 March 1991 when the RUF entered Sierra Leone from Liberia into Kailahun district with the aim of overthrowing the APC government. They moved through the country killing, looting, raping, amputating, and forcing many to join their ranks including children:

> The rebels told her I'm not going to kill you any longer, the only thing is I'm going to put your hand on this stick and cut it, chop it off and she begged, she pleaded to him…he cut off the left one first then she pleaded with the rebel not to cut off the right one because she is a woman, then he refused and did it. The rebel said this right hand I'm going to cut it off and he laid the other hand on the stick and cut it off…he said his name is don't blame God (Translator for Salia, Bo, April 2014).

> When the rebels came the first one that came he told her I'm going to kill you and the other one came and said no I'm going to rape you, so he raped her and he chopped her… (Translator for Almamy, Bo, April 2014).

During this time the government of Sierra Leone was undergoing a number of changes, in 1992 the NPRC overthrew the government, then in 1996 the leader was overthrown and Presidential elections were held. Ahmad Tejan Kabbah from the SLPP won the election but in 1997 he was overthrown in a military coup establishing the AFRC. The chairman Major Johnny Paul Koroma invited the RUF into an alliance with the AFRC. In 1998 the Nigerian-led intervention force ECOMOG drove the newly allied AFRC/RUF out of the capital and Kabbah was reinstated.

In 1999 AFRC/RUF troops returned to Freetown causing devastation and killing thousands over the course of two weeks. A ceasefire was agreed and the Lomé Peace Accord was signed by Sankoh and Kabbah. ECOMOG was joined by UN peacekeepers to monitor the peace agreement who eventually replaced them. UN peacekeepers were then taken hostage. In May 2000 the British military intervened initially on a non-combatant evacuation mission, and they were deployed in Freetown to secure Lungi airport to evacuate non-Sierra Leoneans (Gberie, 2005). After their success the British mandate was widened and they helped to support the UN and the government of Sierra Leone against the RUF. The war was officially declared over in 2002 after a number of rebels had been disarmed.

XI. Summary

This chapter has demonstrated the complexity and diversity present within Sierra Leone and why context was an important prerequisite for understanding our topic. This is an important step in changing the point of observation and exploring local power dynamics and the formation of identity in the present.

I have presented a mix of written history, my own experiences and stories from some of my interviewees to present the people and the place to readers. What this chapter documents is the unique history of Sierra Leone that has facilitated religious tolerance, cultural diversity, different languages, tribal politics, the importance of hair, ceremonies, coups, diamonds, local power structures, regional instability and civil war, food and livelihoods. Some of these key historical events such as religious tolerance and the history of Bo will help to contextualise my findings in Chapter 6 and 7. I have explored the importance of Bo not just in terms of its location but in its meaning as a "safe place" during the war and as a stronghold for the APC opposition. The section on British colonialism again explores ideas around positionality mentioned in the previous chapters. The embarrassment I felt when the past was examined links history, identity and space together. How I am perceived and how I perceive myself is affecting and determining my behaviour.

This chapter highlighted the difficulty and necessity in identifying who the "local" are in this research project in accordance with ethical considerations

and access. I reviewed other scholars' use of the term and located my "local" within this existing literature (Richmond, 2011; Millar, 2014).

I have explored the process of "remembering" and narrative in creating a fixed identity around Sierra Leone and Bo. I have achieved this by revisiting its heroes from Bai Bureh to Tony Blair. I have documented the leaders of Sierra Leone who have directly affected the fate of the people. I studied the economy of the country, its wealth, poverty and its abundance in natural resources and how this contributed to instability in the country. I then briefly touched on the power dynamics at the local level in terms of youth, the hierarchy of power, authority and legitimacy. All these categories are tied up in the past, the present and hopes for the future (Keen, 2009a; Manning, 2009a). They create a myth around Sierra Leone which helps to shape individuals' own identities and influences relations between tribes, ages and strangers.

This history has influenced the way people see the country and themselves as citizens. Chapter 6 re-orientates the perspective of peace and recovery to the relational influence and role of the "stranger" in the Sierra Leonean context in terms of the meaning attached to the internal stranger, the researcher and the peacebuilder. This local meaning challenges the location of power during the peacebuilding process and opens up new questions about where the substance of peace resides. It explores the "unfamiliar" and how human interaction at its most basic level involves the creation of a new space. The following chapter

picks up on this new space and the idea that the substance of peace may reside in other locations by discussing the everyday themes that emerged from conversations and interviewees with people experiencing the “success” story.

Part II

Chapter Six: The Space for Change

Dramatis Personae: By Order of Appearance

Oponjo *A respected Mende male leader within the community in Kailahun in his late 30s early 40s. He went to Guinea when the war began and when he returned to Kailahun the community had dispersed, some had died and others fled.*

Chidj *A Mende man living in Bo. He was young when the war began and fled with his mother. His father and siblings sought refuge in the United States where he hopes to join them one day.*

Ekuma *Respected religious leader in his 60s or 70s within Bo and involved with the IRC of Sierra Leone during the war.*

Soloman *An older Mende man married in his 50s with children. He worked as a social worker before getting involved with a local NGO. He fled to Bo when the war began.*

Salia *A female Mende survivor of the war in her 40s. The RUF amputated both of her lower arms. Her husband was also killed during the war.*

Ahmed *A photographer in Bo who is working on a manuscript for his life story. According to Ahmed his family were persecuted by the APC government.*

Augustine *A Mende man by tribe and a religious leader within Bo. He was young when the war began but recalls running from rebels and hiding one night in an open grave.*

I. Introduction

My research and insights are divided between Chapter 6 and Chapter 7. *The Space for Change* alters the point of observation and challenges the way we assume the process of peacebuilding and research is received by re-orientating it towards a human perspective. I use the concept of the "stranger" within Sierra Leone to catch a glimpse of the hidden world of meaning that structures my engagement with people on the ground as a stranger and the implication for peacebuilders. This chapter challenges the location of power and suggests that the substance of peace lies outside the traditional measures of success. This "substance" will be explored in Chapter 7.

The process of personalising peace and recovery must address the presence of the foreign "peacebuilder" in the guise of an international organisation or NGO. This presence will consist of an organisational culture and a business imperative, although at a more basic level it is the presence of new individuals

on the ground. This presence of the "unfamiliar" involves the creation of a new space, and this chapter looks at the effect of the unfamiliar in Sierra Leone on a human level.

What I find interesting about peacebuilding as a practice is the interaction between local people and the professional class of "peacebuilders". I wondered how these people were perceived and the meaning they may embody just through their presence or reputation. The concept of "stranger" relates back to themes emerging from my pilot study and the idea of location and identity. What does it mean to be a stranger, visitor, foreigner or outsider in the context of Bo and what is the distance between inhabiting the spatial domain and infiltrating the social one?

This chapter examines the role of the "stranger" as a term used to describe (i) Sierra Leoneans without historical ties to the land, (ii) my presence as a researcher from the UK, and (iii) the presence and attitudes towards peacebuilders. These three strangers are perceived very differently, and I hoped that by examining this difference I could assess the extent to which peace and recovery formed around the presence and activities of "strangers" and the limits of this practice.

II. Stranger Danger?

The term stranger in Sierra Leone has an established meaning, as it is a word that not only denotes a particular group of people but also suggests their social standing within the community:

> … "Stranger" status can persist for generations, and is often ascribed to or adopted by individuals whose ethnic identity is different from that of an area's original inhabitants ("indigenes"). Rights and property in rural areas are conferred as both a result and validation of citizenship, and strangers in a community must frequently form relationships with indigenes, through paths such as marriage or the patronage system, in order to gain some of the benefits of citizenship (Reno 2003) (Manning, 2009b: 120).

The stranger is identified in opposition to the indigenes, or original inhabitants. Both conceptions rely on each other for meaning. Peters (2011) traces this distinction back to colonial occupation when these categories were enshrined into the fabric of society:

> The political economy of rural Sierra Leone from the colonial period- and from the abolition of domestic servitude in 1928 in particular- is dominated by unresolved tensions between land-holding elites and

> dislocated peasants or 'strangers'… Children from ex-slave backgrounds lacked secure land, property, and marriage rights at emancipation, and many remained the pawns and clients of a chiefly and gerontocratic rural elite. Those who bucked the trend did so by leaving their chiefdom of birth, thereby becoming strangers in neighbouring chiefdoms (Peters, 2011: 13).

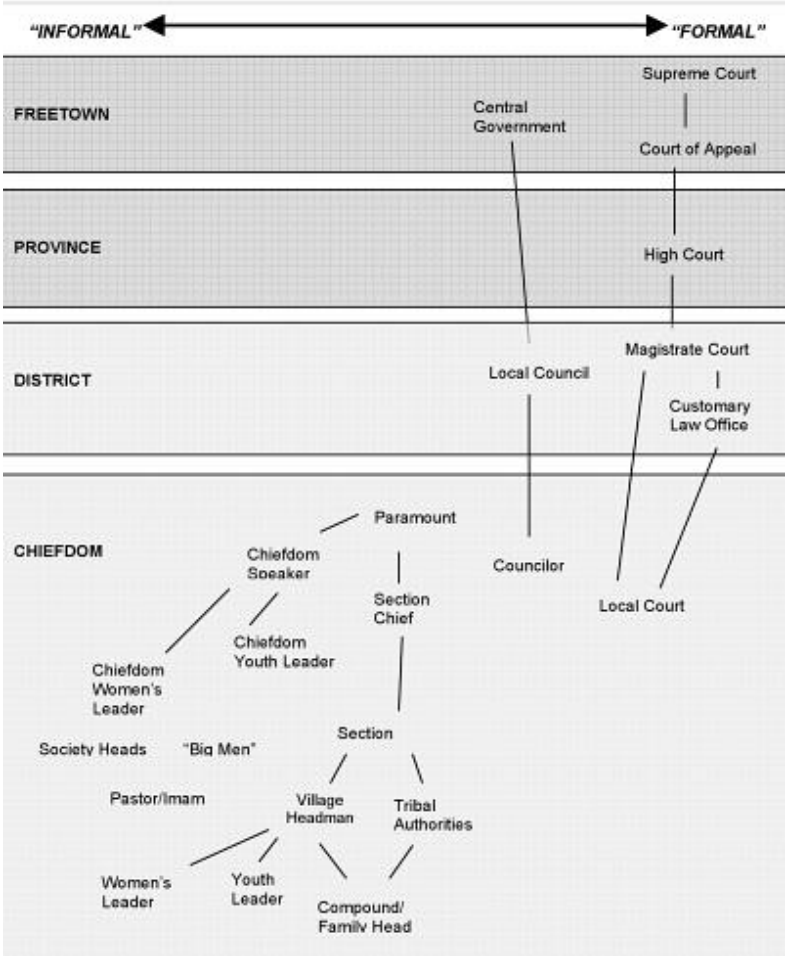
Strangers in this sense are those without close family lineage tied to the land. Location, history and identity are integral in understanding land ownership, authority and power in Sierra Leone. If you do not possess this then if possible you must align yourself with those who have it. This transaction provided indigenes with labour from strangers, and strangers with protection from the indigene and this has important implications for the political economy of the land in Sierra Leone. Simmel (1908) describes the concept of the stranger as a sociological concept, and sums up the disconnect between the individual and the space they occupy:

> The stranger is by nature no "owner of soil" soil not only in the physical, but also in the figurative sense of a life-substance which is fixed, if not in a point in space, at least in an ideal point of the social environment. Although in more intimate relations, he may develop all kinds of charm and significance, as long as he is considered a stranger

> in the eyes of the other, he is not an "owner of soil" (Simmel, 1950: 403).

The arrival of a stranger into a new village could have been caused by a lack of opportunity in their place of birth or to “escape customary social controls” (Peeters et al., 2009: 15). The stranger status for a Sierra Leonean could act as a temporary label, someone with connections and family in Bo may leave, for example ex-combatants who are ashamed to go home. However, if they return then this stranger label could potentially disappear. Some figures put the number of strangers in villages to around one third of the total population (Peters, 2011). Strangers are required to report to the town chief as a security measure, and this precaution is used in order to understand a person’s intentions and their history should a dispute arise (Manning, 2009b: 115). Tensions can occur when strangers outnumber indigenes in a community and a shift in power occurs. A stranger might run for local councillor or village headman. If the stranger wins the election as Manning (2009b) explains in an example in the Western Area Rural District then indigenes or natives may invoke customary law that states they own the land and will not be governed by a stranger. In this instance the stranger could invoke electoral law and the rules of eligibility; and here we see a struggle over power and legitimacy at the local level.

Figure 6.1: Local Governance from a Villager's Perspective



Source: [Diagram taken from Manning 2009b: 113]

In this diagram the position of the stranger is hard to pinpoint. Although it refers to a social group an individual could potentially transcend their stranger status through marriage or as suggested they could attain power and legitimacy through running for election. However more research is needed regarding how far an individual can transcend this label and the ways it can be achieved.

I first came across the term stranger in this context when reading the TRC-R for Sierra Leone under the chapter entitled *Historical Antecedents to the conflict*. According to the TRC-R the British colonialists excluded Krio's from the hinterlands creating a division between the Crown Colony and the Protectorate:

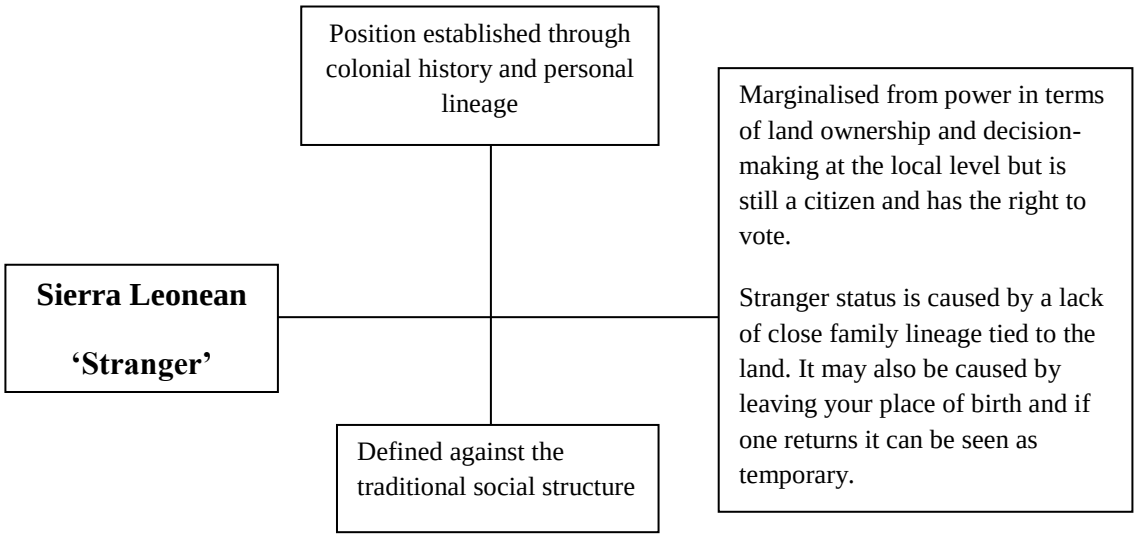
> Krios became "strangers" in the Protectorate by virtue of the Protectorate Ordinance of 1896 and they had to pay "stranger" fees to the local Chief, making them a lucrative source of revenue. Given that Krios were regarded as 'foreigners' in the Protectorate territories, they were afforded only those rights extended to them by the local Chiefs (TRC-R, 2004, Vol 3A Chapter 1: 13).

The favouritism shown by the British towards the Krio and their ascendance into official roles created a divide between the Krio and the inhabitants in the Protectorate. The fact that the population within the Protectorate could not easily access the benefits the Krio's possessed meant that a vacuum was created which was swiftly filled by a new stranger. Lebanese and Syrian immigrants who were literate and who understood trade and had connections initially became a welcomed stranger with the potential to offer new opportunities to Sierra Leoneans from the Protectorate:

> The arrival of Lebanese and Syrian immigrants in 1905 created new dynamics in inter-group relations. The Protectorate people embraced the new arrivals and diverted the bulk of their trade to them. The Lebanese and the Syrians were efficient, humble and literate and they had capital. They were willing, unlike the Krios, to grant credit to the Protectorate traders. In a short time, the British also began to favour the Lebanese and the Syrians over the Krios. This shift in economic alignment removed the remaining opportunity for interdependency between the people of the Protectorate and the Krios (TRC-R, 2004, Vol 3A Chapter 1: 13).

Figure 6.2 suggests how history, kinship and location have the potential to categorise Sierra Leoneans and assign them the identity of “stranger” within their own country. This has the effect of marginalising individuals from positions of power and influence.

Figure 6.2: The Sierra Leonean Stranger



Source: [Author]

Stranger has another broader meaning within the everyday vernacular, someone not from here, which could apply to the local area, the country, the culture, etc. So it seems there are conditions around how an "outsider" is perceived. Wood (1934) provided two important conditions: "The questions of the stranger's purpose and the probable duration of his stay are important" (Wood, 1934: 135).

III. The Familiar Stranger

So there seems to be a grading of "stranger" in terms of people not from here. In the 19th and 20th century Lebanese immigrants entered Sierra Leone and gained prominence through British colonial favouritism and the vacuum left

by their departure. In time these strangers dominated the country economically through various businesses they set up.

Anyone staying in Freetown or Bo for a few nights will begin to notice that hotels, supermarkets and diamond offices seem to be disproportionately in the hands of Lebanese immigrants. This apparent dominance in business has caused tensions in the perception of the Lebanese:

> The apparent confidence with which Lebanese businessmen in Sierra Leone operate today and their dominant role in the economic and commercial life of the country might lead one to conclude that this "stranger" minority group established itself with the blessing and cooperation of the local population. The Lebanese almost monopolize trade and commerce; they are the most successful and most powerful of the diamond dealers. They own and operate cinemas, hotels, nightclubs, gambling centres, factories, travel agencies, and most remarkably, a bank (the Lebanese bank, properly known as the Intra Bank, which operated from 1963 until 1971) (Kaniki, 1973: 97).

Some Sierra Leoneans believe the Sierra Leonean-Lebanese are involved in corrupt practices that prevent native Sierra Leoneans from competing, while others believe that they do not reinvest their money back into the country but

send it abroad to the Middle East to buy property or even to fund conflict (Gberie, 2002: 13):

> ...you know our ministers used to recommend the Lebanese people to the bank managers instead of recommending their black brothers because of the same corruption, because of commission, but somebody recommend you now after receiving the money you just go and make some brown envelope, thank you for your good work for your assistance, but for a black brother he will find it difficult (Oponjo, Kailahun, April 2014).

When I asked Sierra Leoneans if the Lebanese were targeted during the war, they stated that many went back to Lebanon for the duration of the conflict and then returned. This ability to leave is a luxury that others do not possess. These problems and perceptions have meant that Sierra Leonean-Lebanese have not yet been able to gain automatic citizenship at birth because of their "non-negro African descent" and are still officially strangers:

> Unfortunately, their inability to integrate made them too conspicuous and magnified both their success and crimes. Where both Sierra Leoneans and Lebanese "profiteered" in trade the latter were singled out as exploiters, as evil-doers and targets of attack. This was mainly because though some Lebanese married local women, especially in the

> Protectorate, most of them were not absorbed into the society. They were always considered as "strangers", as outsiders. They were in the community but not of it. Economically they were members, but morally they were not (Kaniki, 1973: 113).

Sierra Leonean strangers and Lebanese/Syrian strangers are both welcomed and feared. They share an intention to stay and potentially make money from working and living in the area. In this scenario as the strangers play a role in the political economy there is an interest in their marginalisation from power and fear of their potential to influence decision-making away from the interests of the indigenes.

What is interesting from my interviews is that the Mende Sierra Leoneans from Bo seem to believe the stereotype that the Mende are better at education in terms of learning and fall short on matters of business. When I asked why, the answer seemed to be one of culture, and they told me that Temne, Lebanese and Fullah were brought up on business and trade while the Mende focus on education and learning, making it difficult for them to compete in the world of business. The difference between the Lebanese and Fullah is that they are (to differing degrees) seen as outsiders:

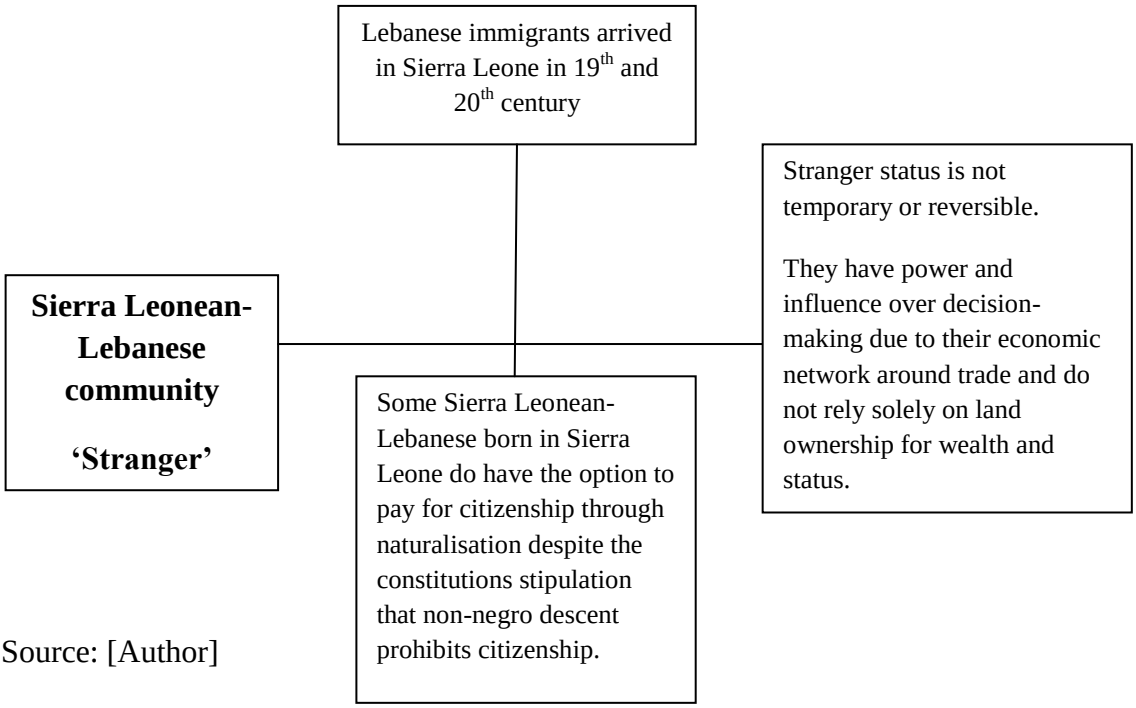
> …well in Sierra Leone we are really having problems based on the past records that our other people have been having, that is why you see

> when you go around Freetown, have you seen a business managed by a Sierra Leonean a very large business…many of the businesses you see around town is managed by Lebanese, the Fullahs and when you talk about Lebanese, Fullahs they are people coming, they are not really originally from Sierra Leone like Lebanese and they know how to do business (Chidj, Bo, March, 2014).

This representation of Fullahs as outsiders is difficult to find in the literature although they were often mentioned alongside the Lebanese in discussions I had, even though they originated in Guinea and as a minority ethnic group they have a long history in modern day Sierra Leone.

Figure 6.3 demonstrates the economic power and marginalisation of Sierra Leonean-Lebanese "strangers". They do not necessarily seek assimilation as an end goal and exercise power through trade rather than relying solely on land ownership tied to history or kinship.

Figure 6.3: Sierra Leonean-Lebanese as Strangers



Source: [Author]

There are other examples of strangers in the Sierra Leonean context including Indians and most recently Chinese. The Chinese stranger has had an increased presence since the end of the conflict due to China's interest in Africa and its inclination to engage in development finance. China's aid is usually tied to infrastructure projects that favour Chinese companies and its loans are commodity-backed and tied to the African countries' natural resources (Sun, 2014). In Bo their physical presence is known through extensive road-building projects, the construction of the new stadium in Bo and their culture is present through the use of the Chinese language on some road signs and "donated" equipment such as fire engines. This relationship is very interesting especially due to the rapid growth of China's economic presence (Sun, 2014) and the

effect this presence might have on the relationship between peacebuilders aligned to the liberal peace and the Chinese version of development; but the topic lies outside my scope in this thesis.

IV. The Researcher from "Stranger" to "Guest" to "Big Woman"

Yet the term stranger in this context has been researched before and offers little in the way of a new perspective. What I wondered was why there appeared to be a difference between the stranger in the sense described above, namely, my personal presence as a researcher and stranger in the sense of a peacebuilder?

The term stranger has developed as a sociological concept largely linked to the work of Simmel (1908). In this context the stranger is in the group but he is not necessarily a member of it:

> The stranger is thus being discussed here, not in the sense often touched upon in the past, as the wanderer who comes today and goes tomorrow, but rather as the person who comes today and stays tomorrow. He is, so to speak, the potential wanderer: although he has not moved on, he has not quite overcome the freedom of coming and going…But his position in this group is determined, essentially, by the

> fact that he has not belonged to it from the beginning… (Simmel, 1908: 402).

From this sociological concept a number of other terms arose all dealing with the introduction of a person from another place, the nature and effect of the interaction and the implications for the social structure, notably, the "newcomer" (Wood, 1934), the "marginal man" (Park, 1928) and the sojourner (Siu, 1952). These concepts provide the theoretical foundations of ideas around the "stranger", but they are also restrictive in their definitions. Simmel's stranger does not "aspire to be assimilated", as he is seen as occupying professional roles with the potential to be an objective confidant who has not quite given up the freedom of wandering (Levine, 1979). This description does not fit the Sierra Leonean stranger who is already well defined, and instead I am seeking concepts to help explain the researcher and peacebuilder in the creation of a new space. The "marginal man" through the process of migration lives in two worlds and seeks to be assimilated into the new culture. Again this definition does not apply, and the roles of the researcher and the international peacebuilder are often temporary where assimilation is not necessarily the end goal. Siu's sojourner according to the definition does not seek to be assimilated and is not offered this membership.

Siu contends that this relationship can only occur in urban communities (Siu, 1952). This view restricts the applicability of my research by suggesting that

such relationships can only occur in urban communities, although it does seem to reflect the Lebanese example of strangers who are concentrated in the urban communities. Finally in respect of Woods "newcomer", I find this definition closer to the researcher and peacebuilder's experience. Wood looks at the response of the group to the stranger and the stranger as the "newly arrived outsider":

> A stranger who has entered a group for the first time is outside the system of relationships which unite the group, and if he is to be included, these relationships must be extended to him. The ease or the difficulty with which this is done will depend upon the flexibility of the system of relationships, the personal qualities of the interacting individuals, and the presence or absence of extraneous factors which might tend to hasten or retard the process (Wood, 1934: 4).

What appeals to me about Wood's definition of the stranger as "newcomer" is the importance she places on the initial meeting and the flexibility she allows in the duration of the newcomer's residency:

> We shall describe the stranger as one who has come into face-to-face contact with the group for the first time. This concept is broader than that of Simmel, who define the stranger as "the man who come today and stays tomorrow, the potential wanderer, who although he has gone

> no further, has not quite got over the freedom of coming and going". For us the stranger may be, as with Simmel, a potential wanderer, but he may also be a wanderer who comes today and goes tomorrow, or he may come today and remain with us permanently (Wood: 1934: 43-44).

I am interested in why the stranger term is not fixed and why the Sierra Leoneans I interviewed might see different strangers differently. What I found fascinating is that as a stranger (a white woman from the UK) I am treated better than some people treated each other. Accordingly, it turned out that instead of feeling like a stranger I felt like a guest.

V. *Hey, White Girl*

Whilst walking around one of the streets in my initial trip to Freetown I noticed some women walking behind me making what I can only describe as comical noises relating to my race. Yet the noises seemed related in my mind to a Chinese person's characteristics. I was confused as I had never been mistaken for a Chinese person before, but when I asked a friend it seemed foreigners tended to look alike and since there had been a great influx of Chinese into Africa and specifically Sierra Leone with the investment in resource extraction I was assumed to be of Asian descent. Other times I would walk down the street and hear *white girl*, *hey white girl*, this is very strange

but no offence was intended. To some people I was white, to others I was Asian although to most I may simply have been foreign, a stranger, not originally from this place. I had become part of a new identity constructed for me that of the foreigner and in this case the latest influx of foreigners, the Chinese.

As a white person walking around I would hear *pumoi* shouted at me especially from children. *Pumoi* can be translated as white man, but it is used to get white females' attention as well as men. The importance of the word is to designate the colour, when I asked a Sierra Leonean friend why they call me *pumoi* if it means white man he replied that when a white person is seen it represents a change in the environment, perhaps even a change that could lead to more prosperity. So as a white stranger I had already gained a symbolic identity as someone who could potentially offer positive change before I had even sat down and had a conversation with the people.

One way I used to gauge the response to my presence was by ending my interviews by asking the interviewee if they would like to ask me any questions. This revealed what information they perceived to be important in our discussions:

> Interviewee: like I'm a football fan what team are you supporting in England?

Interviewee: Of course, I would like to know where you are coming from?...What impact will this interview have on me personally and Sierra Leone as a country?

Interviewee: Well my first question is how do you feel to be in Sierra Leone? Are we friendly?

Interviewee: …After your course would you like to come back to Sierra Leone?

Interviewee: Since you left England are you communicating with your relatives?

Interviewee: No well I'm happy meeting you, there is one thing that I believe that if you have a problem and you don't share it with somebody else the problem will be heavier but now that all these problems I have shared them with you I feel lighter [laughs].

Interviewee: What is your age?...What do you hope to do after?

Interviewee: How many of you in your family?...What do your mum and dad do?...When were you born?

> Interviewee: I want to know about the society [in England]?
>
> Interviewee: I just want to know as you asked me my education I want to know your educational background; your family [laughs]...
>
> Interviewee: How old are you?... Are you married?

The question "Do you have any questions for me?" came at the end as I needed to build a rapport with the interviewees and I wanted them to know they could ask me anything. The above examples demonstrate that I did not get off easily. Many mimicked the open questions I had asked them that centred around family and aspirations. Some, like me, were curious about this "other" culture and society that existed and wanted to know more. Others quite rightly wanted to know what this research would be used for and how they could benefit.

My age and marital status were also of keen interest, particularly for the women I interviewed. We would have discussions from these questions about women in Europe and the struggle between wanting a career and starting a family. For others they used this final question as an opportunity to express gratitude at the conversation as a therapeutic process:

> No well I'm happy meeting you, there is one thing that I believe that if you have a problem and you don't share it with somebody else the problem will be heavier but now that all these problems I have shared them with you I feel lighter [laughs] (Ekuma, Bo, April, 2014).

The question "Do you have any questions for me?" probes something deeper as it shifts power to the interviewee and allows a conversation to occur that is not dominated by the interviewer. This conversation and dialogue builds an awareness of difference where we can reflect on our own views:

> An awareness of culture highlights our own ethnocentrism; it offers awareness not just of others- those whose societies we are arriving in- but of ourselves, not as neutral bearers of universal truth, but as carriers of a mixed bag of 'tools' and of histories that we may not grasp well ourselves (Brown, 2013: 138).

One interviewee told me that if I should visit the town chief then I would have a level of protection and hospitality. He recounted a popular story about a white man who visited a village, who was so hungry he stole food, and after being caught and punished he no longer stole and instead starved to death. The chief was angry at the people for causing his death and from then on it became an offence to take food from a stranger. When I ate at my host family's house it would always be alone. I would ask members of the family if they wanted

some because I could never finish a meal but they would never take anything until I had left the table. An interviewee told me how important food and meals were to demonstrate that you trusted your host.

One of my interviewees mentioned this special treatment that foreigners get when I asked him how someone might go about borrowing money or starting a business:

> First and foremost here is not Europe, Europe maybe if you want some help, assistance in terms of money, you want to start up a business you go to the bank but here it is very difficult for a Sierra Leonean to have a 100% guarantee when loaning money from the bank because we don't trust ourselves, they trust foreigners that is why most times when in this country they go to these banks and they get their loans but you as a Sierra Leonean if you go there it will be very difficult for you to get a loan that is one aspect of it (Soloman, Bo, March 2014).

This idea of stranger or foreigner is important mainly because kinship is so tight and with close kinship comes power and influence, and this also links to conflict resolution and the justice system:

> Yeah in Sierra Leone in Africa generally we have close kinship it's not open that is why, take it to court what will I do?...a perpetrator has

> been caught and prosecuted in court the parents of the perpetrator will come back to the victims parents and say you are our family… we are all closely related take this case from court, but bear in mind in Europe you have justice based approach and in Africa in general we have peace based approach…so it is peace based they don't want certain things to get out because maybe in the future you will do an offence against the perpetrator….(Soloman, Bo, March 2014).

I knew that aligning myself with a respected member of the community in Bo would be the most important strategic move for a rich and broad analysis. I also knew that staying with the family in their home would be the only option to be truly thrown into a community, and so these thoughts were central to my research. It is only upon reflection that I realised the importance of certain moments during my stay. For example, early on in my research my host started referring to me as his English daughter and that he would adopt me as one of his children. This symbolic adoption seemed to be a way to vouch for me and to give protection. It aligned me with an established family who had power and influence and it gave me unprecedented access to a number of individuals within the community in a short space of time. These individuals spanned from Paramount Chiefs to businesswomen operating in the local market to former combatants and students. After a few days I had been given a Mende name *Ho Panda* meaning delicate, precious or something to be looked after, and this further identified me with my host family and the wider

community, “The newcomer must remain more or less alone or be accepted into one of the cliques that already exist, a process which is unlike that which was involved in the first formation of the group, temporary and unorganized as it is” (Wood, 1934: 47).

Although I was a stranger I aligned myself very quickly with my host family. Once people felt comfortable talking to me I felt that I had assimilated well into the family. One afternoon I took a member of the family for lunch and asked him about “Big men” in the community and what warranted that classification. He then described me as a “Big woman”. My skin colour and my access to money meant that I had unintentionally entered into the patron/client system. This started as a very frustrating process as initially I was attempting to define my relationships with family members along the same lines as relations back home. When I realised that some friends would ask for money I saw myself as being taken advantage of, but that was because I did not understand the rules of the game. If I lent money to a friend in the UK I would not expect anything back, but in this dynamic the client/patron relationship was a two way street, so I could call on these people to help me when I needed it.

I was beginning to fit into a role in the community, not the role I had envisioned but one that I had defined, received and incorporated into an existing system almost seamlessly and unconsciously. These hidden networks

within the everyday contain immense influence, and it is a power rarely acknowledged or utilised by the peacebuilder as it is unfamiliar.

VI. Peacebuilder as "Newcomer"

> Contacts with strangers call for the formation of new relationships, and, hence, they form a part of the general problem of the development of society. The behavior towards the stranger will, in a large measure, be dependent upon the system of social integration which is already present in the group since this forms the foundation upon which the new relationship must be erected (Wood, 1934: 33).

Finally, what about the peacebuilders, aren't they strangers? The title "peacebuilder" can cover a range of people including government officials, NGO personnel, academics, advisors, development organisation employees and military and civilian staff attached to organisations (Autesserre, 2014: 10). This list is not exhaustive but they are usually considered the "experts" and therefore carry a certain amount of power, authority, legitimacy and responsibility that is attached to their activities. This list refers to the professionalisation of peace and development, although I would contend that anyone with an interest in the future development of a nation could be considered a "peacebuilder".

This idea of the "stranger" in a sociological sense is not a new phenomenon but understanding how this may apply to the presence of peacebuilders in a post-conflict setting has had little attention. This may be due to the fact that as peacebuilding is seen as a practice in terms of the enactors (as part of an organisation) and the recipients (locals- as a largely homogenous group) little attention is paid to the individuals and their impact on each other:

> Because the Norwegian man that was here, he was white, his presence and the kind of assistance given to them this made her to tend to forget about these things to reduce her emotion and stress (Translator for Salia, Bo April 2014).

Salia who lives in an amputee community suggests that the presence and assistance of the "white man" helped her to recover and forget about her trauma.

Autesserre (2014) addresses the daily routines of peacebuilders in her book *Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention*. Autesserre explores the everyday practices, habits and narratives of the expatriates that inhabit "Peaceland". It is a space that favours thematic/technical knowledge over local expertise, histories and language. The recruitment process ensures that successful candidates share a similar educational background regardless of their diverse origins and have through

everyday practices created a "culture of interveners". These habits and standard procedures of the "everyday" routine and narrow socialisation of interveners can make efforts on the ground, although well-meaning, inefficient and counterproductive. This peacebuilding culture overrides the diverse backgrounds of the interveners and creates a new "system of meaning".

Not only are these strangers creating a separate and distinct culture of the intervener, but they are creating a physical separation in their own bubble known as "bunkerization", which may be defined as a process of isolating oneself from risk through "…fortified compounds, guards, locked vehicles…" (Autesserre, 2014: 219). Although I saw less of this in Sierra Leone as it was over a decade since the conflict ended, I did witness the habit of narrow socialisation amongst expatriates involved in building peace. There certainly was a separation of space in a symbolic and physical sense as I described in Chapter 4.

The peacebuilders as newcomers have their own culture and space which they inhabit within Sierra Leone. This system of meaning is constructed through everyday practices and simplified narratives, although the structure and purpose of their engagement means that they are often perceived as temporary strangers with access to resources that could potentially offer employment or opportunity to local Sierra Leoneans.

The ideas, mandates and the physical presence of these strangers from the West and elsewhere are often well received in Sierra Leone:

> Well actually really I don't know but for me peace in Sierra Leone is a relative term… it is like love, like love… Sierra Leone is a country with its people that are known for one thing, they are very, very hospitable, they love strangers and anybody who loves strangers, it is easy to mould that person into what is good for themselves… What I mean actually is… it is easy for me to forget it is easy for me I mean when you look at the bad things that have happened…(Ahmed, Bo, April 2014).

Here we are talking about strangers as peacebuilders or foreigners, and this interviewee begins our interview by addressing the subjective nature of a term such as "peace" by comparing it to love. He then seems to suggest that this love of strangers and the hospitable nature of Sierra Leoneans makes them "easy to mould": this moulding may be what others have determined are good for them and to an extent Sierra Leoneans may exhibit little resistance. In fact, he states at the end of the quotation that his characteristic of "forgetting" has aided this moulding. However this brings into question the extent to which these strangers truly mould Sierra Leoneans and to what extent Sierra Leoneans appease these strangers.

On my return from Bo, a few interviews stuck in my mind, mainly because they said something I didn't expect and had never heard before. Some interviewees when talking about themselves and their fellow countrymen and women described themselves as complacent, and as willing to accept just about anything that they were given from development organisations:

> The only thing that is actually helping us in this country we are complacent, that is we are satisfied with everything, we say OK this thing is happening let's leave it to God (Soloman, Bo, March 2014).

This self-confessed complacency was identified by this interviewee as the "only thing that is actually helping us", and as a widely-expressed lack of resistance to strangers and trust that God has created a path from conflict to peace. But what sort of path did this interviewee mean? Not only is the stranger in this sense tolerated and welcomed but to a certain extent their ideas are absorbed and adopted. But how far does complacency stretch? How genuine is it as an approach to peacebuilders? These questions are difficult to answer but they certainly challenge the way we view "success" and how far this is connected to the ideological foundation of reforms that peacebuilders promote.

It seems a long-term stranger in the community who plans to settle and benefit from the land gets this "second class status" to protect the power of "native"

settlers, whereas the stranger in the sense of the short-term peacebuilder is seen as someone who could potentially give to the people rather than take, which seems to suggest both the positive and negative stranger:

> Where the former contacts, though few, have all been of a certain kind, a definite attitude towards strangers as a class may have been formed and the reaction toward the newcomer may be an organized but undiscriminating one. He may be heralded as one who brings glad tidings or he may be summarily killed according to the nature of the former contacts of the group (Wood, 1934: 35).

This idea of history as an important element in characterising strangers is especially relevant in Sierra Leone. The British intervention during the war came at a time when ECOMOG were failing to repel the RUF despite reinforcements from UN peacekeeping mission UNAMSIL. To this day, General Richards, like Tony Blair, is seen as a hero by many and as suggested some locals continue to look back at colonialism as a time they would like to return to. These findings are consonant with experiences of some foreigners in places such as India and Malaya during internal conflict, as colonialism is identified by many locals with stability in daily life (Lee, 1998). What peacebuilders bring perhaps more than anything in the early stages at least is hope and political stability, and their presence and their resources are an indication of much needed change with few alternatives available. This idea of

peacebuilders as actors not in a strictly organisational sense but at a somewhat basic and human level is rarely discussed:

> We are Sierra Leoneans, we know our community, we know our people, we know the culture of the people, we know what is needed so I think we can do it more than having extra people or visitors coming to do it, and sometimes the philosophy people have in Sierra Leone and in Africa, most people think the moment you are coming from Europe or America there is money, even on the streets, that is the philosophy people have…they think you are rich…(Soloman, Bo, March 2014).

Here an interviewee discusses the knowledge pool already available within Sierra Leone that he believes is not utilised to the best of its ability. He then points to a common perception or philosophy people have of these strangers when they see them coming: "they think you are rich". This perception shapes behaviour and attitudes to peacebuilders especially those from Europe and America, as these perceptions and expectations are key to understanding why by international standards Sierra Leone can be seen as a "success" story whilst also being located near the bottom of the human development index (UNDP, 2014b).

The adoption and implementation of liberal values are the dominant agenda but these values may not be where peace and recovery are located. What peacebuilders seem to offer is an alternative space where a power game can include new players and new positions and more importantly new opportunities. The self-confessed complacency towards the actions of peacebuilders suggests that positive change is not directly linked to the intrinsic values that are the foundation of these reforms. Instead the substance of change is found somewhere between the new space that is created through the presence of these strangers, the meaning attached to them and their actions.

> …because I mean we are so vulnerable the international community because we really cannot afford what we can eat and all their developments to me are tailor made… they design all their development plans whether that is what we want or not, they will just come…they are pouring in money and they are saying we have given billions and billions of dollars or pound sterling to Sierra Leone the poorest man down there does not receive a penny of that pound and they are saying that the economy is booming, how can the economy be booming when rice at 65000 you are now selling 250000…is the economy booming? (Augustine, Bo, April 2014).

Augustine describes Sierra Leone and its people as “vulnerable”. He feels the programmes are tailor made elsewhere and all he can do is to accept them

because he is powerless. He then reflects on the fact that a lot of money has been given to the government to reform the country but he has not seen it trickle down to the average man. One way to measure what is improving for the general population is to look at the price of rice. I would often hear people speak about the price of a bag of rice as an indicator of the state of the country and as my interviewee suggests the economy cannot be booming as far as he is concerned if the price of rice is this high. Indicators of success such as macro level economic growth are not reflective of development or peace for the entire population if it does not address fundamental issues at an everyday level to improve the lives of ordinary human beings.

The stranger in the form of the external or internal peacebuilder creates space and a catalyst for change but not its substance. It is this space that creates an element of hope which interacts with some of my other themes to create a personal form of peace and recovery.

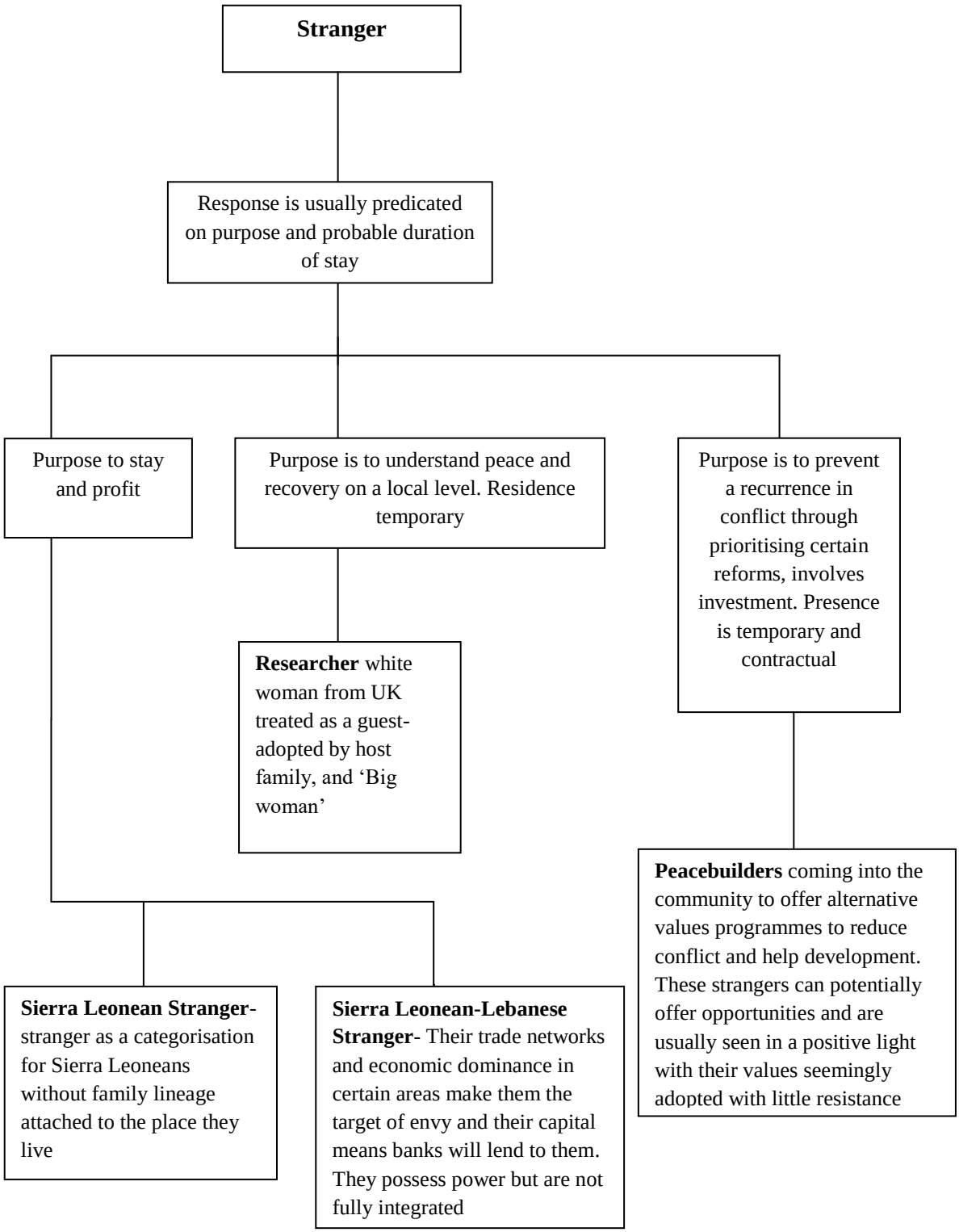
This idea of complacency and vulnerability with a lack of alternatives leads to liberal values being adopted without much resistance and the perception of Sierra Leone as a model of success. Of course once the power play settles and people do not see improvements and the big development organisations are gone there may not be an incentive to carry on with these liberal values in the long term. This corroborates with the idea of a virtual peace described by Richmond (2005) as:

> …often little more than a chimera, a superficial implant, transplanted into a soil without water, dependent upon foreign resources, and subject to uncertainty about the longevity of external commitment. Here there exists a virtual peace, masking deeper cultural, social, and economic realities of violence. Peace is not war, even in these places, but it is an expression of relative domination or hegemony by outsiders involved at its most basic level (Richmond, 2005: 205-6).

The reason that this new perspective is important may not be due to their universality or the intrinsic good of these values but to the new space created and the interpretation of this space. The hope for a better future in a stable society and the possibility of transcending the status quo is created by the presence of these strangers. This has implications for the sustainability of such reforms and measures of "success", where perceptions and engagement on the local level can no longer reside in rhetoric alone as they are crucial to the substance of any peace.

Figure 6.4 pulls together all perspectives of the stranger that I have described and examines different public reactions based on the purpose and duration of the strangers stay. The resulting picture is a snap shot of power dynamics at play on the local level when a particular category of "outsider" enters a new context.

Figure 6.4: The Stranger in Sierra Leone



Source: [Author]

VII. Summary

This chapter has begun the process of addressing the research question: How do the dominant and the local realities co-exist? I have demonstrated how the presence of a new individual or group of individuals has the power to create a different environment. I have focused specifically on the label "stranger" (Simmel, 1908; Park, 1928; Wood, 1934; Siu, 1952) and how this manifests itself in different forms, from the Sierra Leonean stranger to the Lebanese immigrant, the researcher and finally the peacebuilder. Although all of these "strangers" could be classed as outsiders to one extent or another, the way that individual strangers are treated is not consistent among one another, and some of the reasons for this change in behaviour is the duration and purpose of the strangers' stay.

The reason I explored these different versions of "stranger" was to highlight the fundamental difference in the response to peacebuilders as people and symbols of prosperity and change away from the package of liberal values that comes along with them. This distinction has not been explored in the literature where the interaction between people on a personal level has been overlooked in order to understand relations purely through a donor/recipient, universal institutional framework. This gap in understanding has meant that the measures of success do not take into account the impact and dynamics of the new space created and the potential this offers for conversation and mutual

understanding. If the package of liberal values and neo-liberal reforms are not the core basis of appeal for Sierra Leoneans in their everyday life then the measure of their success within Sierra Leone does not necessarily correlate with peace and recovery, as this suggests that the veneer of peace in Sierra Leone will not therefore endure. The seeming willingness of Sierra Leoneans to integrate some of these values into their system could be an exercise in appeasement as opposed to an agreement to allow other forms of development more aligned to their interests to develop. I will explore these distinctive interests in the following chapters.

This chapter suggests that success cannot be claimed, judged or bestowed onto a population solely by actors practicing a liberal peace model if the values championed within this model are not key ingredients to a sustainable peace. The analysis of these stories cast doubt on the label "success" as it suggests that the substance and agency of peace cannot only reside at the international and institutional level. This change in observation does not indicate a purer peace as power relations are present at all levels, but by relocating the focus of my observation from the universal to the local I am able to question the legitimacy of measures adopted by the international community as the precondition for labelling peacebuilding in a country a "success".

My findings here suggest that conceptions of "stranger" as peacebuilder creates the space and opportunity, but not the substance of, peace. This comes

from a myriad of places, and the following sections will explore these multiple spaces.

Part II

Chapter Seven:

Discussion- The Person-ification of Peace Through Multiple Stories

***Dramatis Personae*: By Order of Appearance**

Hindowa *A Mende man by tribe and a respected religious leader within Bo. He is a member of the IRC of Sierra Leone and has many children. He was not in the country during the war but returned to help his community.*

Bantamoi *A young Mende man. A musician within a church group, he mixes music and dance with a message of peace.*

Soloman *An older Mende man in his 50s married with children. He worked as a social worker before getting involved with a local NGO. He fled to Bo when the war began.*

Yoko *A male member of one of the ruling families and a Mende by tribe.*

Ekuma *Respected religious leader in his 60s or 70s within Bo who was involved with the IRC of Sierra Leone during the war.*

Hinga *Hinga is a Mende by tribe in his late 40s to 50s. His father was executed by the RUF during the war and this prompted him to join the CDF.*

Chidj *A Mende man living in Bo. He was young when the war began and fled with his mother. His father and siblings sought refuge in the United States where he hopes to join them one day.*

Ahmed *A photographer in Bo who is working on a manuscript for his life story. According to Ahmed his family were persecuted by the APC government.*

Musa *A respected Mende community leader between the age of 40-50.*

Tejan *A male professional working in Kailahun and a Mende by tribe.*

Mary *Mary is a young female in her mid-twenties, she is a Mende student who studies at Njala University in Bo.*

Ella *Ella is a teacher and activist from the Mende tribe. She prides herself on knowing how to engage with different actors within the community to produce positive change.*

Ansu *A middle-aged Mende man who took part in a group discussion.*

Momo *A highly respected, middle-aged religious leader within the community who was active before, during and after the war.*

Oponjo *A respected Mende male leader within the community in Kailahun in his late 30s early 40s. He went to Guinea when the war began and when he returned to Kailahun the community had dispersed. Some died while others fled.*

Amidu *A Mende male working in a local NGO.*

Julius *A young Mende male in his mid to late 20s working in a local NGO whilst pursuing his studies.*

Abraham *A young Mende male in his twenties with links to UBC church and local development projects.*

Moses *A young Mende male student in his twenties***.**

Abdul *A young male Sierra Leonean from Freetown in his late 30s. He had his arm amputated during the war, and is involved with SLASA. He spreads a message of peace and addresses the issue of discrimination in Sierra Leone against people with disabilities.*

Kamara *A male volunteer for SLASA based in Freetown. As an amputee he is politically active in Sierra Leone to improve the life of amputees and those living with disability across the country.*

I. Introduction

The previous chapter looked at how the "stranger" took multiple forms with varied outcomes. The researcher is now recast as the stranger, existing in a liminal state, trying to understand and create a new terrain whilst being chained to another that acts unconsciously upon me. It is from this beginning that I journeyed into a new space. The subjective and personal experience of post-conflict recovery is hard to capture, and this chapter is a reflection of what I experienced and what I was told. It is a negotiation between the researcher and her participants in order to reveal something essential and transient not only about peacebuilding but the way humans use their environment in a meaningful and symbolic way.

These themes all represent building blocks that uncover a partial story of a personal perspective on recovery. It shows a de-centred and complex "local" within the existing context and realigns the understanding of subject and agency within peacebuilding. In this way the local people are not cast merely as recipients of the liberal peace but as key actors in enacting, enabling and living peace on the local level. These themes are all examples of narratives already serving a purpose in people's lives in the context of Bo. My aim is to expand the space of peacebuilding and not to romanticise the local. I therefore sought to investigate the positive and negative impacts that certain narratives

may have on the prospect of building peace and the mechanisms of power inherent in the system of meaning that has been created.

The first section is entitled "*Shake it for Jesus*", and reflects upon the importance of religion in nearly every encounter and how it has been used for protection, forgiveness, reintegration and the resolution of conflict. The role of religion changes at different stages of the recovery process and is used to make sense of the past, to explain the role of the peacebuilder and to create a vision of the future. I then explore a topic close to the heart of a number of my Mende interviewees- education. *The Oxford of the South* charts a personal story regarding a secondary school in Mattru Jong that the alumni are desperate to return to its previous glory. It is a story that is reminiscent of the country's struggle to move forward from the ghosts of the past. "*We Celebrate Thieves Here*" looks at an everyday account regarding perceptions of corruption. It is a problem for recovery on a national and personal level that most interviewees acknowledged, although their corroboration and acceptance at times told a multi-dimensional story. *"I Am a Football Supporter, Manchester is My Only Football Team"* looks at the role of sport in people's lives and its potential to bring people together and change attitudes.

This collection of experiences, stories and encounters reshapes the notion of peace as an everyday activity at improving well-being on a personal level. It is the part of the peacebuilding process that exists outside of the traditional

organisational lens, a grounded view of people's concerns and aspirations that have the potential to challenge some of our core assumptions about post-conflict recovery and offer new insights.

II. "Shake it for Jesus"

> I am very, very proud to be a Sierra Leonean…it is not my choice, God made me to be a Sierra Leonean and I came to Sierra Leone, it's only in Sierra Leone I become so proud of myself. When I take every step I say this is my home, I am here at home, I am here at home... (Hindowa, Bo, March 2014).

The role of religion in peace-shaping was an important theme that was present every day in the form of language, religious services as well as everyday forms of conflict resolution. The title of this section "Shake it for Jesus" was a common line at my Sunday service in the United Brethren in Christ Church. These services were rather active with singing, dancing, hugging and group interaction. This was very strange to me as someone who does not practice any religion. Religion is not a quiet or solitary affair in Sierra Leone, and is a particular expression of faith:

> As Africans, especially as Sierra Leoneans one of the ways we express our happiness is either you sing or you dance or you do both. So that's

> what we do, we sing and dance to express our happiness for something, our happiness for God, our happiness for what we have achieved, there will always be singing and dancing (Bantamoi, Bo, March 2014).

Figure 7.1: The Entrance to the UBC Church in Bo (16/04/2014)

Religion in Sierra Leone is a powerful force whether we are talking about Christianity, Islam or traditional practices. The integral role of religion is shown in its use in everyday Mende language, where I was living in Bo I would always be greeted in Mende and the response to "how are you?" would translate to "I thank God". The Inter-Religious Council (IRC) estimates that among the approximately 5.7 million inhabitants of Sierra Leone an estimated

77 per cent identify themselves as Muslim followed by Christians who make up 21 per cent (US Department of State, 2010). These statistics are usually coupled with traditional or indigenous practices that exist alongside Christianity and Islam.

The dominance of religion within the community is also inclusive. In fact Sierra Leone has one of the most religiously tolerant populations in the world where intermarriage between faiths is common. I had an interview with an Imam where I posed the question of religious tolerance and asked for his opinion:

> Yes, I mean it is from the making of Sierra Leone it is a country, usually what I always say is, the greatness of a country does not lie in the size but the people…the way we are brought up, we go to common schools, intermarriages like in my family here you have Christian children I have Christian, now you open my door there is a big church…we tolerate each other because this is the way we were brought up... maybe we are more educated than other countries in both religions and religious aspect. I'm not God's agent to come and shoot people for Allah or for God, no, we follow what God says like in the Bible, in the Quran there is no need to force people to follow this... from 18 years they can choose, so we believe that Allah made all these

> religions if he had wanted me to be a Christian let me be a Christian, a Muslim let me be a Muslim... (Hindowa, Bo, March 2014).

Hindowa believes that the religious tolerance in Sierra Leone lies with the children's upbringing, their socialisation and exposure to different beliefs shared by fellow classmates within the education system. Hindowa does not see a divide between Christianity and Islam and sees a singular God who decides which religion someone should follow. The extent of the inclusive nature of religion was exemplified in an *Economist* article where the author describes thousands of Sierra Leoneans as identifying as "ChrisMus" someone who follows both Christianity and Islam (Economist, 2014). The ability to live in peace with people of different religions is peace in action. It is a mind-set that does not create an "us" and "them" divide and allows for relationships to develop without religion being a spoiler.

My interviews and experiences of life in Bo cannot be understood without religion nor can the accounts of forgiveness, reintegration and peace. For many people religion was the key to moving forward and living sometimes side by side with former rebels:

> …honestly we are blessed that is why our own war lasted only for ten years because of that belief we have that there is God that is why it is so easy for we, for us to forgive them, for us to accept the situation

> because you can see somebody whose hand has been amputated by another person, they are living, working on the same street laughing and we say, everything is left to God, God will decide, complacency we are complacent we are satisfied with everything (Soloman, Bo, March 2014).

Here Soloman makes a direct link between a belief in God and reintegration through forgiveness. This complacency is centred around the belief that God knows best and the responsibility lies with him:

> …here in Sierra Leone we have a forgiving spirit, we are Godly people in Sierra Leone…it is not easy but you have to…where I am staying I have a family staying very closer to me the head of that family once was a rebel leader, the other was the rebel spokesman but we are living together doing everything in common. Forgive and forget you see it was not easy but things are getting normal now (Yoko, Bo, March 2014).

Yoko sees the people of Sierra Leone as "Godly people" with a "forgiving spirit", although he states that it is "not easy". It seems there is a struggle between holding onto past traumas and using religion to forgive, move forward and return to normality. Religion pushes people towards forgiveness for the sake of the people and the country. This way of thinking corresponds

with the previous chapter where people admit to being complacent. The belief that things will get better through faith in God can be linked to the presence of the peacebuilder within the country. The peacebuilder is part of a greater narrative, a narrative that involves a divine plan on a linear progression which leads some people to have faith that things are as they should be and be complacent with what they are given. Yet, the role of religion in the shaping of behaviour and attitudes to these strangers and the values they bring are not acknowledged, and this skews our understanding of success by ignoring important peace forming dynamics outside the lens of the traditional focus of the liberal peace model. This is clearly demonstrated in the Ebola outbreak when the presence of medical professionals threatened people's traditional practices in the form of burial practices. In this instance the stranger was treated with hostility and violence (Twort, 2014). This is why the liberal peace model's "universal" values are not universally accepted within local spaces because there are pre-existing narratives and discourses within the diverse context in which peacebuilders operate that determine how these peacebuilders and their ideas fit in.

Figure 7.2: Congregation Gathering Inside the Church (16/03/2014)

Every Sunday I attended the United Brethren in Christ Church (UBC) with friends to witness everyday life for certain Sierra Leoneans. There was immense pride in dressing well for church as it was a sign of respect and a place to get seen. This is where many people met up and talked, where youths swapped numbers and networks were established.

Figure 7.3 shows people sitting outside of the church at the opening ceremony as the inside was full to capacity. The women are wearing similar clothes in this instance to show that they are women of this church. There were speakers outside so they could hear the service.

Figure 7.3: People Sitting Outside as the Church was Full to Capacity (16/03/2014)

i. Religion and Peace Formation

Religion in a post 9/11 world is often see as a source of division or a means for radicalisation, but in the case of Sierra Leone where religion was not a factor in the civil war it was used in a productive way. An example of this is the IRC of Sierra Leone that facilitated talks between the warring factions and the population (Turay, 2000). The complex network, outreach and respect for religious leaders in Sierra Leone make them an integral part of the long-term peacebuilding effort.

The brutal civil war in Sierra Leone had the effect of bringing Christian and Muslim leaders closer together in their efforts to condemn the violence of the RUF:

> Despite spiritual differences between Muslims, Christians and believers in traditional religions, tolerance, co-operation and inter-faith marriages have been hallmarks of religious practice in Sierra Leone. The outbreak of war brought the two major religious groups closer together than ever before. Ordinary Muslims and Christians began to urge their religious leaders to act to end the violence and they in turn condemned the war and urged the RUF to lay down its arms (Turay, 2000: 50).

This call for a collaborative approach led to the formation of the IRC in 1997 that played a key role in opening dialogue between the government and the rebels as well as condemning the violence against civilians. The IRC acted as a key mediator during talks whilst facilitating the early stages of reintegration:

> They also provided an opportunity for combatants to ask for forgiveness, while allowing people who had suffered to articulate their feelings about atrocities and other abuses... (*ibid*: 53).

The IRC became a powerful example of what Koroma (2007) described as "…grassroots peacemaking as a form of Track Two diplomacy" (Koroma, 2007: 279). Ekuma was involved with the IRC and recalled one of his experiences:

> Ekuma:…let me tell you, it is only because of this war that a Sierra Leonean had the mind to kill another person, some really found it difficult, but when this war came we just killed everybody ...during the war we had to form the Inter-Religious Council to even negotiate for peace, I was on that committee we came together with Muslims, we decided to go and meet the rebels as a representative to go for peace talks.
>
> Interviewer: Do you remember what year that was?
>
> Ekuma: It was in the 1990s...there were times we went to meet the armed force leader I mean the rebel leader to tell him if he wants support he should lay down his arms and bring peace, I don't want to bring anybody to follow somebody because they kill us, how can you kill my brother and I come towards you? How can you kill my father and I come to support you? So we reasoned with them.
>
> Interviewer: Did they listen?

> Ekuma: Yes they did at times...we are coming to you to talk to you, to tell you exactly how we are feeling...I'm SLPP to the core but I'm talking to you as [reveals position] and he listened because he knew he had done wrong (Ekuma, Bo, March 2014).

A religious coalition used their influence in society to create a space for conversation. Even though Ekuma was "SLPP to the core" he put his politics aside and used his position and beliefs as a prominent religious figure to try and facilitate talks between the rebels and the government. As Ekuma recounts his experience he states that the rebel leader "listened because he knew he had done wrong". This is an interesting insight into Ekuma's experience of a remorseful rebel leader.

My own experience with my host demonstrated how well regarded these religious figures are in the community and the power and respect they command with the potential to bring people together. These gatekeepers to the "local" are essential to anyone within peacebuilding seeking local-level engagement.

Traditional values and beliefs were cited by the TRC as integral to the reconciliation process:

> Since reconciliation in Sierra Leone involves traditional values and beliefs, the reconciliation process cannot move forward without the participation of the religious and traditional leaders… The inter-faith community in Sierra Leone has played an important role in the negotiations for peace and is still one of the strongest support networks for people affected by the war… The dialogue that has started between various groups and the community can continue with the presence of these leaders. Traditional and religious leaders can help make reconciliation more sustainable (TRC, 2004, Vol. 3B, C 7: 441).

The TRC also recognised the role of religion as a point of entry to reintegrate ex-combatants back into the community:

> Many faith groups became entry points for the return of ex-combatants to their communities. While these efforts were not co-ordinated on a countrywide basis, it was necessary to build on the foundation they provided. The Commission sees itself as having opened a space for dialogue between divided groups and communities. It now behoves civil society, the government and other stakeholders to sustain the momentum created by the TRC process (*ibid*).

The role of religion was not always orientated towards peace formation especially during the conflict where religion and spirituality had to fit with

actions that sometimes ran contrary to the teachings. The meaning attached to religion changed depending on what people required from it and this was shown in its use as protection.

ii. Religion, Magic and Protection

Members of the CDF militia grew out of the Kamajors (traditional hunter-warriors) who were associated with the rituals of secret societies. The CDF was an officially sanctioned governmental fighting force with the aim of protecting communities from the RUF. The secret society side of the CDF introduced the use of traditional practices and supernatural powers to protect themselves against the enemy and their bullets:

> In effect, the "society" allowed for the creation of a motivated and respected defense capability, drawing on ritual and supernatural power. The "defense force," allowed it to fit into a broader political reality with institutions and workings that could not connect with the traditional society structure but were suitable for the open political sphere (Wlodarczyk, 2009: 68).

Hinga, a former member of CDF spoke about the spiritual role of God in his protection:

> Yes but then I had my own protection, I cannot see a weapon, I do not see a weapon because weapon gone is no longer, God when God is more than all weapons everybody in this whole world, God is more than everybody so some of us were not carrying weapons… (Hinga, Bo, April 2014).

He continued by talking about the power sent to a lady in Bonthe district who was gifted with the spiritual knowledge to offer protection:

> Yes that was the area God sent the mystery power in Bonthe District…so that was the area God sent the power and then in dream the power came in dream…The power was sent in dream and the dream was with a certain lady she is the only initiate female initiator, God sent power that you have to take this, you take this, you take this you blend it, you make it, you wash with it and you stand before a bullet no way and that is how the spiritual power came.

Hinga's description of God and magic are used interchangeably to describe a spiritual power that incorporates traditional practices with religion. It reveals faith as a defence against evil during war for the physical body but also on a spiritual level. The role of religion seems to change post-conflict in this context as protection is replaced by ideas around forgiveness and reintegration where new spaces of interaction are created. This shows the power of a

signifier such as religion and the way it can be used by local people to fulfil a present need. This flexibility can be used by peacebuilders wishing to make a positive change by identifying the role of existing prominent narratives and how their work can contribute.

iii. After the War

During my interviews, even when religion itself wasn't alluded to, the language of it was always present. Phrases such as "thank God", "God willing", "God made me", "we hoped to God", "we are Godly people" provided clues regarding the lens used to retrospectively remember and understand the past, the present and the vision of the future. So how does religion shape this remembering through its current role in the community?

I asked a number of religious leaders both Muslim and Christian what sort of problems or conflicts they resolve on a daily basis and how they keep the peace in their community:

> Their main problems mostly is about marriages, divorce and this type of things and we go according to just as I'm saying we go according to what we have in our scriptures, like in the Islamic even in the Gospels. If you go to the Bible you have in Genesis, you have what we say the woman leaves her house and goes to the husband and this family come

> together to become one, you know it is love, you know this is love so they multiply you know... So when you tell people that they should have to hold each other together as one family it is very easy for them to understand when you give them these instances, so these are the type of things, the conflicts, the family conflicts, marriage conflicts when they come you advise them… (Hindowa, Bo, March 2014).

Conflict resolution on the personal level is used here to settle marriage disputes and bring families closer together using religious texts as a guide to living a better and more peaceful life. These religious leaders are also consulted to settle cases of a more serious nature and are often trusted above state justice institutions:

> …If someone is a devout Muslim or a devout Christian most of the terms or phrases we use to settle cases are divine, they are coming from Allah or from God as the case maybe…So when we use these two books the Gospels and the Quran we use them to convince people that we have to live as humans and we have to live as friends…So mainly it is very, very easy when talking to these people who are religiously minded, this is the role it plays in settling conflict (Hindowa, Bo, March 2014).

Religious counsel is accepted by both parties as it comes from a divine text, and this is seen by Hindowa as an effective tool for resolving conflict between believers.

Figure 7.4: Mosque in Kenema on my way to Kailahun (02/04/2014)

Religion and its role within the wider community tapped into the needs of individuals to accept what had happened, move forward and make sense of a new environment in a post-conflict Sierra Leone. It may have been difficult to gain the legitimacy for forgiveness and reintegration without religion which offers reassurance that things are as they should be:

> I'm proud to be Sierra Leonean, I'm proud you know there are times I ask myself if only I should have got myself delivered in any other country besides Sierra Leone I should not have been the person I am today. I believe since the creation of the Earth the Lord God himself knew I would be Sierra Leonean, so I'm proud, I'm proud to be Sierra Leonean. Wherever I go I'm proud of my green, white and blue, that's my national colour, I'm proud to be Sierra Leonean (Chidj, Bo, March 2014).

Chidj has a certainty about his place in the world. Even though he knows it is hard to live in Sierra Leone he has faith that this was always his path. By adopting this attitude Chidj has a sense of acceptance around his current situation. Ahmed told me it is easy to have peace in this country but that problems remained unresolved, which begs the question about what type of peace currently exists:

> … the Catholic denomination teaches is you learn to forgive, love your neighbour as you love yourself, that is why Christians are Christian, but if you tuned in the radio now…one minute, the second minute BBC is in the Middle East they are killing, they are bombing their brothers and each time they kill they say Allahu Akbar God is great, I said why is that? Don't you forgive? So the average Sierra Leonean forgives very easily, it is easy to have peace in this country, the

> country is peaceful, peace like I have told you is a relative term I will not be at peace, but I suppress whatever is worrying me just while we live together (Ahmed, Bo, March 2014).

Here we see Ahmed talk about the lessons of forgiveness found in the Bible, but he seems puzzled that other people claiming to be religious in other countries use religion to justify violence. He separates the average Sierra Leonean from this attitude and believes Sierra Leoneans have a predisposition to forgive, which allows peace to appear fairly easily. However he sees peace as a relative term, although the country is peaceful he is not, he sees many problems still remaining within Sierra Leone that must be addressed, but he suppresses his problems in order to forgive and allow the country to move forward. He continues:

> You hardly ever find this country with religious conflicts very hardly hear that there is compromise between the different denominations they compromise they are living together, you go to Nigeria two days ago they abducted over four five hundred girls from a boarding school Boko Haram meaning book is not good or white man's book is not good…But Sierra Leone I would say is on a time bomb there are a lot of things that are happening that are bad but because we have experienced this war nobody wants to encourage war within this

> country because of the experience we have gone through, because of the sufferings we have gone through, nobody is praying for that again.

Here Ahmed makes a comparison between the religious tolerance in Sierra Leone and the current situation with Boko Haram. At the time of the interview the news had reported on the abduction of a number of girls from a secondary school in Chibok. Even though he sees tolerance in Sierra Leone and the atrocities happening elsewhere in the name of religion he still sees a lot of problems existing in the country. He suggests that the traumatic memory of the war prevents those who remember from re-engaging in any type of violent conflict against the status quo, so I asked what might happen when this generation dies and the only memory is what is written down for future generations?:

> This generation after us…they really don't know the reasons for this war…Sierra Leone has been on a time bomb for a very long time, for a very long time, a very long time, people had left, people they have deserted the military, they have deserted the police they have gone outside for training in Libya, in Senegal, Ivory Coast and other countries to come and topple the government of Sierra Leone who ruled this country for 27 years the All People's Congress, you understand? I don't want to go too deep into the All People's Congress, but I was a victim of the All People's Congress, my senior

> brother was a victim, my uncle was a victim, they tied my uncle in my face and placed him in the sun and waited until the sun had penetrated. They were looking for my senior brother dead or alive, number 2 on the list anywhere they see him they were to shoot him dead.

From the tone and content of this piece of the interview Ahmed still held considerable resentment towards the APC for things that had happened in the past to members of his family. He believes that Sierra Leone has been a time bomb for a very long time and it seems that although religion has helped people heal wounds and live side by side with old enemies there are still memories and existing problems that could potentially reignite.

At a pastors' meeting I had a discussion with a religious leader who told me he felt followers had become too reliant on religion as they pray rather than do, expecting everything to work out: "Yes it is the people they accept every situation with them and they say it is God, God will change it one day that is the belief they have" (Soloman, Bo, April 2014).

However religion is open to interpretation with many people choosing what is and is not applicable in their lives. In this instance religious texts may be used to gain a victory of the status quo over change, as Hindowa demonstrates:

> I mean the husband and the woman they are equal yes but the husband is the leader, he is just like the captain of the ship… because a woman is made from the rib and you as the man I mean you have to straighten that rib but you don't have to do it by force otherwise you are going to break the rib so you have to take her gently, gently, gently, that is the way you have to handle your wife, you are stronger than her physically so you have to have mercy and you the woman you have to obey and listen to your husband because he is your leader (Hindowa, Bo, March 2014).

Religion in the context of Bo and other parts of Sierra Leone seems to be a recipe that works for peace but not necessarily for the liberal/neo-liberal arm of development:

> …we have said 50/50 between a man and a woman, our woman are not as submissive, and it has been in our culture for women to be submissive, now they are not submissive. If I spank my child the police will come after me all these other organisations that are being funded through the Western channel will pounce on me because if they don't do that than they are not doing their work and they will lose that organisation, but you know I should discipline my child the African way, every culture has its own method (Musa, Bo, April 2014).

Musa is talking about changes in Sierra Leonean culture since the war ended. There is a tension here between the "traditional" ways of organising and structuring the family unit which is often justified using religious texts and the values of the development organisations operating in the country. This mentality favours a patriarchal and heterosexual structuring of society where those who fall outside the "norm" will become marginalised:

> I mean in our culture we shout at things we will not stop shouting that a man and a man should not get married, a woman and woman should not get married. I was asking someone I said if you were the pastor and you marry a man and a woman you pronounce them a man and a wife but if you marry two men together how do you pronounce it? Man united [laughs] it is man united it is not husband and wife (Musa, Bo, April 2014).

Here we see power dynamics on the local level where certain members of society will be marginalised according to sexuality. Discourses contain logics of equivalence and difference that enable people to come together and unite as well as to produce common enemies. Religion in this context is no different, as it has provided a catalyst for forgiveness and reintegration but it also has the capacity to exclude and potentially reverse development.

The introduction of "strangers" in the form of peacebuilders adds a new dimension where religion and its role can be altered as we have seen through its changing purpose and meaning throughout the conflict. First peacebuilders should acknowledge this space and what it reveals about people's subjective understanding of peace and progress. Once this has been identified peacebuilders can then design programmes from this beginning or see where their own mandate could potentially fit. If the programme is not flexible then the reverse could be true and the programme could be identified as counter-productive or even damaging.

What would be useful to peacebuilders and international organisations is the flexibility to be creative in their approach to programmes aimed at improving people's lives, and to understand the core components of concepts they hold dear at their most basic level. For example, democracy is about fairness in representation but what if achieving this goal meant looking outside of the realm of politics to help build capacity? In this instance religion, its gatekeepers and its power to influence and inform could be utilised. Working with the gatekeepers, understanding how the narrative creates meaning and where their own vision fits with existing ideas around peace can merge the international perspectives of peacebuilding with a real sense of local ownership. On a few occasions when I attended a church service there would be a public announcement to the congregation. One was about counterfeit medical drugs, the information was conveyed by a local man who was given a

platform to relay important information about checking labels to make sure the medicine is genuine and safe. This is an example of using the legitimacy and influence of religion to reinforce a message to the community.

When I was questioned by Sierra Leoneans I met regarding what organisation I am affiliated with a common assumption was that I belonged to an NGO or international organisation but another assumption was that I was a missionary. I would often see missionaries wandering around the area I was living and in the centre of Bo. They had a history in Sierra Leone that preceded the conflict and led to the establishment of some of the first and finest education institutions in the country.

III. The Oxford of the South

i. Centennial Secondary School

Figure 7.5: Centennial Secondary School Sign (24/04/2014)

My emphasis on education and its role in peace and recovery in an everyday setting came from interviewees who saw their education as a core measure of their own success. My focus on education also stems from my host and other alumni of Centennial Secondary School. They have a passion to return the school to its former glory and have dedicated time and money to try and give the next generation the same opportunities that they once had. My host invited me to attend a convention for the revival of Centennial Secondary School in Mattru Jong, Bonthe District. Once we arrived we stopped at Sierra Rutile

Limited, which was a company owned by a consortium of US and European investors that engages in commercial mining operations of rutile and bauxite. One of the employees staying in the company accommodation let me stay with his family for the length of the convention.

After we met up with other alumni from the school I was given a brief history of why this institution remains important to so many people. It was originally set up by American missionaries in the 1950s and is a large compound at one point considered to be the "Oxford of the South" with people coming from Liberia, Freetown and Kono to attend. Over the years preceding the war poor management meant that standards slipped and once the war began it was occupied and used by the RUF resulting in its dilapidation. It was now the mission of the elder alumni to try and resurrect this glorious past. The energy and rigour with which the alumni spoke about the school and their determination to restore it spoke to a deeper symbolic yearning to ensure the continual improvement of the country through the next generation. This is their investment in the future of Sierra Leone.

Figure 7.6: Centennial Secondary School Buildings, Including Classrooms and a Church (24/04/2014)

Figure 7.6 and 7.7 show the decline of the compound. The restoration of past glory especially in terms of education is an ongoing battle towards "recovering" a lost past as this past seems to be an important indicator of personal success, development and an overall condition for sustainable peace.

Figure 7.7: Buildings within Centennial that have been Left to Decline (24/04/2014)

For me the journey from the Oxford of the South, a school set up by American missionaries, to the school's occupation by rebels during the war, and the struggle by its previous students for it to be as great as it once was, is a story that hits at the heart of recovery and the process of striving to build peace. The danger of underestimating the importance of education to peace was demonstrated as soon as I arrived in Bo.

ii. Unrest at Njala

When I arrived in Bo in early March 2014 and before I had met my host family I stayed in a local hotel for a few days. It was at this point that I heard

on the radio that there was a riot at Njala University in Bo. University property had been burned down and there were reports of stones being thrown at lecturers, which were all caused by students attending the university. The riot spanned two days and required the intervention of fire fighters and the police who allegedly fired live bullets, although this was denied by the police. With at least 15 students arrested, I listened to the radio to find out why these students felt the need to resort to such violence against an institution that was supposed to be their ticket to a brighter future.

It all started when First Year Social Science students congregated to sit an exam as part of their First Semester Examinations. Trouble began when only registered students (students who had paid around 60% of their fees) were permitted to take the exam. The anger and confusion came from the fact that some believed the government would pay 80% of Grant-in-Aid student fees, but the university had not received any money from the government. The university administration then placed the responsibility of payment on students by increasing the payment from 20% to 40%; with a disclaimer that if the government paid then the student would be reimbursed (Awoko, 2014). The lack of consistency, organisation and information caused frustration with some students being pulled out of the examination hall. For many this fee increase was beyond their means and they took their anger out on the university.

iii. Free Education?

As I began my interviews and asked people about their aspirations and how they measured success in their lives it became clear that education was seen as one of the only avenues out of poverty:

> Well my success in life is my educational aspect if I hadn't been educated you wouldn't have met me in this office, I would have been in the bush working as a farmer so my, my life, my educational life made me to be a proud man living a good life, living in an open place so I can say that my educational life is the best for me (Tejan, Kailahun, April 2014).

For Tejan education was his answer to securing the "good life", a way to improve his future well-being. This seemed especially true of the Mende who viewed the Temne, Fullah and Lebanese as being the "business" people. This meant that many saw education as their way to compete:

> …like we are the Mendes that is why we learn, learn, learn, learn till even towards our grave years, we go to college or school just to learn some things because we don't know how to do business you see, so for you to go to the banks that problem has been disrupted by the records that our people have been having (Chidj, Bo, March 2014).

> We naturally Mende people we are not very good at business, we are good at education, office work that is what we are good at (Mary, Bo, March 2014).

Education is highly valued by the majority of Mende people I spoke to whether they were old or young, male or female, but their opinion about how education is prioritised and used within society differed. Although education at secondary school level is supposedly free according to the government, there are a number of hidden costs that makes attendance difficult. Books, writing equipment, uniform and sometimes bribes to teachers make education a costly affair for a number of Sierra Leoneans:

> oooohhhhhhhh no there is no free education, [laughs] there is no free education, nothing is free and education in general… the education is not free they will come here you will not pay class 1-6 you don't pay but the charges are so exorbitant so big you cannot afford them. If you take the statistics now of children going to school you have that on record you come back next year to the same school you will see there will be a high rate of drop-outs…their parents will not be able to pay back for them to sit the private exams... as a result the number of drop outs has increased and crime rate will increase, also prostitution will be increased. (Soloman, Bo, March 2014).

Soloman laughed when I asked whether education was free. This is because even though education is free to attend it is still costly for the average family in Sierra Leone. A 2008 UNICEF report on out of school children in Sierra Leone found that poverty was the biggest obstacle to staying in education:

> Poverty is the underlying reason provided by both children and adult participants alike in both FGDs and in-depth interviews of why primary school aged children are out-of-school. With the average poor household spending 37% below the amount required to meet their basic needs, education is not seen as a priority. For the 80% of the poor living in rural communities, it is a choice between putting food on the table or sending their child to school (UNICEF, 2008: 29).

My interviewee blames the cost of schooling for the high-rate of drop-outs which he suggests has a direct correlation with increased crime rates. The high cost of sending a child to school is also weighed against the loss of potential earning power that child could have if they remained out of education:

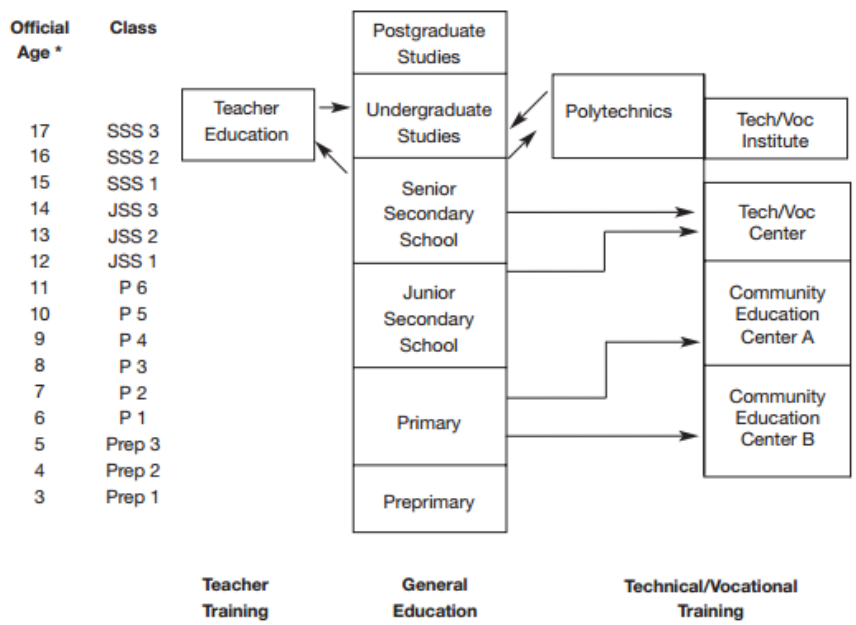
> Although supply-side factors no doubt have a major impact on school access and retention, demand-side factors also affect schooling patterns. Schooling costs, be they direct (fees, transportation, meals, education inputs, uniforms, and so on) or the opportunity cost of

> education (related to the forgone family income derived from children's participation in household activities) may restrict households' ability to send their children to school. They may also favor early dropout, especially when the perceived benefits associated with schooling tend to decrease as costs surge (GoSL, 2013: 33).

For many people the issue of access to education was something that prevented them from feeling as if the country was truly developing for the better. Their aspirations for themselves and their children were highly focused on schooling, and this was how they measured success. Figure 7.8 details the different stages of the education system in Sierra Leone and puts Soloman's quotation into context.

Donor programmes also highlight the importance of education, and so in this respect the space of the international peacebuilder and the dreams of some of the people are aligned. The gap between them however is visible through the different realities they inhabit, where what people want is not always attainable within the existing environment.

Figure 7.8: Structure of the Sierra Leonean Education System, 2012



(GoSL, Education Country Status Report, 2013: 16)

This passion for education and the frustration with access has caused a lot of tension, especially when there are few job opportunities at the end. This problem is heightened in Sierra Leone where a number of Mende I interviewed claimed that their ethnicity makes them unemployable in certain high level jobs and sidelined when applying for university grants. There is a feeling that the government looks at ethnicity and tribal allegiances first, even if a Mende candidate is more educated and has more experience:

> ...you go for scholarship and they look at your name and say oh what is your first name excuse me [Interviewer: provides name] erh [name]

> Brima oh Brima this is a Mende name [name] will not get this scholarship they will not take you... So this has developed into the minds and people have become so frustrated, people have become so angry… Some people retaliated they took guns because their parents acquired them from the bush, some people took guns for common woman palaver… So when this war came some of them a good number of them went and joined the rebels and they came back for the very people for revenge (Ahmed, Bo, April 2014).

Ahmed seems to be suggesting that education is not enough to ensure employment in a desired job. He believes that a Mende surname acts as a handicap when applying for scholarships and this treatment is becoming a source of resentment that had built up before the war and continues today. Whether this perception corresponds to behaviour that is actually enacted or whether Ahmed has misread rejection as prejudice is irrelevant. Instead, what is relevant is that many Sierra Leoneans from different backgrounds believe that having a Mende name restricts their future prospects under the current government, and this perception is a powerful source of anger and frustration:

> If it was SLPP [name] that will gain me employment you see so these are the things that our leaders should try to get rid of…We are all Sierra Leonean we should forget about politics…whatever President comes in is our leader, he is the President of Sierra Leone not the

> President of APC or SLPP… If I'm coming from the north I can say I am Kamara, Conteh, Bangura, Kabul I will gain employment very fast… in the north it is not easy like I went for a workshop …we went there the house because one of my friends accommodated me there and the other people there are all Temnes and they tried to ask me my tribe where I am from, Makeni, is it Temne, Limba and I say I am Sierra Leonean… (Chidj, Bo, March 2014).

Chidj sees himself as a Sierra Leonean first and foremost but he recounts his experience of others' preoccupation with knowing someone's tribal affiliation. Chidj argues for a need to change the mentality of people to look beyond the link between tribe and political allegiance. Ella sees the lack of job facilities as affecting the value of education, which was seen as a panacea:

> Well at times education is the answer to solve problems but you know people are educated here but job facilities are very poor...So some of them especially the youths they are languishing, so at the end of the day after coming from university it is not easy (Ella, Bo, March 2014).

Ella seems to be hinting at problems for the youths of the country should their prospects remain poor. This warning was mimicked by other interviewees:

> ...we are boiling from within, it has reached a point where I have lost confidence in education. We are thinking that education brings some amount of respite but it doesn't, because now it is those who cannot spell their names that are chauffeur driven, how many of these cabinet ministers are actually educated few, few... (Musa, Bo, April 2014).

Musa has lost his confidence in the role of education in improving well-being. He sees contradictions to this narrative in the unfair employment of people based on tribal allegiance rather than merit or qualifications. The education system is also mired by claims of bribery and corruption that have affected its reputation within the country:

> Look at the universities, you will [see] somebody with a Masters degree who cannot construct one sentence who cannot write good English, erh. Graduates wrote a letter to my cousin and he said [name] go through this letter tell me the status of the person who wrote this letter. I said who wrote this, he said just guess, somebody in primary school, he said that is a graduate I said from where and she studied at Njala and I said no... You can't understand because they pass brown envelopes somebody... a student was over the wires saying as long as you have one million five hundred thousand Leones you have the degree… (Ahmed, Bo, April 2014).

The narrative around religion brought comfort, forgiveness and the room for acceptance and reintegration. Education was widely seen among my interviewees as the only route out of poverty towards a better life. When this is disturbed or somehow threatened then the sense of injustice leads to the violence seen at Njala University. However, this narrative was not only threatened by the government not paying fees for certain students, but was also threatened when people perceived that even with education their lives did not improve due to their ethnic group or lack of job opportunities.

The frustration and pride shown by my interviewees in discussions about education suggests that people have strong opinions about their country and their own prospects. In an effort to find out what is not working, what needs to change and what the vision of the future could potentially be requires someone to ask. From that beginning a myriad of options for policymakers and peacebuilders begins.

My experience with education as a key theme has revealed how education is a measure of success that is crucial to how people imagine their future well-being. The importance of retaining, nourishing and building this narrative is essential in order to avoid conflict but the issue does not rest solely with reforming the education sector. This issue links with the political divisions, employment, economics and the cost of pursuing education. In this case conflict may arise if the narrative that links progress with education does not

realign expectations or if there is no alternative narrative of prosperity to offer. If no legitimate alternative presents itself then corruption becomes a viable option.

IV. "We Celebrate Thieves Here"

Figure 7.9: Sign on the Road in Bo Warning People about Corruption (16/03/2014)

When I thought about the themes that might emerge through witnessing lived experience I did not think corruption would be one of them. Corruption is a topic widely covered in the literature as an obstacle to development and a precursor to a state losing its legitimacy (You, 2015: 4). However when corruption was consistently mentioned as a concern to my interviewees in their

everyday lives it became a core theme that I wanted to explore further in the local context.

Corruption and obstacles to personal development and entrepreneurship through a reluctance of banks to lend in Sierra Leone are not new topics, but few have actually asked people their views on it. Have they experienced corruption at any level? Have they been corrupt? What does it mean to them? The answers were surprising to hear. A few interviewees expressed their frustration with the state-founded and operated Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), which needed corruption to be reported to them before they could investigate:

> ...I call somebody who was on the radio for the anti-corruption…and asked them anti-corruption do you have a mandate yourselves to go down as human beings as Sierra Leoneans?... do you have a mandate to go down and look for corrupt people or corrupt institutions without people coming to tell you?...So you have to sit down and wait for people to come to you, are you not seeing it for yourself? Are you not experiencing it? If things are bad with the ministry of education are your children not going to school? They will come home and say uh oh school fees uh oh this and so and so, do you not have this experience?...And the guy say oh oh that is a very good question... (Ahmed, Bo, April 2014).

Here Ahmed vented his frustration at the seemingly detached approach of employees of the ACC. He did not understand how Sierra Leoneans who live in the same environment and whose children go to Sierra Leonean schools cannot make it their personal mission to go out and tackle corruption where they see it. Instead they must wait until it is reported to them before they can investigate.

Another aspect of corruption is the pressure from society and the immediate family especially on the men. There is pressure to be an adequate provider for his family; Ansu described this as the survival game. The man is expected to support a number of people and if someone is getting more money through illicit means then his family may ask why they are not getting the same amount:

> …no one is saying there are not credible people or credible institutions, there are educated people there are people… they are doing their best but they are trapped in the survival game. Let me get what I want to get today because we are living in a society where thieves are respected… If I am working with you in an organisation and you are very prudent, you're wise, very careful, you want to be better in your life… and I'm stealing left and right and building houses all over the place they will say you're not serious do you see your friend he is serious, he is

> building houses but is that his salary, no. So some of those things are justifying the reasons why people should steal because even your parents, even your wife, even your children have expectations and if you say no they will say you are not serious. So that is why I say that we are living in a country where thieves are celebrated, beginners are respected...We are talking about a country that once championed education in West Africa in terms of university education (Ansu, Bo, April 2014).

Corruption understood outside of familial pressure of what it means to be a good husband or father and to provide for your family misses an important determining factor in why corruption is prolific and what push and pull factors cause this behavior to perpetuate. There are also wider economic and political obstacles to tackling corruption in the country due to the history of the country, the marginalisation of certain groups and the endemic corruption at the highest levels of government. For the average Sierra Leonean this will make reform difficult without alternative means of access to personal economic improvement and trust in a stable and accountable government. This makes any assessment of corruption as morally wrong and in need of complete eradication one-dimensional, and naïve.

Some interviewees including Momo mentioned corrupt practices within the political system as a hurdle to development and peace. As I mentioned earlier

the link between the 2012 election and corruption was established on numerous occasions:

> The election process was far from being credible, everybody knows that, and the thing that bleeds my heart is that the pronouncement of the international community which we hate to hear in this country, when the international community would say that the election was fair and credible. You have been taken on a conducted tour of where I want you to see the polling station of my choice, where I know I have popularity and when I go back, if I tell you to surprise you so many constituencies were not counted in both of those constituencies were not counted, they were not counted, there were constituencies in the north where you knew there were only 1000 people living in that community and a vote of 4000 people… (Momo, Bo, April 2014).

Corruption in this sense also leaked into the justice system in the form of bribes, Soloman highlighted a link between justice and the influence of what he calls the "PPF" (Privileged Political Few):

> Soloman: … most often people go to the police but there's no justice, to be honest with you, there's no justice. They try to delay you and justice delayed is justice denied. They delay some certain things and they even send the case to the court, maybe justice will not be on your

side because you don't have influence that is why sometimes I have this line PPF there are certain PPF we have.

Interviewer: PPF what's that?

Soloman: PPF Privileged Political Few if you don't fall in that category I will see you out because [interviewer: you're gone] you see but most times when they go to these police they need money bribes, they need money and if you don't give them money they won't treat your case (Soloman, Bo, March 2014).

Soloman sees the problem of corruption at the top level as a problem for attaining justice for the average Sierra Leonean, although others saw the problem as endemic to the whole of society. Oponjo was an interviewee that I met in Kailahun, where the war started and where Ebola entered the country, he is a Mende by tribe but not a resident of Bo. Oponjo mentioned the issue of corruption in his own household:

Oponjo: OK, well corruption

Interviewer: Is that just at the top or is that everywhere?

Oponjo: Everywhere, even in the corner, even in the kitchen, even in the house, even in my house. I have corruption, maybe if I give my woman 25,000 to go to the market she will take 5000 [laughs]… so

> there is corruption it is a part of us in Sierra Leone... (Oponjo, Kailahun, April 2014).

Oponjo does not see corruption as a problem that needs to be addressed. On the contrary, he sees it as a part of everyday life that transcends the public and private sphere. He even refers to it as "a part of us in Sierra Leone" as though it were a natural part of the [Sierra Leonean] body.

Oponjo then mentioned a saying about corruption that I had heard on a few other occasions, "Wu sai you tie cow na dae eee dae eat", meaning if you tied a cow in a grass field it will live on the grass (resources) around it by whatever means since it has no other choice. At a focus group in Bo an interviewee repeated the same saying and his friends tried to explain it to me:

> OK the meaning, like, if I'm walking out of this office it is there that I have to survive, so if I have a cow I take a cow to the field, I tie that cow, you only survive between that area where the cow is (Amidu, Bo, April 2014).

> It means it brings more corruption because I will not walk out of this office if I hope to have money from that office, everything that I am doing I will get from this office (Julius, Bo, April 2014).

People stay where they get fed. If people have few options about where they are tied then they will continue to eat from the same place to survive. This is the nature of the survival game, and suggests that corruption has two sides. The dominant public narrative is that corruption is wrong, and yet the everyday enactment of corruption suggests that it serves an intrinsic purpose in survival, especially when social welfare is not prioritised.

Abraham and Moses told me that if they caught someone they knew being corrupt they would not report it:

> For example if I came into this office to audit [name] and I find that [name] is corrupt and I have a certain document to indicate he took a huge amount of money… Would I go and prosecute [name] no, I would not (Abraham, Bo, April 2014).

His friend sitting next to him responds to this comment, and in this hypothetical scenario he is cast as the corrupt man:

> I would just call him over and say my friend I will pay you 500,000 now and I'm ready to give you 5 million, what can you do? You will not be able to prosecute me in the government, so I will just close your mouth [laughs] (Moses, Bo, April 2014).

Corruption was highlighted by nearly all of my interviewees as a major problem for Sierra Leone's future development and yet it was still one of the few ways to get rich quick under familial pressure. This paradox is reflected in the apparent clash in the local approach toward corruption. At times corruption acts as a perceived necessity for personal gain when the opportunity arises but there also seems to be a desire for a different system that does not yet fit into the everyday experiences of people living on the ground:

> I don't know if you've seen the web of confusion it is so interwoven to be honest we are only living for today, I live, I sleep tonight and I wake up in the morning, I say God thank you, can I live this other day. Sometimes I say no amount of worries we are stronger than white people… I will be discouraged but I won't commit suicide we have the resilience… (Ansu, Bo, April 2014).

This "web of confusion" of corruption, survival, tradition and the desire for change all amounts to a struggle around how to improve one's well-being. Peace enacted on an everyday level contains contradictions, complexity and plurality, and it does not contain a universally applicable solution with a linear line towards progress. For Ansu, this means that he only lives for today and he is thankful if he survives to see the next. What well-being means past the basics of food, shelter and water is highly personal, and provides a number of entry points for peace and development to occur.

We have a narrative of corruption from external development agencies and the Sierra Leonean government that it is a problem to be eradicated. This narrative has proved to be very influential on the way Sierra Leoneans view corruption. However, it is still an activity that is seen as one of the options out of poverty especially if education is unobtainable or becomes undesirable. Therefore, rather than concentrating funding on eradicating corruption development agencies could take a two-pronged approach where other incentives to improve local lives are created. These incentives and solutions may exist outside the realms of corruption expertise and instead require agricultural reform. These possible avenues can be identified through witnessing lived experience and studying the economy of Sierra Leone where there are gaps or demand in the job market.

V. "I Am a Football Supporter, Manchester is My Only Football Team"

My emphasis on sport comes from a number of experiences. When I first landed in Sierra Leone I noticed two things 1. The striking poverty 2. The amount of men and some women in football jerseys. This formed my initial impression of the country, for instance wherever I went I would see football stars mainly from English teams painted on walls, and as soon as I told people I was from England they would ask which team I supported. The passion for

football crossed the line of a hobby, and this became clear one day when I was with friends from Freetown and noticed that they had different names for each other, I asked why and what the names meant. They replied that they called each other after their favourite football players, and that those names were their second names.

Whilst I was in Bo around Independence Day the President came to Bo to open a new stadium along with the Chinese ambassador (Figure 7.11). The Chinese were contracted to build the stadium, the second biggest in Sierra Leone, and locals believed that it served as a demonstration of China's investment in Sierra Leone's future. I was in the stands as the President officially opened the grounds (Figure 7.11) and I was one of the first to run onto the pitch, which will be the home stadium of the local football team, the Bo Rangers:

Figure 7.10: The Opening of the Stadium (25/04/2014)

Figure 7.11: People Start to Flood onto the Pitch (25/04/2014)

Figure 7.12: The President at the Opening of the Stadium with the Chinese Ambassador (25/04/2014)

During my interviews in Bo I would ask questions to find out a bit more about the people I was speaking to, such as "What do you do in your spare time for fun?" A number of responses highlighted the importance of football in people's lives:

> Interviewer: So what do you do for fun, to relax, what's your hobby?
>
> Chidj: My hobby, let's see I have a banner here Manchester I am a football supporter, Manchester is my only football team I am supporting in the whole world even in Sierra Leone here. I don't have a football team except our national team because, except now it is Manchester stressing me but still I believe in them that one day

everything will be changed [laughs]. So that's why for me to have fun like, even if now I have food here now waiting for me and a Manchester game I will leave my food on the table and go and watch the game and come back just to watch the football.

Interviewer: Why do you think so many Sierra Leonean men love football first of all, but love Premiership games?

Chidj: I think the Premiership is one of the in the whole world most watched league, the wealthiest league they spend money on the TV right…you go all over this country right now even in the villages they have, they have somebody will have a small corner he will have his generator, watch the game…So like I think Britain is our colonial Masters so we love their game we just have to love them, I will not love French football because I don't understand French but for English I know what the commentator is saying I can read about them you see so like 24/7 I go onto my phone, like yesterday I didn't sleep until 2 o'clock just to try to know about what is really happening now with Manchester United if they are going to change David Moyes or not…(Chidj, Bo, March 2014).

One can detect the passion that Chidj has for football by the fact that he would leave his food to watch a game. This is remarkable when many people only

have one meal a day. In this poor country where some villages have the most basic infrastructure there will be an effort to obtain a generator to watch football, while many others keep up to date on the scores on their mobiles. Chidj also makes the connection between the popularity of English football and Sierra Leone's colonial past. I was surprised that there seemed to be little support for the local team, the Bo Rangers, in favour of mainly Premiership teams. Chidj feels a connection to English teams due to the shared history and the fact that he can understand the commentators. Chidj was clearly influenced by the activities of his favourite football team.

It was through watching Premiership football matches at the local Obama bar in Bo that I saw its importance. It was the first time as a white "stranger" that I became invisible and unwanted as a topic of conversation. I could never hear the football commentators because so many opinions were flying around and disagreements escalated quickly.

Obama bar was the place to go and see the latest football game: entry cost 2,000 leones each, the equivalent of 30p, and you would sit in a little room filled predominantly with men. After a while I started bumping into the same people and we would talk about the games. Immediately football became a connector for people even when rival teams played. It drew them together in the same physical space and became an important catalyst for conversation and relationships.

My dialogue with interviewees may seem irrelevant to the traditional peacebuilding scholar, and yet I find the personal world of my interviewees fascinating. I am not trying to portray them as purely survivors of conflict trying to recover and get back to how things were or what they would want them to be. I wanted to see how people lived in the present and how this related to the dominant version of how peace was understood and shaped. The impact of sports after conflict as a tool for positive change has been the subject of much debate mainly due to the methodological and theoretical problems in measuring the effect of sport on participants through the lens of human development (Jeanes & Lindsey, 2014). In Sierra Leone the popularity of football reaches across tribal and political lines and reaches the most rural villages as well as cities. By identifying the popularity of a particular recreational activity it is possible to use what we know about the positive and negative effects of sport to create purpose-built programmes aimed at bringing people together. The United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP) established in 2001 has attempted to build peace through sport by promoting dialogue, gender equality, the inclusion of people with disabilities and youth empowerment through a number of projects worldwide. This can be a grassroots project, but without acknowledging the importance of such an organisation within a particular context it will not gain external funding and be sustainable.

As well as the advantage of feeling part of a community, it is believed the participation of individuals in sports and other recreational activities can be used to help in overcoming trauma (Kay & Dudfield, 2013: 57). Trauma recovery in sports is believed to work by re-socialising the individual through a structure of familiar rules and expectations within a team setting. This helps to establish a feeling of self-control over their lives within the immediate surroundings and fosters a more positive outlook on life as a whole.

The civil war in Sierra Leone was known for its brutality and the use of amputation among other practices to instil terror in the population. I visited an amputee community in a village outside Bo called Mattru on Rail where families affected by amputation reside. As I spoke to people there it became clear that their suffering was far from over, and they relied on donors and the government for medical treatment and basic living cost.

I interviewed a community-led development organisation at their headquarters in Freetown who are active in Bo and across Sierra Leone in Makeni, Kenema and Kailahun. The organisation attempts to reintegrate and raise awareness for amputees who had been victims of the war by organising amputee football matches. The Single Leg Amputee Sports Association (SLASA) began as an amputee football association using sport to create a social space where amputees can feel empowered and re-build their confidence by interacting on a regular basis through training. This is an example of using what already

exists in a way that merges with ideas around peace, reintegration and awareness that is relevant to the Sierra Leonean context. SLASA is a grass roots organisation that has already decided the mechanisms and goals they wish to pursue in order to improve their own well-being and that of their wider community. What they lack are the resources to make their programme self-sustainable and extend their programme across Sierra Leone, and this is where the local and the international organisations could work together. The players on the team have one leg and use crutches to navigate around the field, and the goalkeeper is the only team member to have two legs and one hand. SLASA is a place where the teams from all over Sierra Leone can get emotional, psychological, social and physiological support from coaches, team-mates, supporters and administrators.

One of the main objectives of SLASA was to challenge not only the way amputees perceived themselves but also the view of disability by the wider Sierra Leonean population:

> …you know disability in Africa especially in Sierra Leone means that somebody is left behind, somebody cannot meaningfully participate in that family and so even with their own family members they are neglected let alone the government, so the issue is actually the neglect, most of them were neglected because they have the problems and so

> we have challenges of having people that will be committed to them (Abdul, Freetown, June 2013).

As well as the physical and psychological benefits sport is also seen as a cost-effective strategy for engaging with individuals directly on a social level, (SDP IWG, 2008). This point reflected the opinion of a volunteer from SLASA:

> ...football is a universal language that every corner in Sierra Leone accepts. If I told you kids don't even have a football they can use an orange on the football field or they can use some tins, some empty tins ... to play football. So when we use the word when we use football it's actually brought all of them, it caught their interest they were excited they came on-board and it has been very, very great tool you know for addressing their challenges (Kamara, Freetown, June 2013).

Football gives young people an outlet when opportunities may be scarce. Several studies also reveal that development programmes in sport can have the effect of reducing youth crime when law enforcement bodies are under resourced to tackle growing social problems (Andrews *et al.*, 1990; Crabbe, 2000; Gatz et al, 2002; Hartmann & Depro, 2006). Richards' (1997) study on sport in West Africa suggested that football acted as an alternative to war by allowing youths to improve their social status through more passive means.

VI. Well-being as an Alternative Approach

I have set out in this chapter examples of mechanisms aimed at improving one's life. They serve as a record of personal ideas of well-being, and how this can be attained and maintained. The idea of well-being in development has been explored by scholars such as McGregor (2010, 2011, 2014, 2015). McGregor (2015) breaks down the concept of well-being into material well-being (material aspects of life), quality of life (broader considerations), and relational well-being (relationships that may or may not have a positive impact on the future self). Well-being is not just about obtaining the thing you desire, but is a multi-dimensional concept. Personal well-being here overlaps between material, quality of life and relational understandings. Well-being included the pleasure of watching and participating in sports, but personal well-being also concerned relational needs met in the community at Obama bar. The importance of community and mutual support was primarily gained through religion and the guidance of religious leaders. Furthermore, the emphasis given to education in my interviews seemed intrinsically linked to ideas around a better quality of life in the future.

These personal choices on well-being can be contradictory, as in the case of corruption. Corrupt practices on the local level play a role in the survival game, but in the long run as many interviewees stated, corruption may cause harm to national economic advancement. Likewise religion may inhibit certain

development reforms whether from the West or from the national government. Education may offer little respite when there are few job opportunities at the end or when corruption and mismanagement decay educational institutions, as in the case of Centennial.

What personal conceptions of well-being tell us is how people view their lives, what they see as important and what they aspire to; this is by no means static but it is important. Personal well-being puts local people's lives at the centre of ways of thinking about peace, recovery and development in practice rather than relying solely on physical needs. How do/can these two realities- the dominant and the local- co-exist? What this local approach offers is dependent on the researcher or peacebuilder who either has a particular reform in mind or wishes to design activities based on what there is. In other words their experience on the ground can be used to draw out implications and engage with existing narratives. For example, as I have suggested, education and specifically further education is more than a means of gaining employment as it is symbolic of a better life. With this in mind any attempts at cutting or withholding welfare aimed at education will have the same effect as it did at Njala University when I first arrived in Bo. It seems that opportunities to improve one's well-being revolves around a handful of options that Sierra Leoneans identify as intrinsic to their self-worth. On this basis therefore we might ask why other avenues have become unattractive, why is agriculture not

seen as a favourable option along with further education? How have business and education become separated through tribal lines and can it be untangled?

This local approach also offers a different perspective to the dominant international perspective of peacebuilding and opens up the confined space of what is considered legitimate in terms of aims, objectives and measures of success in peacebuilding.

VII. Summary

What this chapter has sought to do is problematise the question: What shapes peace? How can we talk of success? What is missing from the narrative of peacebuilding? What is legitimate knowledge? Specifically I have attempted to answer my main research question: What does peace and recovery mean in its local context? I have assembled a snapshot in time that has explored the fabric of a community who have been told they are a success story but are marginalised from their "success" and from their own story.

The themes presented in this chapter all represent the constituent parts of a personal perspective on recovery. I have used these themes in order to reshape conceptions of peace from a liberal vision of a functional society starting with the local as the passive recipients towards the "local" as agents of their own future. This shift relocates agency, power and legitimacy and realigns the

debate on peacebuilding towards what is already there and what can be built upon with the result of improving people's overall well-being. This involves being within the community, showing genuine care, building relationships and trust and simply asking questions.

In this chapter I have detailed some of the mechanisms local people rely on to create a sense making framework and meaning to their everyday life. These narratives allow people to construct purpose and aspirations for the future out of a traumatic and destructive period in time. These activities are locally driven but are not mutually exclusive from the activities of peacebuilders who can design programmes out of these observations or integrate existing programmes in a complimentary way by identifying underlying needs and narratives of recovery. In a "local" perspective of peace the role and purpose of religion has been redefined from a powerful source of protection during the war to a facilitator of peace. In this sense religion has given meaning to lives filled with atrocities and trauma. The Sierra Leonean Church in the form of UBC is a locality for singing, dancing and hugging, and gives locals an excuse to wear their best clothes and reconnect with the community. Religion is present in the vocabulary of everyday speech and as a connector between the past, present and future, thus creating a path for those with faith that suggests all is well. This serves a spiritual need for survivors and offers peace of mind.

Education for the Mende plays a pivotal role in harvesting aspirations for the future. It is a vision or belief that things can change and that lives can improve, and the riots at Njala were the result of threatening that belief. Education was something people are proud of, and it was one of the first things people told me about themselves. Personal success was often measured through obtaining an education and it is one of the key aspirations of many participants because it is strongly linked to self-worth and the idea of obtaining a "good life".

"We Celebrate Thieves Here" explored attitudes towards corruption at the local level. It exposed a complex relationship between the need for reform and the realities of everyday life and familial pressure. Corruption then is a double-edged sword used to benefit the individual in the short term but damaging to the integrity of the state in the long term.

Sports was present everywhere. It was probably the one pastime that had the power to make someone miss a meal. It was the topic of many discussions and debates and a passion that went across the whole country. I gave an example of this passion being used to reintegrate amputees after war in the example of SLASA and as an important event in Bo at the local Obama bar. Sport has the potential to influence a number of virtues and vices depending on how it is used, and more than anything it is a common language and a means to start a

conversation with anyone. It also acted as a distraction from the ordinary routine of everyday lives.

I find looking at what people do, want and enjoy as an attempt to follow Geertz's example of pursuing the question "What manner of men are these", or Brown's (2013) quest to understand people on their own terms. So what are the implications of opening up traditional explanations, and spaces, of peacebuilding through the process of witnessing lived experience? What this personal path to recovery in an everyday setting demonstrates are the mundane and extraordinary mechanisms already available and utilised by local Sierra Leoneans to survive physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually, whilst people wait for other reforms to reach them. Theirs is a journey to simply improve their own, living sense of well-being. While this does not make these mechanisms inherently good or provide any kind of answer to a better future they suggest a starting point in acknowledging that people are a big part of the peacebuilding process. From this premise we should acknowledge that any notion of success should be a genuine engagement and negotiation with the needs, aspirations and ambitions of the local beneficiaries of peacebuilding activities.

Part III

Chapter Eight: Conclusions- The Tug of Peace

I. Introduction

On 25th March 2014 I attended a friend's sports day at her secondary school in Bo. She spent a lot of time and effort looking good for this event, especially her hair. As I watched the different activities I noticed her being involved in the tug of war. I turned to a friend and told him how we used to play the tug of war at my old school, and he then corrected me and stated that after the conflict the tug of war was renamed the tug of peace.

No doubt this semantic change was due to the fresh connotations of any reference to war after the end of the conflict, but the notion of peace as a struggle against a number of forces resonated with me.

The prioritisation of reforms after conflict can often feel like a tug of peace between those who construct the new "reality" and those who must live it. The answer to the question of why certain values and reforms take precedence over others is a question concerning politics and power. The discussion regarding what peace, recovery and development should look like in the context of Bo has already been set, regardless of the fact that many scholars including myself cannot conceive a universal definition of peace, let alone peacebuilding, given that such notions are unhelpful in building peace as I have argued. Indeed, in this thesis I have attempted to show how peacebuilding already exists in one form or another through everyday activities that give meaning to the past, present and future. These activities are not always identified through the traditional lens of peace and development, and yet they are mechanisms that for better or worse serve an integral purpose in restoring stability and order to local people's lives. My effort to give a little space to the understandings of peace through the stories of people living after war is an attempt to show the personal and experiential process of post-conflict recovery in an everyday setting.

Chapter 8

This chapter is my concluding discussion of what I found as a witness to lived experience in Bo. I will pull together my arguments on the restrictive space afforded to peacebuilding under the liberal peace and its legitimising framework of managerialism. I contrast this assessment with local mechanisms for achieving and enacting peace and local experiences of what it means to "recover".

I designed my own methodological toolkit to explore the existing power structures of the dominant approach to peacebuilding using Foucault's method of genealogy and archaeology and Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis. This analysis revealed the regimes of truth and the capillaries of power that have fused together to create a dominant myth around the way we understand and enact peace. I then needed a different point of observation that focused on social relationships in order to explore the subjective and experiential process of peacebuilding, and to achieve this I drew from Millar's (2014) ethnographic approach and Brown's ethic of attention.

The process of exploring alternative perspectives offers a different way of engaging and interpreting various meanings around peace, recovery, and ideas around development. These ideas are not mutually exclusive to the dominant approach or necessarily "better", and instead they are a missing piece of our understanding of complex social networks that are marginalised at the moment

to the status of "non-events" outside the consideration of policymakers and peacebuilding practitioners.

Section II of this chapter *Rethinking Peace and Recovery* recaps my research journey from questioning the legitimacy and closure around the liberal peace project to a rethinking of peace and recovery around the notion of personal well-being. It reflects on the difficulty I faced in exposing limitations in a model without envisioning alternatives or simple readjustments to that model. It was a difficult journey over the course of many chapters just to explain the need to see fundamental concepts with fresh eyes because of the dominance of these ideas within traditional IR and peace and conflict studies. After I was able to re-open the debate I needed to justify and identify the tools and theoretical basis that could allow for a change in observation and its operationalisation. I then return to my main research question and the other enabling research questions, to address each in turn. Here I highlight the chapters that are most relevant to each question and summarise the way that those chapters have engaged with my questions.

In Section III *Contribution to Knowledge* I discuss what essential features of my research can be taken away and utilised. I begin by noting the interdisciplinary nature of my work, its uniqueness as a piece that is situated within a period of time where the environment is already changing due to the devastation of the Ebola outbreak. Perhaps most importantly my work has

contributed to the liberal peace debate and the critical peace literature through a detailed exploration of the need to reopen the debate of peacebuilding for the sake of jump-starting local development. Thereafter we should decide whether the current measures of success are fit for purpose. This change in observation acknowledges the fallibility of the liberal peace and the space for alternative interpretations and journeys towards recovery. This will prevent any notion of success without first addressing core concerns of the intended beneficiaries of peacebuilding activities. The state does not suffer if infrastructure is not built, if hospitals and schools are not staffed with trained professionals; but it is the local people who suffer. Therefore the people must be the focus of any positive change in any negotiation between prioritising funds to top down and bottom up reforms. If this is the case then development organisations must consider context as imperative and they must go, see, be, and ask. Finally I discuss the limitations of my research project and a number of opportunities for future research that can build on this foundation. I give specific examples of future projects that are beyond the scope of this research. This is the beginning of a lifetime of inquiry into local notions of peace in and beyond Africa, with many questions and possibly few answers.

It was important to end this research with a section entitled *How have I been affected by my Research?* to see how I have changed as an individual and as a researcher. This is part of my ongoing need to be reflexive and ethical in reviewing my experiences and learning from them to become a better person

as well as a more empathetic and understanding researcher. I then conclude the chapter with a few reflections on what I have learnt with the last word given to one of my interviewees.

II. Rethinking Peace and Recovery

The central goal of this thesis has been to open up the space of peacebuilding beyond the traditional organisational and IR framing in order to prioritise a complex perspective of local people and question the simplified rhetoric of success created and legitimised through the managerial logic. The constraints of this logic have stunted any reimagining of peacebuilding, and I have attempted to open up a reflexive space where simple questions can be re-examined and the location of recovery can be seen as a space influenced, shaped and performed in the context of diverse influences.

During the course of this research and write up I have included my voice in the construction and presentation of knowledge. My story from London to Bo and back again is intrinsically tied to my findings and the creation of the "field" with the people I have encountered along the way. The information I was told and the places I was exposed to have coalesced to produce a singular piece of work.

I exposed and explored the power structures and mechanisms behind the resilience and legitimacy of the liberal peace, and augmented this discussion with alternative personal narratives to reveal the narrow gauge in which liberal peacebuilding as a practice and ideology operates. This exercise sought to revisit previously closed questions around the concept of peace, its purpose and its relation to people. The subsequent analysis gradually formed over the course of seven chapters, with this chapter pulling all the threads that run through my argument together.

Chapter 1 gave a brief introduction to my problem with the liberal peace and its measures of success. Through this analysis I gave my reasons for a personalised approach to peace and recovery. This chapter went back to asking simple questions about what approaches were prioritised and why other voices were marginalised. This laid the foundation for my research questions that shaped the way I engaged with people in Bo and the overall direction of my research.

Chapter 2 began by reviewing the evolution of the dominant narrative, the liberal peace. This chapter looked at the ideological foundation of the liberal peace, the conflation with neoliberal economic reforms and the space in which the ideology could change and manifest through different forms of liberalism. I then merged the literature review with the context of Sierra Leone to explore what form the liberal peace took once it was implemented. This chapter

examined the liberal peace in Sierra Leone and it is from this starting point that my critique began.

Problematising the dominant approach to peacebuilding was important to break down what I was critiquing before changing the point of observation and offering a personalised and experiential version of the process of recovery. Chapter 3 set out this change in observation and rejected the singular story of peacebuilding where the agenda had been set and the measures of success were in the hands of the "experts". Instead, I sought to begin a new discussion of peacebuilding from a local perspective of the people who lived through postwar Sierra Leone. In this chapter I reviewed critically how the dominant myth of the liberal peace was created, sustained and empowered. I introduced the concept of power, discourse, the logic of equivalence and difference and hegemony to explain why certain discussions regarding the purpose of peace have been closed and alternatives appear to have been silenced to accommodate what is presented as "common sense". These mechanisms and technologies of power exposed the current embodiment of peace as a set of beliefs and narratives tied together through power relationships in a self-legitimising cycle. The liberal peace was not presented as a destructive force but as an entity that required the illusion of closure through the marginalisation of other interpretations of peace. I then explored the measures taken and how progress and success were viewed within the framework of liberal peacebuilding and I used the outbreak of Ebola to show the weakness

of prioritising certain reforms over others and then framing the outbreak as something far removed from the practice of peacebuilding. I sought to open up this closed space through which the researcher can find an entry point to the interrogation of the "obvious".

Chapter 4 explored and presented the extent of my involvement in constructing and performing my research. It embraced the "I" in my research where I was inextricably bound to the process of reporting and interpreting a number of local stories from Bo from an ethical and reflexive position. This chapter suggested that being aware of who I am and the cultural baggage I possess was integral to exposing my own limitations in understanding what I could and could not achieve as a researcher. Reflexivity, positionality and ethics were important in addressing the asymmetry in the relationship between myself as the researcher and my interviewees. This approach sought to avoid rearticulating and re-entrenching existing power relations that put a comfortable distance between the external and the internal, the expert and the local.

In this chapter I operationalised my change in observation by creating a new toolkit based on the foundational critique and poststructuralist approach with which to witness and record lived experience and extract themes from my interactions. I initially reflected on my first trip to Freetown and then explained the reasons behind my decision to move the main study to Bo. I

drew on an ethnographic approach to learn the opinions of people on the ground. I kept the ethic of attention in mind in seeking to understand interviewees on their own terms and this helped me see the importance of being reflexive as a researcher. Finally I used Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis to highlight key words in transcripts and understand power structures that are at work through what is present and what may be absent. I then reflected on my research in action, which was the result of my going, seeing and being in a local context.

Chapter 5 introduced Part II and the manifestation of a change in observation. This chapter explored the history and context of Bo and its place within Sierra Leone. It also addressed the question, who is the local in this context and specifically within this research? The subsequent exploration of the history of Sierra Leone was mixed with quotations from interviewees in Bo to personalise the history as it was experienced. This chapter provided much needed context to some of the findings that appeared later in the research.

Chapter 6 and 7 consisted of my critical reflections at emerging findings although the two chapters offered different insights. Chapter 6 repositioned the role of the researcher and the peacebuilder by exploring the meaning attached to the term "stranger" in the Sierra Leonean context. This meaning was fluid depending on the purpose and duration of the "stranger's" stay. The label of stranger for Sierra Leoneans suggested an individual's economic and social

standing in the community. This changed for peacebuilders who were perceived as temporary, wealthy strangers, whose meaning was partially created and attached even before any activities had taken place. These conceptions were essential to the way peacebuilders have been received and the acceptance shown to some of their reforms. This allowed me to explore the space for change where meaning existed before presence. I then used the same idea to reflect on the way I was received during my stay in Bo as a stranger. I used this preliminary insight to structure my next chapter by revisiting the main themes, experiences and stories that shaped my research.

Chapter 7 presented the shared journey between my participants and myself. I structured this chapter around themes that stood out from my experience on the ground and the voices that I heard of people living in Bo whom I saw and who spoke to me. Chapter 7 set out some of the mechanisms relied upon for everyday living, namely religion, education, corruption and sports that are not explored in the same way in the traditional literature. These themes touch on something much deeper than their individual parts. What this chapter is really talking about are everyday realities, dreams, aspirations, ambition, community, personal measures of success and the pursuit of improved well-being. This pursuit relates directly to ideas around the construction and perception of "self" that gives meaning, purpose and happiness to life.

Through this research project I was able to change the point of observation in peacebuilding beyond the narrative suggested by conceptions of the liberal peace and managerialism. The relations that separate the "expert" from the supposed beneficiaries of peace and development are not just an exercise in VfM, PBR, cost efficiency, cost effectiveness and cost-benefit (DfID, 2013b), but an exercise of power. What peacebuilding requires are people who ask fundamental questions and structures flexible enough to encourage them to do so.

My main research question was: What does peace and recovery mean in its local context? In order to answer this question I explored why understandings of peace and recovery within the local context have been marginalised by exploring the dominant approach and the implications of this. Once this was addressed I explored how the dominant model engaged with the local context and how this might affect the experience of peace and the construction of meaning. Finally what are the implications of opening up traditional explanations through witnessing lived experience, and what has emerged from this investigation? How does this help us understand peace and recovery in its local context? I will now explore the enabling questions first:

(i) How is the dominant approach to peace, recovery and success created and legitimised?

This was achieved through a three-pronged analysis. Firstly I critiqued the dominant approach to peacebuilding under the liberal peace in Chapter 2 by revealing its historical and political nature. The second area of critique was the dominant approach to measures of success under managerialism and mechanisms such as VfM and PBR in Chapter 3. These mechanisms restricted the framework of understanding and the horizon of possibilities in the form of creative alternatives outside of the vision of managerialism. Although managerialism acts as a legitimising technology for the liberal peace it is also an ideology of its own that the liberal peace legitimises in turn in a symbiotic relationship. The measures of success are explicit indications that ideas and values are correct, and these are displayed in a cause/effect, input/output formulae that give the impression of objectivity and neutrality. I problematised this approach by suggesting that democracy, SSR and economic growth means little to the population unless the effects are felt on the ground. The de-prioritisation of human development as well as the absence of basic social services de-legitimises any notion of success. As I deconstructed the liberal peace model and its mechanisms of legitimacy I also demonstrated the instability and myth around the liberal peace as a closed system or totality. I used Saussure to show the relationship between language and meaning construction and the conflation of meaning under the master signifier of peace. Gramsci showed how hegemony is achieved and Laclau and Mouffe showed how these positions of power are constructed and de-constructed. Thirdly in Chapter 4 I sought to reinterpret peace, recovery and development using a

toolkit pieced together from anthropology and poststructuralism with a particular emphasis on the relationship between power, truth and knowledge. Chapter 6 and 7 were the result of altering the point of observation away from economic indicators and the meeting of political motivated quotas towards a focus on well-being.

(ii) How do these two realities- the dominant and the local- co-exist?

If there is a dominant model that sets the aims and objectives of peace then how does this merge with local understandings and experiences of peace which do not claim to be unitary or universal? Chapter 6 reflected on the activity of peacebuilding and the meeting of the "expert" peacebuilder with the Sierra Leonean population through the interpretation of the "stranger". I suggested in this chapter that stranger status in Sierra Leone is a label used to classify other Sierra Leoneans without historical ties to the land. However, the term stranger is then applied to new people tasked with bringing peace, stability and development. The term was also used to understand the way the researcher is viewed through the eyes of the general population. The idea of co-existing is thus explored at the basic level of human awareness of the "other" who is in one sense a stranger in that s/he is new to the environment but this conception is not absent of meaning. If the stranger is white or from Europe or America then it is assumed they are wealthy, and if they are aligned

with a known development organisation it is assumed they have money to spend. The peacebuilder walks into a context already pregnant with meanings, expectations and aspirations in his/her favour.

Chapter 7 then offered examples of how the peacebuilder could potentially engage with the existing context and its prevalent narratives in a way that enables local agency and legitimacy. This approach gives bottom up approaches the same priority as other top down approaches and it addresses the concerns of the local people in a way that is directly relevant to their everyday lives.

(iii) What are the implications of opening up traditional explanations, and spaces, of peacebuilding through the process of witnessing lived experience?

After establishing perceived, local meanings attached to the peacebuilder and researcher as the "stranger" I continued my journey reflecting on the two months I spent in Bo. Chapter 7 explored events and conversations that stood out to me as significant during my stay. It recounted a number of stories grouped together under the themes of religion, education, corruption and sports. These stories were personal accounts of everyday life in a country moving from the classification of fragile state to low income state. The success story narrative perpetuated by the UN represented a meta-story of a

country whose classification as a success story has already been declared for the people. Through witnessing lived experience and having open and honest conversations we see a complex myriad of opinions and desires that shape the way we interpret peace, the means by which it can be achieved and the way we go about measuring success. What my interviews mainly suggested was the shallow nature of progress with little regard for the well-being of the population in whose name progress is sought. This research question has implications for my immediate research as well as in other contexts where the liberal peace has been implemented. It legitimises the questioning of fundamental "truths" held regarding what a functional society should look like and the template used to get people there. It pulls into question the power and legitimacy of the "expert" and their sole reliance on a managerial logic. Finally it suggests that the narrative of "success" used by international development and peace organisations and the reality of everyday life can be worlds apart. This research seeks to bridge that gap. The implication of the process of deconstructing a dominant narrative and seeing for myself can be applied in a number of other fields allowing for a rich, human and nuanced array of stories and experiences to be analysed.

At this point I return to my principal research question: How is meaning created around peace and recovery in its local context?

Chapter 8

Chapter 7 drew out themes from my experience on the ground, and this process personalised the supposed beneficiaries of peacebuilding activities and treated them as more than objects of policies. Instead it presented daily activities as living enactments of an ongoing process of building peace on the ground. This process included communal gatherings, aspirations for a better life, the pursuit of happiness, by making it through another day, by watching your favourite football team play or by simply having someone listen to your story.

Meaning is created around peace and recovery in an unconscious and conscious way as well as in an individual and social way. The routine of everyday practices holds clues regarding what people cherish and the mechanisms of well-being that they rely on. These mechanisms such as religion can be master signifiers that contain a number of interpretations that can potentially unite people together and drive them apart. The fluid nature of religion as a means of justifying behaviour and overcoming trauma was demonstrated in its changing purpose during and after the war. This suggests that people can hold multiple and even contradictory stories about themselves and their reality as seen in the perception of corruption. My interviewees knew that corruption was a big problem in the countries development but yet still admitted to being complicit in certain corrupt activities.

The researcher, policymaker or peacebuilder has to be sensitive to these dynamics that can be found everywhere. They are contradictory and fluid but expose a tension between different versions of "reality" and meaning that are being constructed. This sensitivity through a change in observation allows for the opportunity to tap into existing narratives that holds meaning and legitimacy within the local context for a number of people and identifying what purpose it holds and what wounds it seeks to heal. This requires an interdisciplinary, creative and innovative approach to peace and recovery.

III. Contribution to Knowledge

This thesis has sought to make the following principal contributions:

- Building empirical knowledge and understandings of peace and conflict studies by developing and applying an immersive ethnographic approach.

My thesis has posed pertinent questions on peacebuilding that have often been considered in the literature to be "obvious", common sense, or closed. The subsequent locally grounded approach offers a new approach to shaping peace towards the beginning of a fraught period of time for local Sierra Leoneans with the emergence of the Ebola epidemic where hopes were high but realities were harsh. In an international discourse where Sierra Leone continues to be

presented as a success story despite the ravages of Ebola I have painted a different, alternative picture of that "success". Drawing on Geertz (1973), Brown (2013) and Millar (2014) I have explored how peace is lived in Sierra Leone by physically being there, talking to local people, seeing the sights, and experiencing sounds and smells that make up everyday life in a Sierra Leonean community. This approach has helped me to build a rich, intricate picture of a locality and its people in an empathetic and ethical way that is rarely captured in the peace and conflict literature.

By challenging orthodox approaches and understandings of peace and development I have sought to open a debate on how we approach peace and how we determine "success". I have achieved this by exploring the limitations and constraints in the current incarnation of the liberal peace model. I used poststructuralism and the concept of power to show how this narrative became dominant and how this perception of dominance by nature excluded alternatives. This analysis demonstrated the illusion of closure around the liberal peace, its political nature and the potential for change. This suggests that the liberal peace may not completely reflect human nature or offer a model for peace that accounts for and helps in developing complex everyday activities of peacebuilding. By opening up notions behind the liberal peace I have expanded the space around ideas of peacebuilding and introduced the possibility of flexibility in re-interpreting mechanisms of legitimacy used by "experts" in administering peace. In turn my research has opened up an

opportunity to observe and utilise information sourced from the creativity and spontaneity of the everyday experiences of Sierra Leoneans and ordinary phenomena that they experience and practise to live a peaceful life following the civil war.

My empirical findings are open to a number of interpretations. To a large extent what is experienced is dependent on the people experiencing the phenomena. For instance, if I were an employee of an international organisation working within the liberal peace understanding of "success", "progress" and "recovery" then I would have a fixed mandate for assessing the "local" and their needs. If I were concerned with nutrition and I had obtained the same findings then the fact that one of my interviewees left a meal to watch football may have the effect of characterising football as a dysfunctional or negative influence of the individual's health in Sierra Leone. In this interpretation my other themes would be ignored even if they were observed because they would have been located outside my scope of inquiry. There may also be various interpretations of my findings from a local perspective, for example: Might the opening up of the peacebuilding space be necessarily what my interviewees want? What might be some local outcomes of a looser, more flexible approach to peacebuilding? More research would be needed to trace the impact of further changes in observation and whether these changes produce attractive policies for Sierra Leoneans. The possibility of multiple interpretations of my findings suggests how my findings and themes

do not in fact represent an alternative model but an open space for exploring different entry points in both peace-shaping (in a looser, locally-driven approach) and peacebuilding (by international institutions).

- Designing and putting into practice an interdisciplinary methodological toolkit aimed at opening up new spaces through learning and experience.

I designed a new methodological toolkit and explanatory framework demonstrated in figure 4.1. This toolkit spans business studies, anthropology, peace and conflict studies, IR, development studies, and sociology, and I drew on the toolkit to tailor my investigation to changing the point of observation of peacebuilding as seen in figure 3.3. Each of these disciplines added a different, rich dimension in helping to explore and justify the need for emphasising the role and voices of the local people in Bo. Here I adopted an ethnographic approach and the ethic of attention as key components of my immersive method that was driven by my interaction with locals in Bo. I drew on the theory and assumptions of poststructuralist scholars to alter the point of observation and engage with ideas around power as a crucial investigative concept in my analysis of traditional notions of peace and recovery. Specifically I have built on the current critical literature and offered a toolkit for those scholars and practitioners that can reach beyond this research and the context of Sierra Leone. I believe this toolkit may be useful for other

researchers who also engage with foundational critiques that question the assumptions of a hegemonic discourse and who seek guidance in operationalising their ideas. These far reaching implications can guide future research in diverse locations that have a similar theoretical starting point.

My methodological toolkit can also be adapted and improved upon to address various social phenomena. Here I have taken the starting point of peace scholars who are critical of the liberal peace project and I have extended their views by highlighting the way peace is enacted by local Sierra Leoneans with themes from their daily lives that have arisen from my conversations and interaction with them.

I have utilised a number of tools, mechanisms and insights from a range of other fields of study. Firstly I introduced the concept of managerialism from business studies as a key concept in shaping the organisation, implementation and measurement of peace. Through my discussion of managerialism I outlined an architecture of peace that is supply driven (on the terms and interests of international peacebuilders) and not necessarily needs driven (on the terms of those for whom peace is intended to be built). The role of managerialism as a legitimising ideology in the shaping of peace has been largely ignored as this perspective falls outside the mandate of investigation in IR, and of peace and conflict studies. By integrating this dimension in my analysis I have suggested how the conception of the liberal peace may also be

shaped and influenced by other conceptions prevalent in the world of business and economics. These influential conceptions require interdisciplinary study and collaboration to be able to better understand their influence and impact on the liberal peace. For example, there are a paucity of studies that have sought to make sense of multiple local conceptions of the "stranger" and to draw implications from the ways in which local Sierra Leoneans and their conceptions and values can be meaningfully incorporated into their local, lived context (figure 6.2, 6.3, 6.4). Here I have argued that local conceptions and values are primarily and ultimately important in shaping practices of peace that may endure when peacebuilders eventually depart.

Finally, this research project is relevant to any activity concerned with building and understanding notions of a sustainable and locally owned peace. My locally driven perspective of shaping peace is not easily translated into the current donor-driven infrastructure of peace that is restricted by the nature of its own institutionalisation and measures of success, and this is for a number of reasons. Firstly my approach is locally grounded and requires peacebuilders to physically enter a post-conflict state with an open mind and a willingness to confer with local people in an empathetic and authentic way. Although this does not exclude an organisational structure it does require an organisation that i) enables stories, values and opinions of everyday people to engage with and inform development policy and to develop understanding of the broad impact of certain reforms, (ii) possesses the ability to locate and support

individuals who wish to engage and understand how multiple stories interconnect on a micro level, and iii) explore how i) and ii) may affect and usefully coexist with structural and macro level reforms to build a local peace. This may mean, for example, that the traditional notion of a "Foreign" Office based in London becomes redundant. Instead UK peacebuilders may need to set up a myriad of local offices led by locally-informed practitioners who interact regularly with citizens of peace rather than being led by policymakers who set up procedures for building their universal peace based on a number of assumptions which we have explored whilst being at a safe distance from the post-conflict epicentre where their policies are implemented.

The need for organisations to change, and to facilitate and support such work requires an adjustment in the way that we measure and legitimise "success". This requires a fundamental change in the point of observation to ask questions anew, and this starting point is my contribution to the foundational critique, the process of building peace and the people who wanted and perhaps needed to share their stories with me.

In sum, my research has sought to alter the point of observation and to view peacebuilding from a local micro-level of the everyday interaction and lived experiences of local Sierra Leoneans. Here my main contribution has been in opening up a hitherto confined space of peacebuilding from an epistemic community of non-local "experts" to an experiential and subjective process of

recovery (Brown, 2013; Millar, 2014). In this instance progress is relative and by no means stable, especially when considered within the current measures utilised by development agencies. This work attempts to challenge the current site of legitimacy, power and knowledge (Foucault 1980a, 1980b; Lukes 2005). I do not presume that top down approaches to peacebuilding do not help in establishing stability, but I have sought to recognise existing dynamics on the ground that suggest how peace and development may reflect and embody personal journeys such as mine of living peacefully, locally. By contrast, personal perspectives of shaping peace seem to have been largely ignored in the current literature and especially by policymakers:

> Great hope and optimism do not always lead to the desired result. Peace cannot be 'made' to happen. Often it is a by-product or happy accident of other processes that are not directly related to peacebuilding (Mac Ginty, 2013: 1).

IV. Limitations of This Study and Future Research

The stories and opinions of my participants in my main study were limited (i) to the Southern and Eastern Districts of Sierra Leone and (ii) therefore almost exclusively from the Mende ethnic group. A broader study of the remainder of the country requires more time and resources. This type of broader study may be able to identify differences of what constitutes personal well-being. As I

demonstrated in Chapter 6, my mere presence, the colour of my skin and my stranger status meant I was walking into a context that to a large extent had already attached meaning to my "self". This context affected how I was treated, who I had access to, and the sort of information people felt comfortable telling me. The interviews where they spoke Krio quickly or Mende were difficult for me to follow and the use of a translator would have created another level of potential miscommunication.

My principal gatekeeper to the community gave me incredible access to a diverse range of people (*vide* my interviewees' profiles which are all contained in the appendix). As my direction from one interviewee to another came from that initial introduction I probably missed out on spontaneous interviews at certain points during my research trip. It is important to change your routine and go off the beaten track every once and a while to engage with people that perhaps you do not normally stumble upon.

As this research is interdisciplinary and has given rise to more questions than answers the potential for future research is abundant. I will list a few options:

- Explore the concept of personal well-being in peace and recovery and how this could coexist within development organisations.
- There is room to expand on each of the main themes identified in chapter 7, for example there will be literature outside of my discipline

on the role of football in Sierra Leone, its history and use in a communal setting.

- Explore the dynamics of the Chinese "stranger" in terms of how they are perceived by locals and liberal peace practitioners.
- Future research could explore the role of managerialism and the way it affects the "peacebuilder" in the field. This would require an ethnographic approach to the inner workings of development organisations rather than the "local".
- A more gender-aware study could add another dimension to the findings in this research project, where the views of women could be explored in more depth.
- Future researchers who have a similar theoretical approach may find the guiding principles of my methodological toolkit useful and could potentially adapt and improve upon my suggestions by applying it in various contexts.

V. How have I been affected by my Research?

Before leaving for Sierra Leone I was warned about the culture shock and although I definitely found it hard to adapt to life in Bo, the shock came on my return to the UK. I remember being on a train into University and stopping at Clapham Junction. When I was there I saw a number of women dressed up for the races in their big hats and beautiful dresses, and that was when I received

my culture shock as that was the moment I realised the extent of the division between these two worlds.

Since returning I have remained in contact with my friends and the host family who looked after me. I had planned to return to give a presentation of my findings to Njala University along with other staff from the University of Roehampton although this was put on hold due to the Ebola outbreak. I have attended a number of conferences since I have been back and I have presented papers at two. At these conferences I have been lucky enough to find Sierra Leoneans doing their own research and I have had long conversations with them regarding my findings and the emphasis I have placed on certain themes. This feedback has been extremely helpful and has made me more confident in presenting my findings to the academic community.

These academic circles are again a world away from the context many of us speak about and I have kept my networks within Sierra Leone firmly intact by working to help a local NGO called Mission4Salone that I engaged with during my study. My work with M4SL is a long-term project to bring awareness to their activities and extend their network into the UK and beyond. I believe my contributions and personal achievement in this research will be felt more in these activities than in the policy world.

When I decided that I wanted to do my research in Sierra Leone and I was convinced that staying with a family was essential to immersing myself within the culture all that was left was making it happen. I did not dwell too much on the risks or the logistics of making it happen I just knew it needed to happen sooner rather than later. Looking back I experienced a lot of new things in a short period of time. It was my first time in Africa, my first time in Sierra Leone, my first time in Bo, my first independent research trip. This adventure seems far removed from my everyday life and I sometimes think- did I really do that?

There are some aspects of this research that prompted more personal, lifelong endeavours. One in particular was the exploration of ethics as a social as well as an individual endeavour to improve my "self". Another aspect of my research that will stay with me for a long time is the slaughterhouse in Kailahun. It is easy for me to express how I felt when I was inside- I was numb, but it is much more difficult to describe how I felt after I left. The delay in my feelings mimicked that of my culture shock on my return to England. Once I had left I felt a wave of sadness which was quickly overshadowed by anger. The Sierra Leoneans I was with told me they had forgiven these people. I found my anger in the face of their forgiveness quite strange; as the victims may have been people they knew and communities they grew up with, why in that case was I so affected as a stranger to the people and the place? I don't know for sure, and maybe their forgiveness is due to some of the themes I

mention in this research, such as faith or the need to move past trauma. Perhaps my anger came from my lack of control. Where was I when this was happening? What was I doing? How can these two worlds exist on the same planet and how can I make sense of them? I hope, in some small way, that this work is a contribution to that understanding.

VI. Postscript: Ebola

As I am nearing completion of my research project I wanted to reflect on the Ebola outbreak. It is October 2015 and as the number of deaths and confirmed cases declines so too has the international attention on Ebola and Sierra Leone even though EVD is still present in the country. In fact I was being invited to lessons learned seminars whilst Ebola was still very active, although the fact that one case could lead to an epidemic means that until it is eradicated completely it is a constant danger. It is safe to say that Ebola fatigue has set in with a feeling that we have helped as much as we can and it seems to have worked. I am not the only one to notice this growing fatigue as online articles are beginning to surface reflecting public opinion, including “Ebola: 'Isn't that over yet?” (Mazumdar, 2015) and “Attention, World: The Ebola Fight Isn’t Over” (Liu, 2015).

Indeed we have ploughed money into well-needed treatment centres and resources as well as qualified personnel but with this help coming to an end

can we say Sierra Leone will be more prepared in the future? Not if the problems of infrastructure and the lack of investment in health systems persist especially with the death of so many health workers in the country. The social and cultural miscommunication between medical professionals and local populations shows that contagious disease is not just a medical concern. An intervention that knew how to engage with community leaders and bridge the gap between a safety conscious approach and an understanding of the importance of local traditions would have saved lives (Twort, 2014). Again this is a lesson that is integral when considering the power and politics involved in the prioritisation of peacebuilding reforms. This is a conversation that is not happening within policy circles as the narrative is that Ebola was an unfortunate and unforeseen event. The suggestion that all we require is better monitoring mechanisms and a quicker response by health organisations is only part of the story and risks missing the link between the extent of the harm caused by EVD and the prioritisation of reforms that characterise peacebuilding activities.

VII. Final Thoughts

Bringing the voices of people from Bo into the discourse on peacebuilding adds a different and inconvenient dimension to what shapes peace. To sincerely recognise the importance of these voices is to highlight the inadequacies of the liberal peacebuilding architecture to engage with the

"everyday" and any notion of personal well-being and local-led recovery. It is to ask a whole knowledge system to think again about what it values, and why and how it legitimises these claims. This is a discussion many thought had been conducted thoroughly and was therefore closed, and my research project has sought to re-open it by readjusting the agency in peacebuilding from the international to the local. Here the last word rightly goes to one of my local participants:

> This country is yet a baby country Sierra Leone in Africa still needs to go back to the drawing table yeah, we need to use this moment as the right place so we can develop our country, develop our people, we cannot centre everything to our families but there are families out there who need this money, the masses are there, but are we serving the interests of the masses? No (Kapen, Bo, April 2014).

Table of Interviews

Nomenclature	Gender M/F	Descriptor	District &Date
Abdul	M	A young male Sierra Leonean from Freetown in his late 30s (Chapter 7). He had his arm amputated during the war, and is involved with SLASA. He spreads a message of peace and addresses the issue of discrimination in Sierra Leone against people with disabilities. I met Abdul on my initial trip to Sierra Leone and we saw each other on a few occasions.	Freetown, June 2013
Abraham	M	A young Mende male in his twenties with links to UBC church and local development projects (Chapter 7). Abraham would be at an NGO office that I would visit frequently during my stay.	Bo, April 2014
Ahmed	M	A photographer in Bo who is working on a manuscript for his life story (Chapter 6 & 7). According to Ahmed his family were persecuted by the APC government. He is probably in his late 40s to early 50s. Ahmed was a friend of my	Bo, April 2014

		host. Ahmed had many encounters with rebels during the war. He is self-reflexive and critical of the current state of the country. He also has first-hand experience of prejudice due to his Mende tribe affiliation.	
Almamy	F	An older Mende woman living in an amputee community in her late 50s (Chapter 5). She is a survivor of the war but bears the psychological and physical scars from her experience. Her children were her motivation to carry on. I only met her on one occasion when I visited the amputee community. She spoke Krio and seemed to be in her 60's-70's.	Bo, April 2014
Amidu	M	A young Mende male working in a local NGO (Chapter 5 & 7). I met Amidu on a few occasions and we discussed national and international news stories	Bo, April 2014
Ansu	M	A middle-aged Mende man who took part in a group discussion (Chapter 7). We met on one occasion.	Bo, April 2014
Augustine	M	A middle-aged Mende man by tribe and a religious leader within Bo (Chapter	Bo, April 2014

		6). He was young when the war began but recalls running from rebels and hiding one night in an open grave. He would be present at religious ceremonies I attended and we met on a number of occasions.	
Banja	M	A middle-aged Mende man who is locally respected and holds a position of authority within the community (Chapter 3). Banja spoke good English so after I interviewed him and spoke to other women in this particular village he acted as my translator.	Bo, March 2014
Bantamoi	M	A young Mende man (Chapter 7). A musician within a church group, he mixes music and dance with a message of peace. I met him a few times at the Obama bar and at the fundraiser for Centennial secondary school.	Bo, March 2014
Chidj	M	A Mende man living in Bo (Chapter 6 & 7). He was young when the war began and fled with his mother. His father and siblings sought refuge in the United States where he hopes to join them one day. Chidj works within the	Bo, March 2014

		country to help children and orphans. I met Chidj through his work and we met up socially. He travelled with me to Freetown at the end of my research trip. We are good friends and speak regularly.	
Ekuma	M	Respected religious leader in his 60s or 70s within Bo and involved with the IRC of Sierra Leone during the war (Chapter 6 & 7). Ekuma is an elderly gentleman that I met at a pastor's workshop. The workshop was aimed at using the influence of all religious leaders across denominations within the country to engage with the population and contribute to development.	Bo, April 2014
Ella	F	Ella is a middle-aged teacher and activist from the Mende tribe (Chapter 7). She prides herself on knowing how to engage with different actors within the community to produce positive change. I met Ella on one occasion but she was happy to describe her opinions on the state of the country and what she believes needs to change.	Bo, March 2014
Francis	M	A male student in his mid-twenties with mixed tribal	Bo, March

		lineage (Chapter 3). I met Francis on numerous occasions as he worked with a few other interviewees. He was studying at university and had great ambitions for the future. He was always well dressed.	2014
Hindowa	M	A Mende man by tribe and a respected religious leader within Bo (Chapter 7). He is a member of the IRC of Sierra Leone and has many children. He was not in the country during the war but returned to help his community. Hindowa and the other religious leaders interviewed are relied upon for local level conflict resolution. He is an elderly gentleman.	Bo, March 2014
Hinga	M	Hinga is a Mende by tribe in his late 40s to 50s (Chapter 5 & 7). His father was executed by the RUF during the war and this prompted him to join the CDF. Hinga has an intimidating presence that demands respect immediately. However, after a while you see his sense of humour emerges. He is between 40 and 50 years old.	Bo, April 2014
Isata	F	An older married Mende woman in her 70s who used to be a teacher (Chapter 5).	Bo, March 2014

		She has a wealth of knowledge about the changing state of Sierra Leone. She has adult children that are at university. She had encounters with rebels during the war but emerged largely unscathed. I met her on one occasion through a recommendation from another interviewee.	
John	M	A British military man assigned to Sierra Leone to help reform the armed forces (Chapter 4). As IMATT was being replaced by ISAT it was an interesting time to get this interviewee's perspective on the transition.	Freetown, June 2013
Julius	M	A young Mende male in his mid to late twenties working in a local NGO whilst pursuing his studies (Chapter 7). He was friends with some of the other young males whom I interviewed.	Bo, April 2014
Kapen	M	A religious leader within the community around 40-50 years old and a Mende by tribe (Chapter 8). He suffered amputation under the RUF.	Bo, April 2014
Kamara	M	A male volunteer for SLASA based in Freetown	Freetown, June

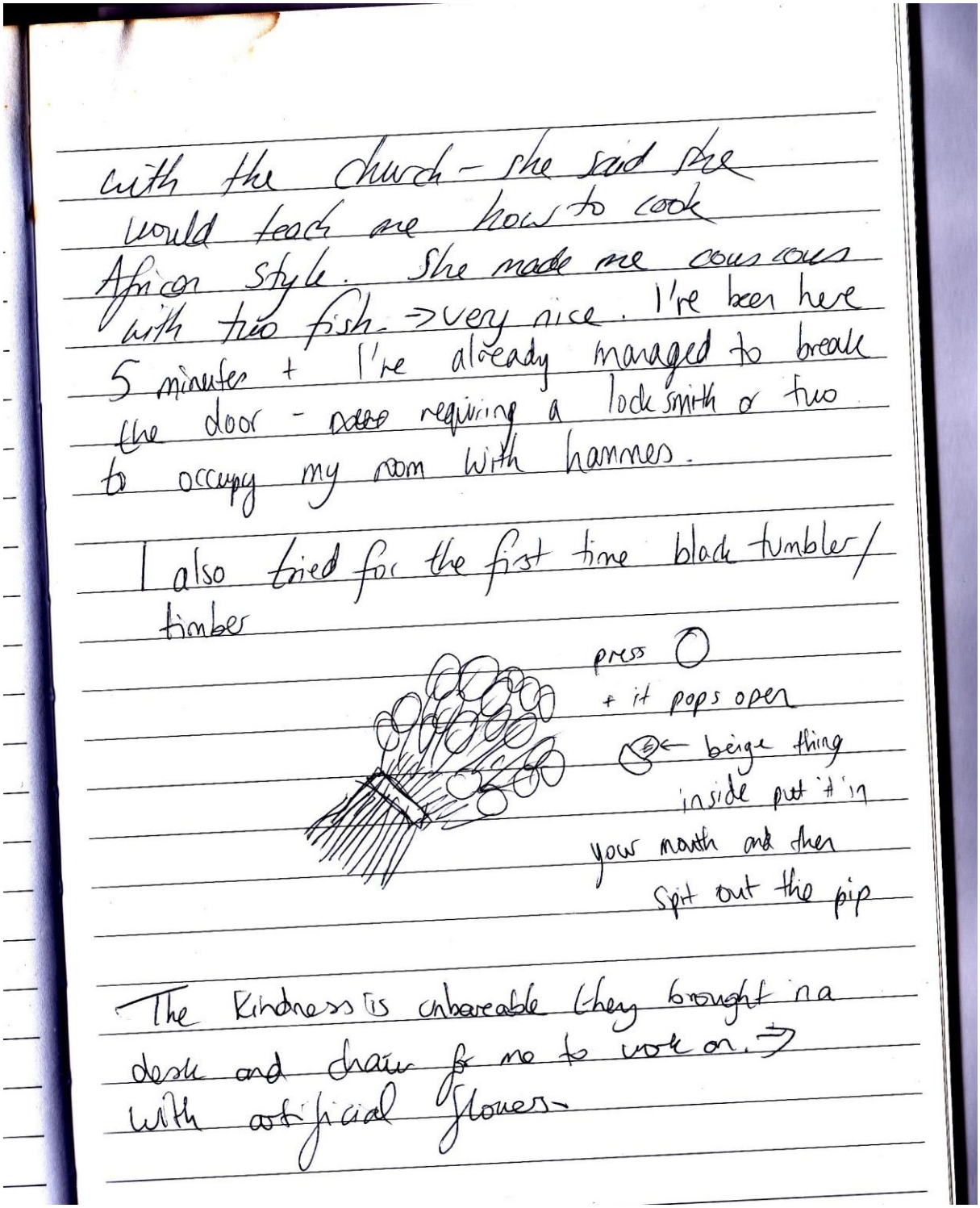
		(Chapter 7). As an amputee he is politically active in Sierra Leone to improve the life of amputees and those living with disabilities across the country. I met Kamara during my initial trip to Sierra Leone and saw him on a number of occasions.	2013
Mary	F	Mary is a young female in her mid-twenties, she is a Mende student who studies at Njala University in Bo. (Chapter 7). I met Mary through another interviewee.	Bo, March 2014
Momo	M	A highly respected, middle-aged religious leader within the community who was active before, during and after the war (Chapter 7). Momo is Mende by tribe. Momo was helpful in connecting me with other potential interviewees.	Bo, April 2014
Moses	M	A young Mende male student in his twenties (Chapter 7). I met Moses on a few occasions and enjoyed conversing with him about football, news and Sierra Leone.	Bo, April 2014
Musa	M	A respected Mende community leader between the ages of 40-50 (Chapter	Bo, April 2014

		7).	
Norman	M	A young Mende man who is active within the community and uses his voice to express what he believes is right and wrong in his country (Chapter 3).	Bo, April 2014
Oponjo	M	A respected Mende male leader within the community in Kailahun in his late 30s early 40s (Chapter 6 & 7). He went to Guinea when the war began and when he returned to Kailahun the community had dispersed. Some died while others fled. Oponjo was quite intimidating at first but once I built up a rapport our conversation flowed a lot more easily. As Kailahun was quite difficult to get to I only visited him once.	Kailahun, April 2014
Salia	F	A female Mende survivor of the war in her 40s (Chapter 5 & 6). The RUF amputated both of her lower arms. Her husband was also killed during the war. One of my friends acted as the translator as she spoke quickly in Krio. She was busy looking after a number of children whilst the interview was conducted.	Bo, April 2014
Soloman	M	An older Mende man in his 50s married with children (Chapter 5, 6 & 7). He	Bo, March 2014

		worked as a social worker before getting involved with a local NGO. He fled to Bo when the war began. I saw Soloman very frequently as he had a lot of local knowledge and was very interesting to speak to.	
Tejan	M	A male professional working in Kailahun and a Mende by tribe (Chapter 7). I saw Tejan on one occasion. He was the brother of a friend from Bo and was considering doing a PhD. He worked in a hospital which is where the interview was conducted.	Kailahun, April 2014
Yoko	M	A male member of one of the ruling families and a Mende by tribe (Chapter 7). Yoko escorted me on some of my travels around the country. He was well connected and was a good gatekeeper to people and places.	Bo, March 2014

Appendix

Extracts from Research Diary

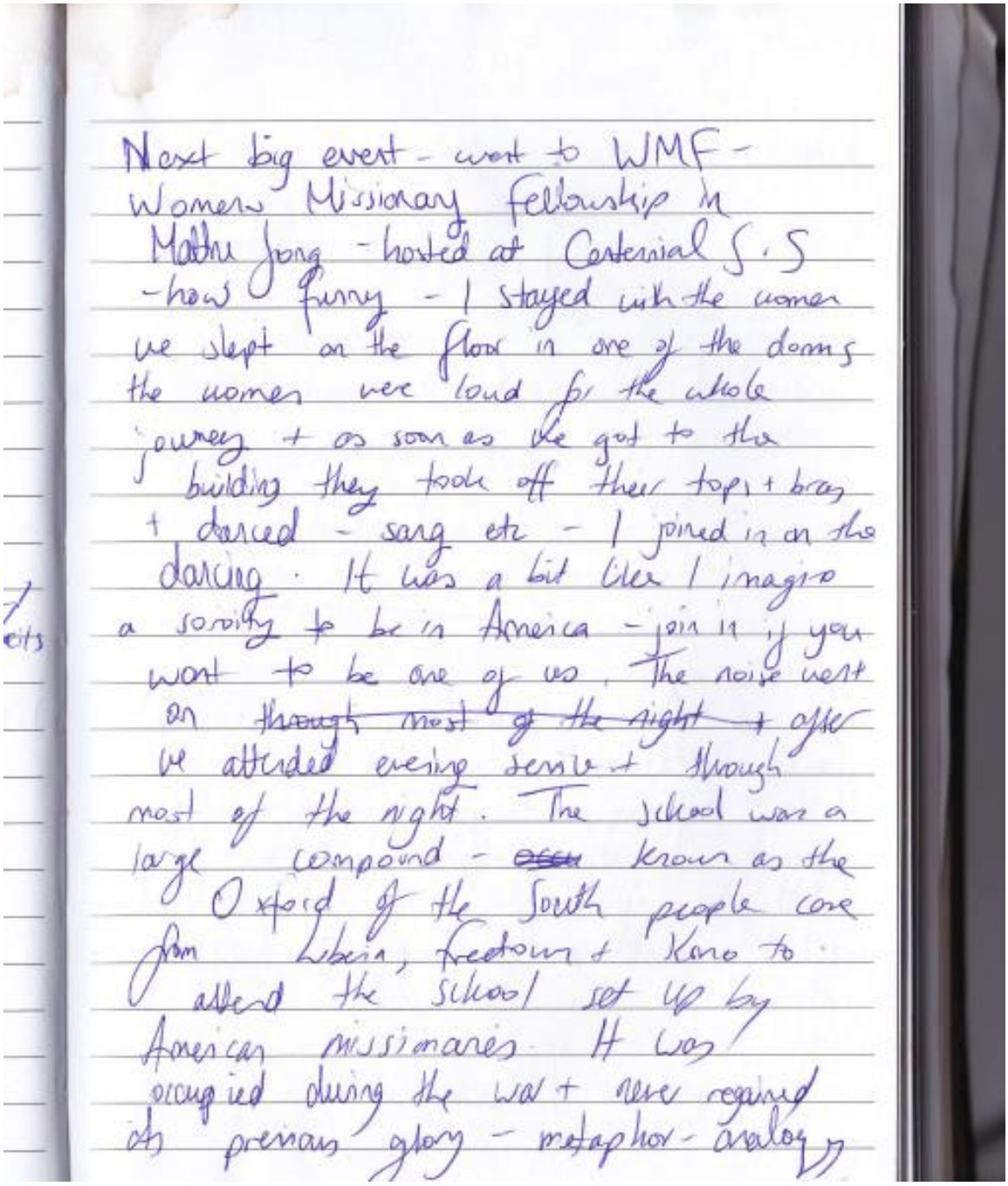


with the church - she said she would teach me how to cook African style. She made me couscous with two fish -> very nice. I've been here 5 minutes + I've already managed to break the door - requiring a locksmith or two to occupy my room with hammers.

I also tried for the first time black tumbler/ timber

press ○
+ it pops open
(5) ← beige thing
inside put it in
your mouth and then
spit out the pip

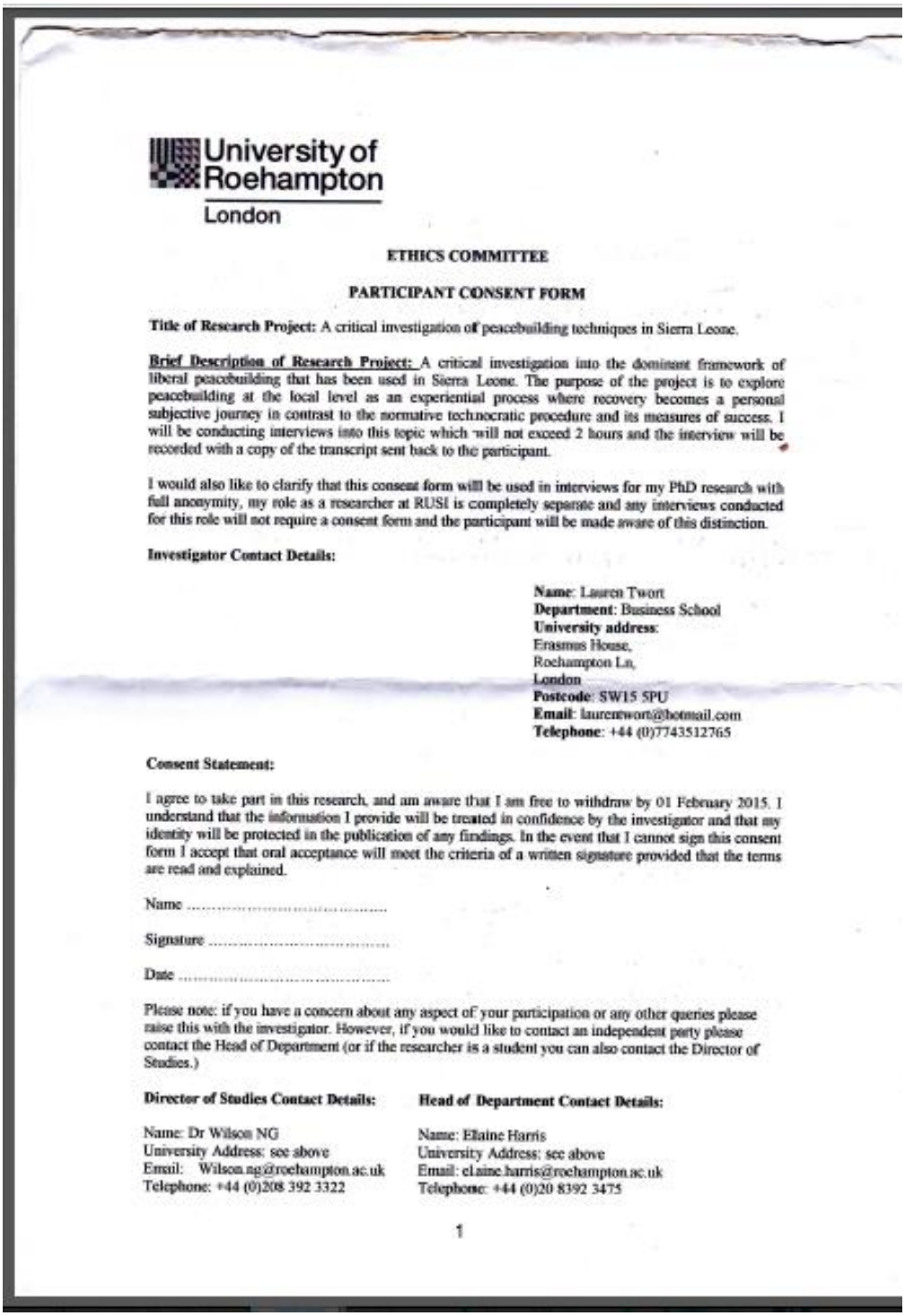
The Kindness is unbearable they brought in a desk and chair for me to work on. ⇒ with artificial flowers.



Next big event - went to WMF - Women's Missionary fellowship in Mathu Jong - hosted at Centennial S.S - how funny - I stayed with the women we slept on the floor in one of the dorms the women were loud for the whole journey + as soon as we got to the building they took off their tops + bras + danced - sang etc - I joined in on the dancing. It was a bit like I imagine a sorority to be in America - join in if you want to be one of us. The noise went on ~~through most of the night~~ + after we attended evening service + through most of the night. The school was a large compound - ~~esse~~ known as the Oxford of the South people come from Liberia, Freetown + Kono to attend the school set up by American missionaries. It was occupied during the war + were regained its previous glory - metaphor - analogy

Participant Consent Form

The research for this project was submitted for ethics consideration under the reference BUS 13/ 013 in the Department of Business and was approved under the procedures of the University of Roehampton's Ethics Committee on 29.05.13.



University of Roehampton
London

ETHICS COMMITTEE

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project: A critical investigation of peacebuilding techniques in Sierra Leone.

Brief Description of Research Project: A critical investigation into the dominant framework of liberal peacebuilding that has been used in Sierra Leone. The purpose of the project is to explore peacebuilding at the local level as an experiential process where recovery becomes a personal subjective journey in contrast to the normative technocratic procedure and its measures of success. I will be conducting interviews into this topic which will not exceed 2 hours and the interview will be recorded with a copy of the transcript sent back to the participant.

I would also like to clarify that this consent form will be used in interviews for my PhD research with full anonymity, my role as a researcher at RUSI is completely separate and any interviews conducted for this role will not require a consent form and the participant will be made aware of this distinction.

Investigator Contact Details:

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Consent Statement:

I agree to take part in this research, and am aware that I am free to withdraw by 01 February 2015. I understand that the information I provide will be treated in confidence by the investigator and that my identity will be protected in the publication of any findings. In the event that I cannot sign this consent form I accept that oral acceptance will meet the criteria of a written signature provided that the terms are read and explained.

Name .....

Signature .....

Date .....

Please note: if you have a concern about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise this with the investigator. However, if you would like to contact an independent party please contact the Head of Department (or if the researcher is a student you can also contact the Director of Studies.)

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