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Grassroots perspectives of peace building in Sierra Leone 1991-2006

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Grassroots Perspectives of Peace Building in Sierra Leone 1991-2006

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the University's
requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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Coventry University

ABSTRACT

This study is about peace building in Sierra Leone, during and after the civil war (1991-2002). The initial hypothesis was that the impact of externally driven peace building activities was reduced because of insufficient attention to local culture and priorities. This hypothesis was underpinned by a number of assumptions based on the author's personal experience and the views of Sierra Leoneans met in the early post-war period. Firstly, that local culture and priorities were the most appropriate in the context of peace building. Secondly, that divergence from local culture and priorities by externally driven activities would inevitably be detrimental to peace building. Thirdly, that local culture and priorities would always have the capacity to inform externally driven peace building activities.

In 2003, when this study was planned, the post-war literature mainly described the war and its causes or examined the success of peace building activities and programmes. There was also considerable interest in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Special Court. Informants included external actors, Government and NGO personnel but grassroots perspectives were largely missing. This study set out to remedy this omission; trained local researchers used participatory methods to collect grassroots perspectives at six locations, with different war experiences. In all 76 Sierra Leoneans participated in focus groups and other key stakeholders informed the study.

Findings within and among the focus groups were heterogeneous. The three prominent themes of grassroots concern that emerged were need, governance and societal relationships. Although the hypothesis was not substantiated in all respects, the findings related to societal relationships were supportive. Forgiveness, expressed according to local culture and tradition, was a local priority not always given prominence in externally driven peace building activities to the apparent detriment of peace building impact. In other cases (such as shelter or beneficiary participation) where the 'local' and the 'external' diverged, the influence on peace building impact was more tenuous. Incidental findings suggested that practice-preach dichotomies within external peace building activities may be detrimental to impact although to be certain, further research would be required.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|----------|---|
| ACC | Anti-Corruption Commission |
| AFRC | Armed Forces Revolutionary Council |
| AFSTRAG | African Strategic and Peace Research Group |
| AIDS | Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome |
| APC | All People's Congress |
| BBC | British Broadcasting Corporation |
| CBO | Community Based Organisation |
| CDA | The Collaborative for Development Action |
| CDF | Civil Defence Force (Kamajors) |
| CECORE | Centre for Conflict Resolution (Uganda) |
| CEDSA | Centre for Development and Security Analysis |
| CGG | Campaign for Good Governance |
| CSSp | Congregatio Sancti Spiritus (Congregation of the Holy Ghost Fathers) |
| CODESRIA | Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa |
| DDR | Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration |
| DFID | Department for International Development (UK Government) |
| DRC | Democratic Republic of Congo |
| ECCP | European Centre for Conflict Prevention |
| ECOMOG | Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group |
| ECOWAS | Economic Community of West African States |
| FBC | Fourah Bay College (University of Sierra Leone) |
| GTZ | Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Technical Cooperation) |
| HIV | Human Immunodeficiency Virus |
| HRW | Human Rights Watch |
| IA | International Alert |
| ICC | International Criminal Court |
| ICG | International Crisis Group |
| ICRC | International Committee of the Red Cross |
| IFRC | International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies |
| IMATT | International Military Advisory Training Team |
| IPRA | International Peace Research Association |
| Le | Leones (currency of Sierra Leone) |
| MoHS | Ministry of Health and Sanitation |
| NaCSA | National Commission for Social Action |
| NGO | Non Governmental Organisation |
| NPFL | National Patriotic Front of Liberia |
| NPRC | National Provisional Ruling Council |
| ODI | Overseas Development Institute |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| OHCHR | Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights |
| OPARD | Organisation for Peace, Reconciliation and Development |
| PCIA | Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment |
| PRA | Participatory Rural Appraisal |
| PRSP | Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper |

| | |
|------------------|--|
| RPP | Reflecting on Peace Practice (project) |
| RUF | Revolutionary United Front |
| SCF | Save the Children Fund |
| SCSL | Special Court for Sierra Leone |
| SIPRI | Stockholm International Peace Research Institute |
| SLA, SLAF, RSLAF | Sierra Leone Army/Armed Forces, Royal Sierra Leone Armed Forces |
| SLANGO | Sierra Leone Association of Non-Governmental Organizations |
| SLPP | Sierra Leone People's Party |
| SRR | Security Sector Reform |
| SWOT | Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (analysis) |
| TBA | Traditional Birth Attendant |
| TRC | Truth and Reconciliation Commission |
| UDHR | Universal Declaration of Human Rights |
| UFMR | Under Fives Mortality Rate |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| UNAMSIL | United Nations Assistance Mission to Sierra Leone |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation |
| UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| UNIOSIL | United Nations Integrated Office for Sierra Leone |
| USA | United States of America |
| USD | United States Dollar |
| USIP | United States Institute of Peace |
| WHO | World Health Organisation |
| WVSL | World Vision Sierra Leone |

1 INTRODUCTION

This study is about peace building in Sierra Leone. Specifically, it explores how Sierra Leonean grassroots' perspectives on peace building in their country during and after the civil war (officially, 1991 – 2002) converge or diverge from international peace building theory and practice. During and after the war, many external actors became involved in peace building in Sierra Leone. Their activities covered the full continuum of conflict handling / peace building from military peace keeping to reconciliation. At the same time, indigenous peace building efforts were underway at all levels of the society; local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), many with an expressed peace building mandate, proliferated¹. Yet, up to four years after the end of the war, discernable impact (if any) of these peace building efforts on the lives of ordinary civilians remained unclear.

Details of the war and peace building initiatives in Sierra Leone are narrated later. This chapter first explains the genesis of the study in my personal experience of Sierra Leone, Uganda and other post conflict societies. Then, the structure of the enquiry is summarised and finally, the contents of the rest of this thesis are outlined.

(a) Personal Experience

My own experience of working in Sierra Leone before, during and after the civil war and of working in other situations of violent conflict made me increasingly question how external actors, particularly NGOs, engaged with such societies. Since this questioning eventually led to this study, this section narrates that experience (chronologically) and the development of my questions.

Between 1987 and 1992, I was Matron of Panguma Mission Hospital in Kenema District, Eastern Province, Sierra Leone, just 10 km along bush paths from the diamond-mining town of Tongo, which became a notorious rebel stronghold during the war. The Hospital's public health department always had a strong community development focus; as well as antenatal care, childhood immunisations and growth monitoring it undertook literacy, water, sanitation, and food security activities in the villages within its two catchment Chiefdoms, Lower Bambara and Dodo (total population 105,000). This gave much more insight into rural village life than a hospital matron might normally gain. In 1992, the war closed in around Panguma; a massacre eight km from Tongo² and rumours of 'rebels' gathering in the surrounding hills eventually led the local parliamentarian³ to recommend that female expatriate volunteers leave. The hospital finally closed after an attack on the 12 March 1994 by unidentified combatants; four expatriate missionaries were ambushed and shot, 11 Sierra Leoneans were also killed, the hospital looted and staff accommodation burned. Many hospital staff and towns people fled.

¹ Before the war, there were a few dozen national NGOs, by 2006, 220 national NGOs were members of the Sierra Leone Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (SLANGO). Interview with Aisha Josiah (SLANGO National Coordinator), 30/06/2006, Freetown.

² At Weima.

³ The late, Honourable Member of Parliament, Dr Moiwo Korji.

After leaving Sierra Leone and a spell as matron of a Mission Hospital in Zambia, I joined Medical Emergency Relief International and worked both sides of the border between Rwanda and (what was then) Zaire.⁴ For the first time, I engaged with communities where both the victims and perpetrators of extreme physical violence were living side by side. I observed that the relief (and later, development) programmes in that region, although technically competent, failed to acknowledge this devastating reality faced by the beneficiaries of their activities.⁵

Next, I moved to Lofa Country, Liberia, triaging Sierra Leonean refugees crossing the border as they fled rebel attacks on several major towns in Eastern province.⁶ I knew a number of them and others had links to Panguma citizens known to me. Even those that were not physically injured told harrowing stories of atrocities⁷ and loss. These stories and the refugees' constantly expressed desire to go home 'soonest', led me to once more question how communities including both victims and perpetrators could ever live together again and if there was anything that external actors (like me) could contribute towards social reintegration in such circumstances.

Later, I had the opportunity to start exploring these questions more fully through a Masters Degree and fieldwork in Uganda. In January 2003, I was invited to Uganda to evaluate community-based reconciliation⁸ activities between the Iteso (settled farmers) and the Karimojong (semi-nomadic agro-pastoralists),⁹ initiated by a small UK based NGO with 40 years experience in the field. Their 'primary objective is to promote reconciliation. Practical "development" activities are seen as a way of helping to achieve this'¹⁰. This evaluation provided the case study for my Master's dissertation, 'How Can NGO Community Development Programmes Support Reconciliation? Lessons Learned From N.E. Uganda'.

My findings suggested that the four stages of a standard project cycle (assessment, planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation) could be expanded in a situation

⁴ Following a 'rebel' takeover of the country, it was renamed the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) on 17/05/1997.

⁵ This hampered agencies' work. Apart from the paralysis engendered by personal psychological trauma, people that could hardly bear to live together would (could) not engage with 'community' programmes and projects.

⁶ 53,500 Sierra Leonean refugees arrived in the Liberian border 'town' of Vahun (population 3,500) in just three weeks during February 1998.

⁷ For example, many refugees from Segbwema reported that the 'rebels' had locked patients in the wards of the Methodist Mission Hospital there and then set fire to the buildings.

⁸ In this context, 'reconciliation' was understood as the most participatory component of peace building, during which conflicting parties not only look for solutions to the causes of their conflict 'but also work to alter the adversaries' relationships from that of resentment and hostility to friendship and harmony'. H. Assefa, 'The Meaning of Reconciliation' in ECCP *People Building Peace: 38 Inspiring Stories From Around the World* (Utrecht: ECCP, 1999) p 38.

⁹ The Iteso and Karimojong of N.E. Uganda have a common tribal origin but separated about 300 years ago. The Karimojong believe that at that time the Iteso took with them their best cattle. The Karimojong's instinct to recover their lost cattle from those earliest days of separation means that there has always been cattle raiding across the Teso and Karamoja border. The introduction of guns into the region (in the late 1970s) escalated the death toll from raids. From 2000, tensions increased because drought and famine in Karamoja forced the Karimojong into Teso to steal food and for grazing and water for their cattle. By that time, an estimated 200 people per month were being shot in raids and skirmishes and tens of thousands of Iteso displaced. According to Baker, between January and October 2001, 54 raids took place forcing 38% or 88,000 of the Iteso to take refuge in 58 government camps for internally displaced people. B. Baker, 'Taking The Law Into Their Own Hands' (UK: Ashgate, 2002) p 195.

¹⁰ Accessed on 30/12/2002 via www.cips.org.uk/approach.htm

of conflict or its aftermath to make community development activities more supportive of reconciliation. Thus, assessment required extensive background knowledge about the conflict and its socio-economic, political and geographic context.¹¹ This background knowledge had to include an appreciation of indigenous conflict handling mechanisms and hence local culture.¹² I was greatly influenced by Lederach's writing¹³ which was so pertinent to the Iteso Karimojong context (although he had never been involved there). The planning and implementation stages of the project cycle depended on community participation to generate ideas and approaches that were most likely to bear sustainable fruit.¹⁴ I found other Uganda-based research, which suggested that,

Although NGOs thought participatory approaches important case studies reveal less evidence of participation and innovation than the conventional wisdom would suggest... most [NGOs] at least attempt to develop participatory processes even if not always with unmitigated success.¹⁵

Implementation also needed 'holistic thinking and behaviour'. Community development NGOs could support reconciliation by mainstreaming it in all their usual activities. For example, Oxfam or Concern could site their wells/boreholes to be accessible to both communities. Thus, giving an opportunity for people from both tribes to interact while they collected water and their cattle drank. In addition, NGOs needed to behave in a 'reconciliatory' way to reinforce the message of their activities, for example by employing people from the parties in conflict in roughly equal numbers.¹⁶ Communities quickly noticed differences between what NGOs 'preached' and 'practised'. The NGO nutritionist who enthusiastically advocated groundnuts as a protein source lost credibility when she never ate local food and bought all her supplies from supermarkets in the capital.

Lastly, the monitoring and evaluation phase of the project cycle needed to move beyond 'effectiveness' based on narrow programme objectives and indicators to explore

¹¹ S. Cutter, 'How Can NGO Community Development Programmes Support Reconciliation? Lessons Learned From N.E. Uganda' (unpublished Dissertation for MA in Third World Studies at Coventry University, 2003) p 37.

¹² Culture can be defined as 'the shared knowledge and schemes created and used by a set of people for perceiving, interpreting, expressing and responding to social realities around them.' Lecture by C. Rank, Coventry, 10/10/2002.

¹³ J. P. Lederach, 'The Journey Toward Reconciliation' (USA: Herald Press, 1999), 'Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation In Divided Societies' (USA: United States Institute Of Peace, 1997) and 'Preparing For Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures' (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1995).

¹⁴ Cutter, 'How Can NGO Community Development Programmes Support Reconciliation? Lessons Learned From N.E. Uganda' p 38.

¹⁵ S. Dicklitch, 'The Elusive Promise Of NGOs In Africa; Lessons From Uganda' (UK: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1998) p 160.

¹⁶ There was evidence that local people appreciated tribally mixed NGOs teams as a vision of what was possible

impact¹⁷ since this gave more insight into the realities of local actors in relation to externally initiated activities.¹⁸

It was experiences in post conflict Sierra Leone that finally led to this study.¹⁹ I first returned to Sierra Leone in April 2002²⁰ after peace had been officially declared but before the post war elections (of May 2002). The scale of the international presence was much greater than I had envisaged; Freetown's streets were clogged with white 4x4s displaying every imaginable logo from United Nations agencies, NGOs (international and local) and faith-based groups. Driving out of Freetown towards the east, the main base of the United Nations Assistance Mission to Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was visible with helicopters landing and taking off every few minutes and row up on row of armoured vehicles and 4x4s. With 17,500 peacekeepers, UNAMSIL was the largest peace keeping operation in the world at that time.²¹

Reading about Sierra Leone before leaving the UK, the media and academia had focused on Sierra Leone's unique two-pronged approach towards national reconciliation. Namely, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)²² created to produce a truthful report of the conflict and to expedite the process of social reconciliation and the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) to 'try those with greatest responsibility for human rights violations'.²³ However, Sierra Leonean friends and acquaintances (particularly in the rural East), felt that those two institutions had little relevance to them and were just window dressing for the international community. These 'informants' and their communities displayed a greater interest in forgiveness, driven by a sense of shared responsibility for the conflict; 'we must forgive; it was our sons and daughters, brothers and sisters that did this. We are all responsible'.²⁴ I encountered many local initiatives, with no external involvement, that encouraged reconciliation. For example, the choir of St Paul's Cathedral, Kenema, had composed and recorded songs about forgiveness and reconciliation.²⁵ In the Cathedral

¹⁷ By 'impact' I mean the intended and unintended consequences (good or bad) of an intervention experienced both by the intervention's 'target population' and those beyond that target population. The World Bank defines impact as 'positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended' (www.worldbank.org/ieg/nonie/docs/IE_statement.doc). I would not wish to confine the term to development interventions.

¹⁸ For example, to reduce conflict over water, the NGO had a well digging programme at sites accessible to both Iteso and Karimojong. In a ranking exercise, the wells and dams programme scored highest but not for reasons connected with water, 'having the celebrations for [the handover of] the Hand Dug Wells gives it the highest score in this area when compared to all other activities'¹⁸. Since community interaction was a higher local priority than even water, the NGO might have considered additional opportunities for 'parties' than the infrequent handover of water installations.

¹⁹ Many aspects of post war Sierra Leone caught my attention although they did not necessarily have a direct bearing on this study. For example, the scale of the destruction; most striking was the once crowded street of houses (mostly occupied by hospital staff) and small shops opposite Panguma Hospital's main gate which by 2002 was just bush. One had to kick around in the long grass to find signs of cement foundations. The destruction was so complete and the bush quick to reclaim the land.

²⁰ Then twice towards the end of 2003 (while based in Liberia) and in March 2004 before returning to live in Kenema District from September that year.

²¹ UNAMSIL 'Fact Sheet 1: Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration' accessed on 22/10/2008 via www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unamsil/factsheet1_DDR.pdf

²² www.trcsierraleone.org

²³ www.sc-sl.org/about.html

²⁴ St Paul's Cathedral Choir, Kenema, Sierra Leone at the launch of their Peace Promoters cassette on 20/04/2002.

²⁵ To promote the messages the cassette was sold at subsidised rates; schools, cultural and women's groups received free copies and a local radio station regularly broadcast tracks.

grounds, Kenema Diocese had established a school for returnee children and re-integrated ex-combatants who could not enrol at local schools because either they were disabled by war injuries (amputation) or their local school was full. The Bishop of Kenema was particularly blunt, 'foreigners should keep out of other people's reconciliation processes, they do not understand'.²⁶

In the capital city, Freetown, I renewed acquaintance with academics from Fourah Bay College (FBC), University of Sierra Leone, who also had reservations about the role of external actors in peace building. Namely, that some too readily applied 'western' thinking without considering indigenous²⁷ African approaches. Management of post-traumatic stress disorder in child ex-combatants was a particular concern, western approaches focused principally on the individual child rather than on the wider community to which the child belonged.²⁸ In rural Sierra Leone, 'Individual' was a rare concept, 'community' being the paramount social entity. This is articulated in the African philosophy of Ubuntu, a unifying vision or worldview enshrined in the Zulu Maxim '*umuntu ngumuntu agabantu*'; literally, 'a person is a person through other persons'.²⁹

In 2004, I led an evaluation of World Vision's³⁰ emergency and public health activities between 1998 and 2003 in Bonthe District, Southern Province, Sierra Leone. Most of the £1 million funding for which was from the British Government's Department for International Development (DFID). The terms of reference required a comparison between Bonthe and another District in Sierra Leone (I chose Kenema District since I knew it) and a,

Literature Review / examination of 'grey literature':

- [World Vision] will provide the Evaluation Team Leader with the necessary project documents, e.g. initial assessments, baseline data, original project proposals and reports.
- ... Up-to-date population figures from GoSL [Government of Sierra Leone] and recent reports (if any) regarding the overall health status in Sierra Leone...
- The Evaluation Team Leader will analyse the above information and will source recent reports relating to the general status of the health system in Sierra Leone (e.g. from the Internet, databases, journals, etc).

Comparison of epidemiological reports from Bonthe Health District.

- WVSL will provide epidemiological reports from all 5 phases of this project, to the Evaluation Team Leader, for her comparison and analysis.³¹

²⁶ Personal communication with the Rt Revd Patrick D. Koroma, 06/12/2004, Kenema.

²⁷ By 'indigenous' in this context, I mean ways of thinking and of acting that, although dynamic, are rooted in pre-colonial practices, institutions, relationships and rituals.

²⁸ O. Gbla, 'Conflict and Postwar Trauma Among Child Soldiers in Liberia and Sierra Leone' in A. Sesay (ed), *Civil Wars, Child soldiers and Post Conflict Peace Building in West Africa* (Nigeria: AFSTRAG, 2003) p 186.

²⁹ D. Louw (University of the North) '*Ubuntu: An African Assessment of the Religious Other*' p 2 accessed on 26/04/2000 via www.bu.edu

³⁰ World Vision UK is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation financed by the UK Government, the European Union, charitable trusts, corporate supporters and more than 100,000 individuals, who sponsor children in poor communities overseas. For more information, see www.worldvision.org.uk/server.php?show=nav.11

³¹ S. Cutter et al, 'World Vision Sierra Leone: Evaluation of Bonthe District Emergency/Primary Health Care Programme 1998 – 2003' (unpublished report for World Vision UK and DFID, March 2003) p 28.

This examination of reports and statistical data disquieted me. Where, among the huge number of reports by agencies and the Sierra Leone Government, were the opinions of 'ordinary' people like my friends?

The data showed that post war health and development indicators were similar to those of the late 1980s when I first worked in Panguma, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Pre and Post War Health and Development Indicators

| Indicator | Pre War ³² | | Post War ³³ | |
|--|-----------------------|---------|------------------------|---------|
| | Data | Year | Data | Year |
| Life expectancy at birth | 42 years | 1990 | 41 years | 2005 |
| Human Development Index | 160 of 160 | 1989 | 176 of 177 | 2003 |
| Population undernourished (%) | 46 | 1990/92 | 50 | 2001/03 |
| Infant mortality per 1000 live births | 151 | 1989 | 165 | 2005 |
| Under fives mortality rate (UFMR) per 1000 live births | 261 | 1989 | 284 | 2003 |
| Maternal mortality rate per 100,000 live births | 450 | 1980/87 | 2000 | 2004 |

I became concerned that, given Sierra Leone's health and development status was relatively low in the 1980s, blaming the war for all Sierra Leone's post war problems ignored deeper causes of slow development and poor health. In addition, if agencies continued doing what they had always done (without discernable impact) these deep-rooted problems would not be addressed. Maternal mortality provides an illustration. As a strategy to reduce maternal mortality, external actors (in many countries) favour training traditional birth attendants (TBAs) in the villages. On returning to post war Sierra Leone, I found the increased knowledge and skills of the many TBAs remarkable. Most acknowledged the training they had received from NGOs, some while living in refugee camps in Guinea.³⁴ Why then, was maternal mortality still so high? 'TBAs themselves mentioned that patients often refuse transfer because they cannot afford the hospital fees and transport to hospital is not available'.³⁵ TBAs narrated how, even when they knew women would not deliver safely in the village, they could not withstand the social pressure from the community to try to deliver them, 'you are my friend, do not send me away, try, don't do this to me, we don't have money'.³⁶ Meanwhile, NGOs in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MoHS) continued funding TBA training workshops

³² UNDP, 'Human Development Report 1991' (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) p 119 – 192.

³³ UNDP, 'Human Development Report 2006' accessed via hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr06-complete.pdf on 12/09/2007 and UNICEF, 'At a Glance: Sierra Leone' accessed via <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/sierraleone.html> on 1/11/2007.

³⁴ Interview with Semabu Women's Group (including a number of enthusiastic and committed TBAs), 20/03/2004, Semabu (Bonthe District) as part of the Bonthe Evaluation.

³⁵ Cutter et al, 'World Vision Sierra Leone: Evaluation of Bonthe District Emergency/Primary Health Care Programme 1998 – 2003' p 13.

³⁶ From a story told by a Medical Assistant about the death of his mother in childbirth with her seventh child (he was the oldest). The nearest clinic with delivery facilities and personnel that were more skilled was 4 km away. (Bonthe Evaluation).

(no one wanted to stop them because of the free food and per diems) and maternal mortality in Sierra Leone remained the highest in the world.³⁷

Some interviews during the Bonthe evaluation resonated with hints (from other sources) about a disconnect between international and local priorities. For example, a senior MoHS doctor said,

It can be a problem if NGOs or other bodies come with their own agendas. For example, UNICEF [the United Nations Children's Fund] is targeting four 'priority' Districts, which make it difficult for the MoHS in other Districts... when UNICEF wanted to introduce solar fridges they wanted to use contractors for installation but they were persuaded to train local MoHS staff in installation and maintenance. This is likely to make the system more sustainable and gives local people status 'we can fix solar'... Dig out the structures and processes that were in place before the war and re/build those... The structures that you meet are the structures that you should work with.³⁸

At community level, there were grumbles, 'they [NGO field workers] treated us badly; you cannot just treat us like tools'³⁹ referring to agencies' frequent requests for labour as a contribution towards project implementation in the belief that this would ensure community ownership of the project. The Chief, in this case, wanted a say in what his community's contribution should be. Corresponding with Dicklitch's findings in Uganda (above), it seemed that although World Vision thought community participation important, their practice did not meet communities' expectations; often they consulted communities rather than let them participate (exercise choice through negotiation) in the project cycle.⁴⁰

The Bonthe evaluation demonstrated unexpected impacts of some externally initiated activities. Although not necessarily bad, these pointed to a divergence between local and external realities. For example, women's groups had received seeds, cocks and goats to generate income for a community fund intended to pay the medical fees of any child taken to hospital. However, the women saw the main benefit of the project as a reduction in domestic violence, nothing directly to do with children. One woman explained that the project acted as 'a peace cord between husbands and wives'. Women were able to fend for themselves, did not embarrass their husbands with requests for money that the men could not satisfy and so did not directly threaten the male role as a 'provider'.⁴¹ The 'external actors' who established the programmes knew little about the realities of domestic violence in that community.

³⁷ C. AbouZahr and T. Wardlaw 'Maternal Mortality Estimates in 2000: Estimates Developed by WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA' via www.who.org.

³⁸ Interview with Dr Alasana Sesay (Director of Maternal and Child Health and Expanded Programme of Immunisation at the MoHS), 16/03/2004, Freetown as part of the Bonthe Evaluation.

³⁹ Interview with Paramount Chief Bio, 19/03/2004, Sogbini Chiefdom.

⁴⁰ Cutter et al, 'World Vision Sierra Leone: Evaluation of Bonthe District Emergency/Primary Health Care Programme 1998 – 2003' p 17.

⁴¹ Interview with Mary, Representative from a Mattru Jong Women's Group (one of three), 20/03/04. However, in the north of Sierra Leone, a similar project increased domestic violence and divorce. In this more polygamous area, the women who joined the micro-credit scheme kept the profits for their children and did not share with the 'lazy' wives who did not participate. This caused jealousy and squabbles between the wives so their husband hit them to quieten things down. If that did not work, the husband sent away the wife who joined the micro-credit scheme because she was seen as the problem; she implied criticism of the husband as a provider and anyway, can fend for herself now.

The comparison visit to Kenema District highlighted another divergence between local and external priorities. The District (unlike the rest of Sierra Leone) has endemic Lassa fever, a viral haemorrhagic fever that during epidemics has a case-fatality rate exceeding 50 per cent. Most people in the east of Sierra Leone know someone who has died from Lassa fever⁴² and fear it greatly. Yet, the large number of white Land Cruisers owned by the National HIV/AIDS Secretariat seen all over the country pointed to a different priority disease. People were puzzled by the resources being targeted at a disease that they have not seen when few resources were available to control and treat Lassa (and malaria) from which people died every day. Some suspected that an international agenda was superseding local priorities.⁴³

In summary, different experiences of engaging with societies in and emerging from violent conflict had made me question how best external agencies and actors can support such societies. Returning to post war Sierra Leone, I grew more concerned about the issue since there were clearly huge external resources going into 'peace building' in that country but the impact (if any) on the lives of 'ordinary' Sierra Leoneans was unclear. The indifference of my friends and acquaintances to the TRC and SCSL particularly surprised me and community-based perspectives pointed to different priorities and realities from those of the media or agencies. My work in Uganda had indicated that how agencies operate was nearly as important to 'beneficiaries' as what agencies did and this was often linked to cultural norms. It seemed that this might be the case in Sierra Leone as illustrated by communities' bias in favour of forgiveness and concerns about 'western' approaches to trauma healing and participation.

When reviewing the recent literature on Sierra Leone prior to the Bonthe evaluation in early 2004 I found it either descriptive (concerned with the war and its causes) or evaluative, looking at progress towards peace usually in relation to specific programmes or sectors. Senior academics from Coventry University had undertaken a more holistic study of 'Restructuring Sierra Leone'⁴⁴ in 2003 but it was not published until later in 2004. There was a dearth of grassroots⁴⁵ views about what was going on. Rigby suggests that although potentially a significant contribution, grassroots perspectives generally are missing from peace building literature,

⁴² The death of Dr A. Conteh, the only doctor in Sierra Leone versed in the clinical management of Lassa, with 20 years experience of the disease, who died of the virus on 04/04/2004 was widely publicised.

⁴³ This was voiced, among other times, at a strategic planning workshop organised by the Local Agency for Active Community Empowerment, August 2005, in Kenema.

⁴⁴ B. Baker and R. May, 'Reconstructing Sierra Leone' *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 42, 1 (March 2004).

⁴⁵ I understand 'grassroots' to mean 'proletarian' those who undertake manual labour (waged or unwaged), the same people who, according to Marx, do not own the means of production. In Sierra Leone, 'professionals' such as teachers, nurses, and policemen have to farm (or mine diamonds) to survive and are thus members of proletariat. Some literature differentiates between the proletariat (waged) and the lumpenproletariat (unemployed).

The analyses of particular conflicts and peace processes are the most relevant and interesting... such reports frequently provide insights into conflict dynamics that come from “bottom-up/inside-out” community level perspectives, something that is too often missing from more conventionally academic literature.⁴⁶

Given that there was some evidence that grassroots perspectives on peace building in Sierra Leone differed from received wisdom on the subject and that such perspectives were not well represented in published accounts of peace building in that country, there seemed a need for more research. Specifically, to seek out grassroots perspectives of peace building in Sierra Leone and to see if, how and why these perspectives converged or diverged from those of external actors. The invitation to support the ongoing reconstruction and restoration of services at Panguma Hospital gave me an opportunity to return to Sierra Leone that resolved practical issues such as a visa and accommodation.

(b) Enquiry Structure

The purpose of the study is to explore grassroots’ perspectives of peace building in Sierra Leone during between 1991 and 2006 in relation to ‘western’⁴⁷ and African peace building theory and praxis. The initial hypothesis was that in Sierra Leone, the impact of externally driven peace building activities was reduced because of insufficient attention to local culture and priorities. This hypothesis was underpinned by a number of assumptions based on my own experiences of Sierra Leone and elsewhere and on the views of Sierra Leoneans that I met during initial return visits there. Specifically that,

1. Local culture and priorities were the most appropriate in the context of peace building.
2. Divergence from local culture and priorities by externally driven activities would inevitably be detrimental to peace building.
3. Local culture and priorities would always have the capacity to inform externally driven peace building activities (an interconnection between the ‘local’ and ‘external’ was inevitable).

To achieve the study’s purpose, the following process was employed,

1. A thorough examination of the literature on ‘western’ and African peace building theory and praxis.
2. Collection of grassroots perspectives through focus groups in six locations throughout Sierra Leone.
3. Examination of the degree to which these grassroots perspectives diverged or converged from external ideas and actions and exploration of the possible reasons.

The methodology used to achieve the second step of this process, the collection of grassroots perspectives, is discussed in the next Chapter (Two). This Chapter explains the three phases of data collection (the selection of approaches and tools, the training of a research team and the engagement with the focus groups) and the role of participant observation,

⁴⁶ A. Rigby, ‘Humanitarian Assistance And Conflict Management: The View From The Non-Governmental Sector’ *International Affairs*, 77, 4 (October 2001) p 964.

⁴⁷ Largely European and American.

within the context of Sierra Leonean culture and the influences of my own culture.

The following three Chapters seek to provide background and context for the grassroots' perspectives collected during this study. Chapter Three considers what peace and peace building are as described by both 'western' and African writers and includes brief discussions about 'violence', 'conflict' and 'justice'. Since praxis only becomes reality through practitioners, Chapter Four considers peace building actors, both individual and collective. Emphasis is given to external, internal, civil society and governmental actors since they are most relevant to this study. The 'people' focus of this Chapter generates reference to human security and rights-based discourse. Chapter Five moves from the general literature on peace building to the specific experience of Sierra Leone. After a short general background about Sierra Leone, the history of the war and concomitant peace building is narrated. This is not rigidly chronological since peace building in Sierra Leone was a hotchpotch of activities undertaken by different actors at different times (or simultaneously). The Chapter ends with brief comments (which aim to give further context to the study) about the literature generated by the war and peace building in Sierra Leone.

Next, the grassroots perspectives of peace building collected in Sierra Leone between November 2004 and July 2006 are presented in three thematic Chapters. Perspectives related to 'need' are the focus of Chapter Six. However, this Chapter begins by presenting the focus groups' perspectives on the causes of the war, which inform all three data Chapters. Then, three types of need (survival, utilities and services, and livelihoods) are narrated in relation to human psychology and then, perspectives on responses to those needs, both in terms of outcomes and processes. Issues generated by these perspectives are discussed within the context of general peace building theory and praxis and convergence or divergence between 'external' and 'local' are highlighted. Chapter Seven presents grassroots perspectives of peace building related to governance grouped into three topics; namely, reform of structures and institutions, democratisation and economic reconstruction. Governance perspectives were broad, incorporating not only National Government but also other 'power holders' who influenced social wellbeing and peace building. 'Convergence' and 'divergence' between local priorities and culture and externally driven peace building activities are examined as they emerge. Chapter Eight presents grassroots perspectives related to societal relationships. Since relational issues already emerged among earlier perspectives, this Chapter starts by recapping those perspectives. Then, relationships involving civilians and the various combatant groups (and their constituencies) are discussed and finally the effect of the war on relationships between civilians, particularly the generation gap.

The final Chapter of this study (Chapter Nine) starts by arguing that conclusions are problematic in the context of peace building in Sierra Leone. Next, the findings are discussed in the light of the hypothesis and the assumptions that underpin it. Incidental findings related to externally driven peace building activities are also discussed. The Chapter ends with observations relating to this study's research process, this thesis itself and where it might lead.

2 METHODOLOGY

This Chapter starts by drawing attention to aspects of both Sierra Leonean and my own culture and context that informed the methodology for this study. Next, the three phases of primary data collection are outlined; namely, the selection of approaches and tools, the training of a research team and the engagement with six community based focus groups throughout the country. Finally, the role of participant observation in this study is described.

(a) Cultural Context

The methodology selected for this study was influenced by a number of factors, which are considered in this section. Namely, aspects of Sierra Leonean culture, the country's post conflict context and my own culture and experience.

In terms of Sierra Leonean culture, people's stance towards 'outsiders' and towards women was most pertinent to this study's methodology. Chapter 1a mentions how basic respect and compassion for others is at the root of Ubuntu philosophy; practically, this means outsiders¹ must be shown great courtesy and hospitality,² everything should be done to put them at ease and make them feel comfortable. Thus, to tell a visitor what (it is assumed) they want to hear is a kindness; it is not good to disturb them with unpleasant facts. I experienced this after returning to live in Panguma in 2004; during initial visits friends and acquaintances only briefly mentioned the war; talking more about their children, the forthcoming harvest and the activities of other friends and colleagues. Only months later, did people share anything of their war experiences. From my research diary,

Only the stories and demeanour of visitors indicate the passage of time; people are only just emerging from a nightmare. Some are clearly traumatised. During two visits [a former nurse aide student] embarked on prolonged rants about life in general, not just the war, while gazing fixedly into the distance, almost ignoring my presence. He detailed the flight after the March 1994 attack... It was expedient for people to wade the course of fast flowing rivers so there were no tracks for the rebels to follow. They learned to use alternatives to palm thatch as signs of harvested fronds betrayed the presence of civilians when the rebels inspected the trees. Similarly, only raw food was eaten to avoid telltale smoke from cooking fires.

When I first returned, people's instinct was to protect me from the realities of the war, only as time passed and relationships were re-established, did they become more open.

The experience of other researchers highlights how this affected their research. One scholar (researching women in peace building) shared with me her frustration that, after paying for 55 interviews over several months, 'there is not one that I could not have written myself'.³ This suggested that her informants were very good at telling her what they thought

¹ In Mende, there is no word for 'foreigner' or 'outsider'; the word used, 'hoetey', literally means 'catch a chicken'. When a visitor arrives (expected or not) hospitality requires that a chicken is immediately caught and turned into a meal for the visitor. Many families only keep chickens for visitors and eggs, not home consumption.

² Green suggests that fear can also be a motive for hospitality, 'Africans are fearful of denying hospitality to a stranger... because they fear the visitor may turn out to be a witch'. R. Green, 'Religion and Morality In The African Traditional Setting' *Journal Of Religion In Africa* XIV, 1, (1983) p 16.

³ Personal communication with Courtney Hostetler (researcher from St Anne's College, Oxford), Kenema, 20/08/2006.

she wanted to hear. Another researcher⁴ (who, accompanied by her interpreter, stayed with me) told me authoritatively after a couple of days interviewing, that the Kamajors (Civil Defence Forces) was a taboo subject, her interviewees 'clammed up' and would not discuss them. My experience was contrary; the nurse aide, quoted above, candidly told me about the exploits of his uncle who was a senior Kamajor leader; indeed, in Panguma town (a Kamajor strong hold during the war) people still openly used their Kamajor titles. Later, I discovered that this researcher's interpreter had been a notorious member of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF, a rebel faction during the civil war), allegedly involved in burning patients alive in the wards at Segbwema Mission Hospital. Naturally, people would not discuss the Kamajors through an interpreter from an opposing faction but no one explained this dynamic to the researcher because it would have been unkind to upset her plans.

Sierra Leone is a patriarchal society; 'the country's gender discriminatory laws, paternalistic culture, traditions and practices that discriminate against women... Various forms of domestic violence continue to affect women in society'.⁵ In rural communities, this discrimination against women affects their right to formal education, political participation, inheritance and property ownership. For example, women still need their husbands as guarantors before they can get loans from banks.⁶ Although foreign women are not discriminated against in the same way as some Sierra Leonean women, gender relationships are still uneven. I remember, as Matron of Panguma Hospital, being introduced to some high profile visitors to the Chiefdom, by the late Paramount Chief⁷ as 'she is a man'; as if being male conferred a status not achievable by women. Chief intended to compliment me and to guide the visitors on how to interact with me.

Although this Chapter is not concerned with the history of Sierra Leone's war and its aftermath, it is relevant to the methodology to note that the war led to an enormous influx of external actors. These people ranged from mercenaries, peacekeepers, United Nations officials and NGO workers to those looking for lucrative mining deals, drug dealers and people traffickers. By 2005/6, researchers were also pouring into the country. They all had one thing in common; they were rich relative to most Sierra Leoneans. Many of those that understood this became adept at deriving personal benefit, natural when struggling on a dollar a day.⁸ Inexperienced researchers ended up paying exorbitant sums for interpreters and even for interviews.

In qualitative research, the researcher is part of the process so my own culture and experience had to be considered when choosing the methodology for this study. Its

⁴ A PhD student in her 20s from the London School of Economics, who was in Sierra Leone for a total of seven months.

⁵ UNDP, 'Sierra Leone Human Development Report 2007' p 44 accessed on 12/09/2008 via http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/nationalreports/africa/sierraleone/sierraleone_nhdr_20071.pdf

⁶ A. K. Foday-Kalone, 'The Contribution of Women's Organisations to Peace Building in Sierra Leone' (unpublished Dissertation for MA in Peace and Reconciliation studies at Coventry University, 2007) p 17.

⁷ Paramount Chief A. M. Farma IV.

⁸ An exaggerated 'sob story' worked on 'humanitarians', inflated prices for goods and services such as taxi fares or 'security' for vehicles parked outside expensive restaurants (extra for cleaning the windows or washing it while the client ate) worked best with business people.

motivation, to give voice to Sierra Leonean grassroots perspectives, was rooted in my own pro-poor (pro-women) concerns and desire for justice. These interests were undoubtedly informed by religious belief and years of fieldwork in Africa. Out of empathy for the 'grassroots', I have preferred to work at community level rather than in more strategic positions (within NGOs, for example).⁹ Thus, I have seen the negative impacts of relief, development and even peace building.

As indicated in Chapter 1a, I worked in Sierra Leone before the war and with Sierra Leonean refugees in Liberia; so many people knew me as a health worker. Even in the early part of the year in which this study began, I had been in Sierra Leone doing a health evaluation. Such visits gave me the idea that grassroots perspectives of peace building were not all positive.

Thus, a number of personal and broader factors made conducting community-based research myself in Sierra Leone problematic. If participants did express negative opinions about peace building there was a risk that I could unintentionally reinforce them (non-verbally). Many Sierra Leoneans are good at reading faces and body language so might work out 'what I wanted to hear'. On the other hand, my European identity might lead to exaggerated stories of neglect and hardship in the hope of material benefit. In terms of practicalities, I do not speak all Sierra Leonean languages so would need interpreters who themselves would become part of the research process (see the 'RUF interpreter' above). I might not receive good cooperation from the Chiefs (the only entry point into communities) as a woman, particularly as I would be 'empty handed' (unexpected of a European). Alternatively, I could be asked to pay to engage with a community. My health worker identity might interfere with the research process, what would I do if I was asked to see 'patients' while 'researching' in a community, particularly a critically ill child or woman having a difficult birth?

Sierra Leonean researchers¹⁰ and other informants agreed that I was poorly placed to collect primary data myself. A friend, undertaking research for his Masters in Education (University of Sierra Leone) commented, without prompting, 'they'll tell you what they think you want to hear. Because you are white, they fear that you have links to donors'.¹¹ Therefore, training a team of Sierra Leonean researchers to collect primary data was clearly a better option. Further, by positioning the research process closer to the experiential and subjective realities of the participants and by trying to distinguish it in the participants' minds from NGO-style evaluations might elicit responses of greater authenticity. The myriad of agency reports on peace building in Sierra Leone did not need an addition, this research aimed to unearth a different reality. As mentioned earlier, qualitative research is always influenced by the researcher(s). This method simply tried to mitigate the influences associated with a European.

⁹ I did try a year each as a UK-based programme officer and Zambia Country Director for the same NGO.

¹⁰ For example, Osman Gbla, then Head of Political Science at FBC, University of Sierra Leone (now Dean of the Social Sciences and Law faculty).

¹¹ Personal communication with Father Ambrose Turay, Kenema, 09/2004.

(b) Primary Data Collection

Primary data collection involved three phases. First, the selection of approaches and tools. Second, recruiting and training a research team. Finally, that research team's engagement with community based focus groups at various locations throughout the country.

Ideas for approaches and tools for data collection were informed by my experience of participatory approaches used in community development programmes and by reading various peace building 'prescriptions' and manuals. J. P. Lederach's writings had previously helped in my work in Uganda, particularly his insistence on 'building from cultural resources in a given setting', rather than a prescriptive model 'based on transferring conflict resolution technology from one setting to another'.¹² Since, collecting grassroots' perspectives on peace building (and the causative conflict) was in a sense, 'conflict handling', it seemed logical to apply the same ideas. Thus, the approaches to data collection for this study aimed to draw out ideas from communities and avoid 'suggestion'; for example, during early engagement with communities, words such as 'peace', 'forgiveness' and 'reconciliation' were avoided until the communities introduced them themselves.

The most relevant (and familiar¹³) community development approach for this study was participatory rural appraisal (PRA)

A growing family of approaches and methods to enable local people to share, enhance and analyses their knowledge of life and conditions, and to plan, act, monitor, and evaluate. ... The essence of PRA is changes and reversals... Outsiders do not dominate and lecture; they facilitate, sit down, listen and learn.¹⁴

As well as taking time (sit down) to listen and learn and using facilitation to draw out comments, three specific PRA tools were adapted to collect data for this study. Seasonal calendars generated the idea of conflict timelines, 'problem trees' became 'conflict trees' to explore the roots causes and effects of the civil war¹⁵ and a simplified SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Treats) analysis to look at the roles of some external actors in peace building.

Since, for reasons mentioned above, I wanted Sierra Leoneans to collect the primary data, the next step was to recruit researchers. I ruled out experienced researchers or community development workers versed in PRA techniques because I had observed that, despite the theory, such 'experts' tended to be didactic, rather than facilitative (the literature also suggested that participatory approaches are often poorly implemented). There was also a risk that experience might bring with it prejudices similar to my own (see above) which would undermine one of the reasons for not collecting primary data myself. In addition, 'experts' were likely to stick to what they knew rather than be ready to adapt approaches and tools to the peace building scenario. Therefore, I decided to recruit a team that I would

¹² Lederach, *'Preparing For Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures'* p 7.

¹³ I have conducted several PRAs but the largest was at Mayukwayukwa Refugee Settlement in Kaoma District, Zambia (population 16,000) in March and April 2000.

¹⁴ R. Chambers, *'Whose Reality Counts? Putting The First Last'* (UK, Intermediate Technology Publications, 1997) p 102 – 103.

¹⁵ Subsequently, the idea of using PRA tools in peace building has appeared in the literature. For example, R. Blackman, *'Peace-building Within Our Communities'* (UK: Tearfund, 2003).

train in the approaches and tools selected for this study. It seemed likely that people who were ultimately going to use the research experience for their own ends (rather than just for money) would be most open to acquiring the new ideas and the skills necessary. Therefore, I enlisted the help of the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, FBC, University of Sierra Leone and the Centre for Development and Security Analysis (CEDSA), Freetown to identify potential candidates. The criteria and rationale for research team members are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 **Criteria and Rationale for Research Team Membership**

| Criteria | Rationale, to:- |
|--|---|
| Knowledge of, or interest in, peace building. | Provide a foundation up on which to build the team's capacity. Increase the probability that the team would complete all assignments diligently. |
| Physically and academically fit, including proficiency in written and spoken English and Sierra Leonean local languages. As well as Krio and English, the team needed to speak, at least, Mende and Temne. | Be quick to understand and fulfil the team's role in the research process. Be able to undertake field trips involving tough travel and living conditions. Be able to communicate with people from different tribal backgrounds. |
| Continued availability for up to two years. | Provide continuity for the communities targeted by the research. |
| Less than 25 years of age | Reduce the likelihood that team members had been combatants. Increase the chances that team members would be flexible and open to new ideas (related to the research process). |
| Open and honest, not arrogant. | Deal respectfully with grassroots communities. Be ready to adopt new ideas and learn new skills. Honestly handle resources intended for the communities targeted by the research and each other. |

A team of six researchers was recruited. They were honours graduates (in political science or English), ranging between 25 and 28 years of age, starting their Masters in Philosophy at Fourah Bay College. The civil war had disrupted/prolonged education to such an extent that it proved impossible to identify younger recruits with sufficient educational attainment. It also proved impossible to recruit any women; the field trips seemed to be the major deterrent. A part-time Freetown-based administrator, who I had already known for over a decade, completed the team.¹⁶

In November 2004, I ran an introductory workshop for the new researchers. Although the programme included academic input on peace building and reconciliation,¹⁷ most sessions were experiential, reflecting what would be required of the researchers in the field.

¹⁶ He had no previous connections to the researchers and provided me with a 'sounding board' regarding requests that came from the researchers and focus groups. In addition, on occasions he independently verified the researchers' activities.

¹⁷ The University of Sierra Leone was very short of learning materials, so I provided all the researchers with photocopies of assorted Lederach and Assefa articles, the literature/definitional chapters from my MA dissertation and PhD research proposal. All the books and articles cited in the latter were available during the workshop and 'reading time' timetabled.

For example, team building activities included PRA 'ice breakers' that the team could later use with their focus groups, they drew their own timelines and conflict trees with follow up discussions which I facilitated in the style that I hoped they would emulate. Meals were eaten together. Planning sessions on establishing the focus groups and designing the interview guidelines were participatory and, indeed, the researchers contributed many constructive ideas.

The researchers had a good theoretical background regarding peace and reconciliation. However, it was a struggle to communicate the idea of 'open questions' as a research technique; they had to be weaned away from sharing knowledge or introducing ideas through their questions. For example, during an exercise based around ascertaining mothers' views on childhood immunization, the researchers wanted to ask questions like 'why do you think childhood immunization is a good idea?' 'Tell me about how tedious it was standing in line for immunization.' 'Why did you have your child immunized last year?' They were baffled when confronted with the idea that some rural women might think immunization was a *bad* idea, might have enjoyed chatting to the other mothers while queuing and had *not* taken their child for immunization last year. 'Tell me what you think about childhood immunization' was far too simple'. This problem was eventually solved through many exercises and role-plays.

Follow-up days with the team were held throughout 2005 and early 2006. Although the main aim of these was to evaluate and modify the research process, they were also administrative (for paying allowances and expenses) and to induct additional team members. They seemed to boost team morale and maintain commitment and enthusiasm.

Towards the end of 2004, the researchers set about establishing community-based focus groups in line with the plan formulated during the introductory workshop. This timing was significant; the TRC had reported in October 2004, so a major chapter in the formal peace building process had closed by the time of the first focus group discussion on 27th November 2004. When the focus groups talked of the 'past', they generally meant before their group had started meeting i.e. before the TRC reported, their 'future' was informed by the (partial) knowledge of the TRC's revelations and recommendations.

Each focus group was allocated two researchers according to their capacity in the local language of the area. While one researcher facilitated discussion, the other was to take minutes and operate the tape recorder. They planned to alternate between activities to maintain concentration. In addition, the researchers wanted to travel in pairs in case one was taken ill.¹⁸ Lastly, they thought that two people would be better able to give proper time and attention to meeting and greeting the authorities but also organise practicalities like venue, cooks, food and drink quickly.

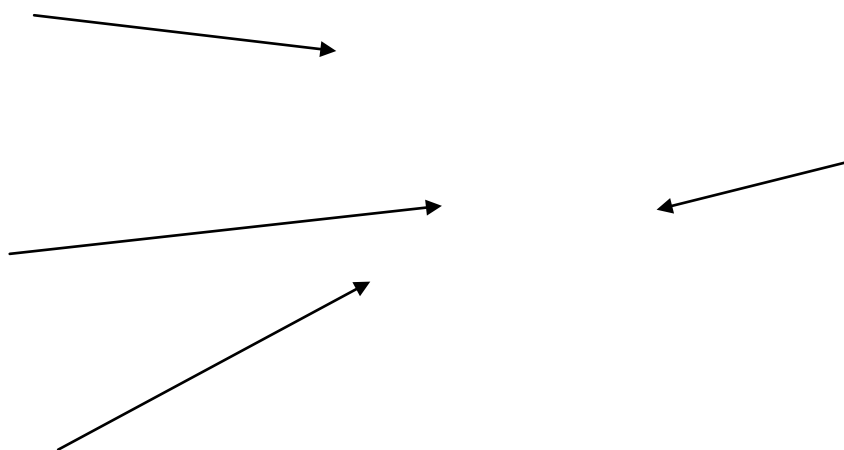
Six¹⁹ focus groups of ten persons were established, two in Freetown (as the major population centre) and four spread throughout the country (see Map 1 below) to reflect

¹⁸ The fear of diarrhoea (indeed, cholera) caused by drinking water in the villages was a recurring theme at all the researchers' follow up days.

¹⁹ The number was determined by finance.

different demographics and experiences of the war; for example communities that had been internally displaced, been refugees, been occupied by the RUF (diamond mining area) and an isolated riverine community.

Map 1 Locations of Non Freetown Focus Groups. The following map has been removed for copyright reasons



The Freetown focus groups, Regent (a relatively rural community in the hills above the city) and Firestone (an urban, former ghetto, in the heart of the city) were tribally and socially mixed. Mile 91 is on the main road leading east out of Freetown; the community is predominately Temne and includes people that were internally displaced during the war and a number of former abductees. Mafokie, northeast of Freetown is also a Temne area and includes people who were refugees in Guinea. Tongo, in the east, is a major diamond-mining centre, which, although in Mende land, attracts people from all over the country and beyond (to mine). During the war, the RUF occupied Tongo. Benducha is an isolated riverine community.

In five locations, the communities (essentially, the Chiefs and Elders) selected the focus group participants. In the sixth case, an appeal for participants was broadcast on the local radio; on the day of the first meeting, the first 10 people to turn up formed the group. The only stipulation was that those chosen were likely to be around for the next year and available for subsequent meetings. In total, 76 individuals (36 women and 40 men) participated in focus group activities.

Women were eager to participate and were the majority in both Freetown focus groups.

Regent women,

Were equally vibrant and outspoken as men in Regent. This was reflected in the composition. We had six women and four men. We noticed the exuberance of more so the women to use this opportunity to express their views... Most of the members of the group were educated, giving less difficulty in understanding the format of the group discussion.²⁰

The age distribution and occupations of the focus group participants are shown in Figures 1 and 2 below.

Figure 1

AGES OF FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

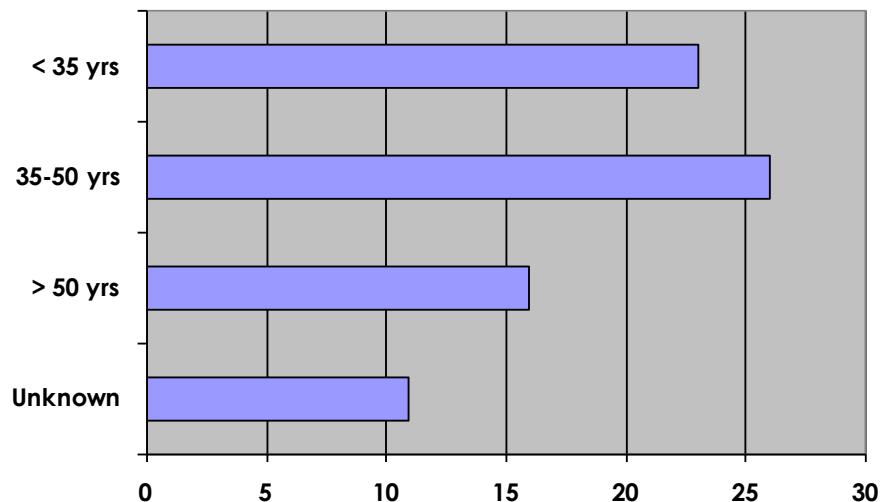
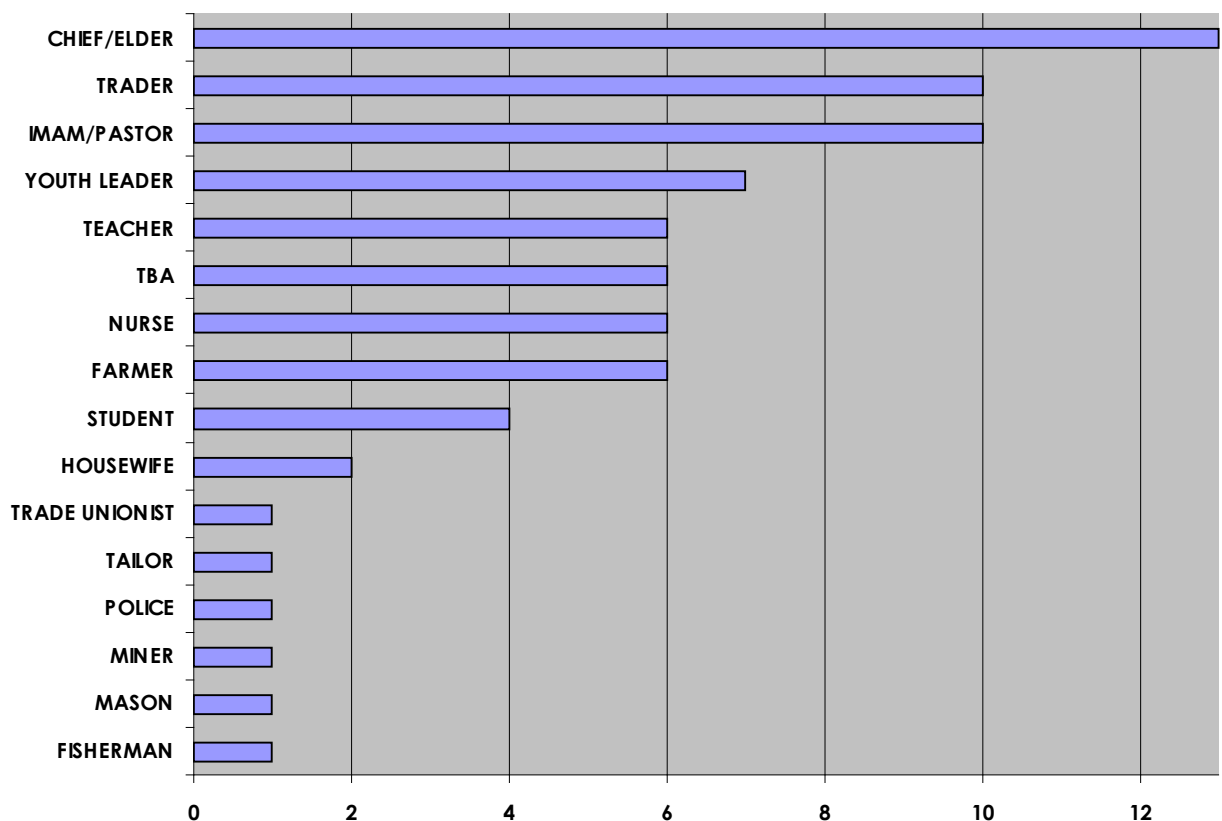


Figure 2

SELF-ASCRIBED OCCUPATIONS OF FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS



²⁰ From the researchers' report on the meeting at Regent on 20/05/2005.

In any community, these occupations would not be mutually exclusive; for example, a housewife may also trade or an Elder may also farm. 90 per cent of the Regent focus group was literate; all other groups had literate members (mostly teachers and nurses) but not such high percentages. Some groups included self-confessed ex-combatants although this was not apparent at the outset.

The researchers conducted daylong workshops at each location on two occasions, a minimum of three months apart. After the second meetings, a presentation was made (usually in front of the Chiefs) of about 100 copybooks and pens for that community's school-going children. This gesture (suggested by the researchers) was always well received.

The interview guidelines for the first workshops were standard (see Appendix A); guidelines for the follow-up workshops were specific to each focus group, in order to follow-up/clarify data from the first meetings. Between 50-70 per cent of the original focus group members returned for second meetings. In all cases, the Chiefs insisted on sending substitutes for missing members and, several insisted on increasing the number of participants such was the interest in the process. The researchers took focus groups' conflict trees and timelines back to second meetings; this was appreciated as it showed that the focus groups' efforts were valued. Tape-recording the meetings was not a problem, '[the] tape recorder was well accepted, participants liked the idea of their voices being captured and carried away'²¹.

An initial Freetown group, Home Base, became an unintentional 'pilot' when the researchers failed to tape record the first meeting and inadequacies in the 'reconciliation' questions in the interview guidelines were identified. At a workshop with the researchers in January 2005, the interview guidelines were adjusted and 'management' of the tape recorder agreed between the administrator and researchers. See Appendix B for the initial 'lessons learned' regarding the research process as 'minuted' at the January 2005 workshop.

As an exercise in chronology, the timelines did not work well, but as a tool to facilitate discussion and draw out experiences, they were more successful. The researchers reported that the focus groups found it 'too taxing to remember dates for the timelines'.²² No two focus groups agreed on when the war began and ended. The second problem was separating discussion (data) about the war and its aftermath, the focus groups discussed 'during' and 'after' interchangeably. Participants (and other Sierra Leoneans I know) did not seem to think about time in the same way as Europeans do i.e. a linear progression of events W,X,Y,Z. Instead, time is more circular, encompassing events, so whether X,Z,W,Y or Y,Z,W,X does not matter. For example, many people do not know their exact birth date but have an idea of events around the time of their birth ... Independence, elections and (bizarrely) Apollo landing on the moon (1969).²³ A strict chronology may not be important; as Rigby points out reconciliation can begin during, as well as after, the actual cessation of hostilities,

²¹ Verbal communication from researchers, Kenema, 22/01/2005.

²² Verbal communication from researchers, Kenema, 22/01/2005.

²³ People remember this date because a severe conjunctivitis first appeared in Sierra Leone about that time. Apparently, dust, knocked off the moon's surface by the Apollo craft, got into people's eyes causing the condition (known as 'Apollo eye').

'reconciliation initiatives can take place at any point during a destructive conflict, as people seek to establish bridges across the conflict lines ...'.²⁴

The opportunity for primary data collection, which included the three phases of approaches and tools, research team and focus groups, outlined above, arose because I went back to live in Sierra Leone to support the health sector. Thus, daily life was a learning opportunity in itself; this is outlined in the next section on 'participant observation'.

(c) Participant Observation

Living and working in Panguma, Segbwema and Kenema supported the primary data in two ways. Firstly, by giving insight into what people were really expressing, rather than merely saying and secondly, by providing other reference points, namely direct experience and personal interactions, against which to weigh the primary data.

Trying to understand the layers of meaning expressed by people's words (even in English) was one of the biggest challenges of this study. 'Understanding' is inevitably boxed by one's own worldview, a box constructed from culture, religion and previous experience among others. 'Think outside the box' is an exhortation beloved of management consultants but is also a requisite for anything more than superficial communication with the Sierra Leoneans that I met (and, presumably, with anybody else from a different cultural background).

In certain contexts such as addressing elders, it is not normal Sierra Leonean custom to make direct requests or statements but rather to imply the crux of the matter (described by Europeans as 'beating about the bush'). It takes a long time to learn to draw the correct inferences; initially, mistakes happen. For example, when told that the hospital generator was fixed, I thought 'electricity'. However, this was a wrong assumption; although the generator itself was indeed working, the hospital wiring, which the rebels ripped from the walls, had not been replaced. 'Children's Ward is open' conveyed images of patients in bed, drips, and blood transfusions; another wrong assumption, although the ward has been rehabilitated, complete with beds and mattresses and anyone could walk round and admire it, there were no patients because there were no staff.

As well as the tendency to 'imply', other obstacles to grasping meaning were that Sierra Leoneans often disagree among themselves (there can be as many opinions as there are people in a room) and seem able to hold apparently contradictory views (polygamous Christians, for example). These, together with the tendency (mentioned earlier) to say what people think the listener wants to hear, made 'triangulating' data very difficult. As an example of the former, one informant²⁵ said that 'Mende' (the name of the predominate tribe in the east) means 'to see and to speak about it (without any investigation)'. No other Mende supported this translation; everybody had a different idea. The nearest alternative definition was 'to hear and to speak about it'. Similarly, there are several Mende words for

²⁴ A. Rigby 'Twenty Observations on "Post Settlement" Reconciliation', paper presented to Reconciliation Expert Network seminar, Stockholm, 15 – 17/03/2006.

²⁵ Personal communication with Dr Bockaire Vandy (Director, Eastern Polytechnic School of Nursing) Kenema.

'peace'²⁶ but Mendes find it difficult to articulate the differences in English. Some say there is no word for 'forgiveness' in Mende but there is a Mende translation of the Lord's Prayer, which really says 'feel sorry for me because of the wrong I have done'. The focus groups themselves provide examples of apparently contradictory views; one focus group was positive (in a bland way) about the TRC on the first visit but more negative on the second visit,

The other organisation that was to create more problems for us was the TRC. They told us to come and listen to those who killed our loved ones and burnt our houses. We did not want to have anything to do with them.²⁷

The same focus group accused the Red Cross of gun running but when asked about 'strengths and weaknesses' of NGOs, recorded nothing against 'weaknesses' for Red Cross. Another focus groups first described NGOs are being 'ineffective ... corrupt' but also said they 'helped a great deal ... vital role in our community development'. The researchers did not see these opinions as contradictory. They thought it is possible to say that the TRC did a good job over all, but had a negative effect on particular communities. Likewise, gun running on the side does not affect the material benefits received from the Red Cross and although NGOs are 'ineffective and corrupt', the few resources that eventually reach the beneficiaries are appreciated. Apart from primary data collection, the researchers also developed a role in translating meaning as well as words.

Living in a community provided an opportunity to give administrative help to a grassroots peace building project unrelated to the war (or the primary data collection activities for this study). Helping this project gave insight into indigenous peace building and a comparison with how communities are dealing with the aftermath of the more recent civil war. In addition, it provided a 'control' regarding the language, translation and concepts of conflict and peace building, thus supporting my struggle for 'meaning'. Although a different type of conflict, the associated vocabulary and ideas proved very similar to those of the focus groups giving validity to the research team's data and translation. Background to the 'Rights Based Peace and Reconciliation Project in the Luawa Chiefdom' is included in Box 1.

²⁶ Fr M. Lamboi, homily, Holy Spirit Church, Kenema. 11/06/2006

²⁷ Researchers' transcripts from Mile 91 meetings, 27/11/2004 and 26/02/2005.

Box 1 Rights Based Peace and Reconciliation Project in the Luawa Chiefdom

In Luawa Chiefdom, Kailahun District, leaders (and Parliamentarians) have always come from three 'ruling' families. Over the years, the culture of western-style democracy has eroded traditional Chieftaincy and civic rights. For example, the creation of the role of Court Chairmen, appointed by the Government, conflicts with the traditional role of Chiefs, whose primary responsibility it was to decide conflicts and disputes among their subjects. This has bred misconceptions and misgivings among these three families. The result has been problems within the Chiefdom, particularly concerning local traditional leadership rights and positions.

During the Annual Memorial Sacrificial Meeting of the Fah-Bundeh family in Kailahun, from the 23rd to 31st December 2005, there was a proposal to the two other families through the current Paramount Chief, P.C. Sama Kailondo Banya V, about the need for the three families to dialogue. For the first time in the history of Luawa, the "Guhunteh" (traditional consultative meeting) was held in the office of the Paramount Chief to discuss how the Luawa traditional Chieftaincy dynasty can work together for the dignity of the families and the development of the whole Chiefdom, for the benefit of future generations. One proposal was to invite members of the three families to Kailahun for a consultative meeting about peace and development. This took place in Kailahun on 10th and 11th April 2006 with 20 representatives from each family and other local dignitaries. The main objectives were to create an atmosphere for peaceful dialogue and coexistence among the three ruling families and to foster a culture of political tolerance and social cohesion in Luawa Chiefdom. Financial support and two facilitators were provided by GTZ [Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, German Technical Cooperation] Traditional ceremonies took place including the swearing of an oath for peace by one representative from each family and an action plan formulated, which included the cultural repatriation of the youth.

As well as helping interpret the meaning of the primary data, participant observation also helped balance the primary data in the following way. The focus group workshops and follow up visits generated a large amount of information, which I tabulated (using Excel spread sheets²⁸) according to themes and then topics. In this way, it was possible to see clearly the relative significance of the different issues. For example, every focus group (and the researchers) cited poverty as a cause of the war but only one group mentioned 'Interference by other countries'. Initially, I planned to reject as 'insignificant' any issue that was only raised once (in line with public health survey methods). However, I later changed my mind because of the small sample size. For public health surveys, the minimum sample size (to claim that it represents the specifically targeted population where the sampling universe is not known) is 210 (30 clusters of seven informants).²⁹ Since there were only six focus groups and they were not randomised but sited because of their particular locations and

²⁸ Word tables did not provide sufficient width, my final data chart was five landscape A4 sheets wide (and seven deep).

²⁹ See for example, Moser and Kalton, 'Survey Methods in Social Investigation' and S. Lwanga and S. Lemeshow, 'Sample Size Determination in Health Studies. A Practical Manual' (Geneva: WHO, 1991).

experiences of the war I decided not to automatically reject 'one off' issues. Rather, to first weigh 'one offs' against observation or personal communication. For example, although Benducha was the only focus group to mention sea-going vessels, it remained in the analysis because I had seen Benducha's isolation³⁰ and seasonal dependence on sea routes for supplies. In addition, I had heard a student nurse (from Bonthe) in my class highlight the problem.

In other instances, participant observation reduced the significance (or weight) of the primary data. Both the Mafokie and Tongo focus groups' spoke about their need for health clinics in their communities. However, I had visited the Tokpumbu clinic (which had inpatient facilities) less than four km from where the Tongo focus group met at Bomie and knew that Panguma Mission Hospital also provided a weekly mobile clinic at Bomie. In addition, I knew that Mafokie is less than five km from Port Loco where there is a hospital. In Sierra Leonean terms, these are not great distances to transport patients. Thus, Tongo and Mafokie's 'need' for a clinic was not as great as Benducha's, for example.

To summarise, a team of Sierra Leonean researchers trained in participatory approaches and tools collected primary data from six focus groups, sited because of their particular locations and experiences of the war. Participant observation supported this data by giving meaning to what was said and by providing a reference against which to weigh the significance of the primary data.

Before presenting the grassroots' perspectives that were collected by this method, the next three Chapters provide background and context. These Chapters examine peace building theory and praxis, peace building actors and background on Sierra Leone, the civil war and emerging peace.

³⁰ Personal experience of Benducha's extremely difficult access and minimal Government and NGO services led me site a focus group there. (Bonthe Evaluation, see Chapter 1).

3 PEACE BUILDING: THEORY AND PRAXIS

The next two Chapters seek to provide a broad context for two aspects of this study's hypothesis; namely, 'externally driven peace building activities' and 'local culture and priorities'. The former are informed by, and themselves inform, the literature that describes and prescribes peace building; that is to say, suggests what it is and how to do it. African writers give context to the latter aspect of the hypothesis. 'Why', undertake peace building attracts less attention in the literature. Maybe it is a 'given' since, although there are still 56 conflicts ongoing worldwide, there is cautious optimism that increased peacemaking and peace building efforts since the Cold War are bearing fruit, although 'relatively little effort has been put into conflict prevention'.¹ Who undertakes peace building, the actors, is the focus of the next Chapter of this study.

This Chapter first considers what are peace and peace building from the both 'western' and African perspectives; this necessarily includes a brief discussion about 'violence' and 'conflict'. Then, western and African prescriptions for peace building are examined; this section covers elements of justice. Only topics relevant to the hypothesis or that emerged as prominent in field research for this study are emphasised, so some internationally important peace building issues are omitted; for example, pacifism/non-violence, terrorism, arms and nuclear weapons control, the 'right to protect' and international justice mechanisms such as the International Criminal Court (ICC).

(a) Peace Building: Descriptions

This section first considers western ideas of peace, clarifies the terms 'violence' and 'conflict' and presents African views of peace. Next, discussions of peace building itself include the debate as to whether or not it is exclusively a post-war activity and its links to the different forms of development, governance and justice. Two distinct foci in peace building praxis are identified. This section concludes with African ideas about peace building and comments on how western and African approaches to peace building have different starting points.

Although many entities including governments, civil society, counsellors, faith-based groups and even the military use the term 'peace building', it is a contested term.² One likely reason is that the 'peace', which is supposedly being built, means different things to different people. This lack of clarity has practical implications. In Uganda, I found that the Iteso and Karimojong did not agree on what constituted 'peace', for example, coming together and interaction or a degree of separation (leading to a reduction in physical violence). Thus, for over 12 years, all parties worked towards different goals and, unsurprisingly, did not attain any of them.

In common parlance, 'peace' means the absence of physical violence, an end to hostilities. This idea of peace originated with the ancient Romans who defined 'peace' (*pax*)

¹ Human Security Centre, 'Human Security Brief 2007' accessed on 27/07/08 via www.humansecuritybrief.info

² M. Gawerc, 'Peace Building: Theoretical and Concrete Perspectives' *Peace and Change*, 31, 4 (October 2006) p 435.

as the absence of war between two or more states. Since the end of the Cold War, war between states has minimized while conflict within states has increased and 'now makes up more than 95 per cent of all [violent] conflicts'.³ Thus, in the international context, peace has come to mean the absence of war within or between states. However, writers, and activists such as Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi, challenged the idea of peace as the mere absence of war. Galtung introduced the concept of 'negative' and 'positive' peace. Negative peace as the absence of direct physical violence⁴ and positive peace as the absence of both the root causes of that direct violence (the structural violence of, for example, oppression, discrimination, corruption, greed and poverty) and the ways of thinking and acting that perpetuate direct and structural violence (cultural violence).⁵

Peace, of course, is more than the mere absence of war. Achieving peace also means eliminating starvation, poverty, violence, threats to human rights, refugee problems, global environmental pollution, and the many other threats to peace, and it means creating a climate in which people can live rich and rewarding lives.⁶

Of course, this could be criticised for being utopian; however, ancient wisdom suggests that 'where there is no vision, the people perish'.⁷

While it is possible to achieve negative peace without justice, justice appears essential to positive peace. However, Miller and Pencak suggest that, '... peace and justice may be viewed as contradictions in practical terms.'⁸ If the only way to oppose injustice is force, (the justification for many armed rebel movements), justice requires hostilities, which contradicts any notion of peace.⁹ According to Miller and Pencak, from the beginning of human existence there has always been war because of the innate tendency of human beings to be aggressive.¹⁰

It is relevant to this consideration of 'peace' to clarify the terms 'violence' and 'conflict' at this point. Although synonymous in the media, writers on peace differentiate between the two. Conflict is part of the normal human condition resulting from a perception of mismatched priorities and aspirations, which, if handled constructively, can bring 'dynamic change, which keeps relationship and social structure honest, alive, and responsive to human needs, aspirations and growth'.¹¹ If mishandled conflict can generate violence, thus violence, not conflict itself, is the antithesis to peace.¹² Different opinions on the value of conflict generate different responses to it. 'Conflict resolution' tends to start with immediate

³ Human Security Centre, *'Human Security Report 2005 War and Peace in the 21st Century'* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) p 23.

⁴ My Sierra Leonean acquaintances feel that only people who have never been under fire or bombardment during a war could describe the cessation of hostilities as 'negative'.

⁵ J. Galtung *'Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization'* (London: Sage, 1998).

⁶ City of Hiroshima Peace Declaration, 6 August 1991

⁷ *'The Holy Bible'* New International Version (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1973) Proverbs 29:18.

⁸ R. Miller and W. Pencak, *'A History of the Commonwealth'* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002) p 107.

⁹ 'A Call for Many Peaces' in Dietrich et al *Key Texts of Peace Studies* (Vienna: LIT Verlag, 2006) pp 282 - 285

¹⁰ Miller and Pencak, *'A History of the Commonwealth'* p 107.

¹¹ J.P. Lederach, *'The Little Book of Conflict Transformation'* (USA, Good Books, 2003) p 18.

¹² Gawerc, 'Peace Building: Theoretical and Concrete Perspectives' p 439.

'symptoms', to seek common ground (rather than exploring difference) and to develop understanding of other points of view.¹³ Those that see the creative potential of conflict worry that this approach may end a conflict before people's important and legitimate concerns are addressed.¹⁴ Thus, those wishing to address the root causes of a conflict favour 'conflict transformation'. According to Lederach,

Conflict transformation is to envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life giving opportunities for creating constructive change process that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships.¹⁵

Conflict transformation addresses questions of reducing violence and increasing justice in human relationships. This implies that dialogue is essential in promoting peace and justice at both interpersonal and structural levels.

Returning to the consideration of peace itself, Boutros-Ghali writes of 'social' peace (being challenged by 'discrimination and exclusion') and 'strategic or political' peace (linked to 'democratic practices') and implies that the latter is the more important.¹⁶ However, he does not explicitly define either. This maybe because he thinks 'the concept of peace is easy to grasp; that of international security is far more complex'¹⁷ or maybe because, as Secretary General of the United Nations, he is more concerned with prescriptions for peace than describing it. Since discrimination and exclusion are antonyms of democracy, these 'peaces' seem to be 'the two sides of the same coin' rather than separate entities.

Some writers, particularly those writing from a faith perspective, differentiate between 'outer' and 'inner' peace. The latter being the inner state of the individual rather than what is going on in the world around them. Other languages are richer than English in expressing these different dimensions of peace. For example, New Testament Greek differentiates between '*hesuchia*', external peace and '*eirene*' a deep inner peace that comes from 'being in right relation with God, oneself, one's neighbour and God's creation'.¹⁸ There are several Sierra Leonean Mende words for 'peace' that convey social cohesion, reciprocity, rights and responsibilities between community members.

Lederach suggests that cultural context defines peace;¹⁹ therefore, it is appropriate to mention here some African views of peace. 'Peace is conceived not in relation to conflict and war' but as order and harmony between the individual, the community, and the universe (divinely established by a supreme God).²⁰ Any violence, which is viewed as a deliberate attempt to disturb individuals' inner harmony ('peace of mind'), has a ripple effect outwards to the community and the universe. Thus, 'outer' peace emanates from 'inner' peace; the two are inseparable. Peace is a gift from God although Africans recognise 'their

¹³ M. Liebman, '*Mediation in Context*' (Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2000) pp12 - 13.

¹⁴ Lederach, '*The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*' p 3.

¹⁵ Ibid p 14.

¹⁶ B. Boutros-Ghali, '*An Agenda for Peace*' (New York: United Nations, 1992) pp 6 and 34.

¹⁷ Ibid p 6.

¹⁸ K. Lindsey, '*Making Peace, Biblical Principles And The Experience Of CHIPS*' (UK: CHIPS, 2002) p 57.

¹⁹ Lederach, '*Preparing For Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures*'.

²⁰ G. Onah, '*The Meaning of Peace in African Traditional Religion and Culture*' (Rome: Pontifical Urban University) p 5 accessed on 21/05/2007 via www.afrikaworld.net/afrel/goddionah.htm

co-responsibility'.²¹ It is not defined negatively in terms of what needs to be eliminated, but positively, describing a vision of what peace should be like, 'good relationships well lived; health, absence of pressure and conflict, being strong and prosperous.'²² The Yoruba of Nigeria speak of '*alafia*' meaning 'the sum total of all that man may desire; an undisturbed harmonious life'²³, in effect, a synthesis of spiritual, material, and social well being. These visions demonstrate the rippling of peace outwards from the individual in contrast to the Hiroshima Declaration, quoted above, which starts with society.

Some African writers propose that peace and justice are inseparable. According to Sarpong 'justice produces peace... there can be no peace without justice... Peace is honourable... People must relate to one another on equal terms.'²⁴ From the perspective of the Igbo of Nigeria,

Peace is not something that happens but rather a situation that arises when justice happens. It is a happy state of things that happens when the state of things is just... the result of order and right alignment... It is not only that peace is based on justice, rather, peace is justice and justice is peace.²⁵

The Yoruba, also from Nigeria, see peace as a precondition for progress, 'I want to build a home/ I want to have children... Without peace, these things are impossible...'²⁶ True progress is impossible in the midst of moral, social and cosmic disorder.²⁷

These African views of peace parallel '*eirene*' by describing harmonious relationships with and between humankind, creation and the creator. This resonates with a general African worldview, which sees as linked relationships, ideas, events that may seem random to people from a western tradition. As Tutu, cited by Battle, explains 'westerners have analysis, we [Africans] have synthesis'. Thus, Africans' 'synthesising mind set, as opposed to the occidental analytical one'²⁸ creates a worldview of interconnections and integration, which extends to the concept of peace.²⁹

Western writers also discuss peace in terms of societal relationships. For example, Wallensteen thinks peace is 'conditions that make the inhabitants of a society secure in life

²¹ God is a 'given' for Africans; there is no concept of atheism. A Ghanaian proverb says; '*Obi nkyere abofra Nyame*', meaning 'no one teaches a child God', God's existence is self-evident, even to children without any instruction. Onah, '*The Meaning of Peace in African Traditional Religion and Culture*' p 9.

²² R. Rweyemamu, 'Religion and Peace (An Experience with African Traditions)' *Studia Missionalia*, 38 (1989) p 381.

²³ J. Awolalu, 'The Yoruba Philosophy of Life' in *Presence Africaine*, 1970, p 21 cited by Rweyemamu in 'Religion and Peace (An Experience with African Traditions)' p 382.

²⁴ P. Sarpong, 'African Traditional Religion and Peace (with Special Reference to Ashanti)' *Studia Missionalia*, 38 (1989) pp 353 - 5

²⁵ T. Okere cited by Onah, '*The Meaning of Peace in African Traditional Religion and Culture*' p 6.

²⁶ Awolalu, 'The Yoruba Philosophy of Life' cited by Rweyemamu in 'Religion and Peace (An Experience with African Traditions)' p 382.

²⁷ Onah, '*The Meaning of Peace in African Traditional Religion and Culture*' p 10.

²⁸ M. Battle, '*Reconciliation: The Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu*' (USA: Pilgrim Press, 1997) p v.

²⁹ An example from Mangango, Western Province, Zambia, towards the end of 1995. A friend who had been at the point of death, explained her recovery like this 'at 4 am, my mother heard the bird call. Mid morning, Lulu [her 10 months old daughter] suddenly became breathless and died at noon. That was when my sickness passed into her. When we went to bury her that afternoon, I collapsed. When I woke up, I felt stronger and knew that I was getting better.' Linking an early morning birdcall, the baby's death and recovery from life-threatening illness was completely reasonable to other Zambian colleagues, but hard for me to grasp.

and dignity now and for the foreseeable future'³⁰ and similarly, Fisher, writes that 'peace work is the art of finding ways to live in the present in a manner which will create a more just and equitable future'.³¹ However, it is unclear whether these statements encompass creation as well as inter human relationships. Africans such as Sarpong are more explicit about the relationship between creation and peace. Now that wars are fought over scarce natural resources such as water (because climate change has brought drought and desertification),³² the implication is that 'society secure in life' and 'a more just and equitable future' depend on relationships with creation as well as between people(s).

Having briefly presented key ideas about peace, namely, 'negative' and 'positive', 'social' and 'political', 'outer and 'inner' and cosmic; this Chapter now turns to peace building itself. Inevitably, different definitions of peace generate different descriptions of peace building. Wallensteen points out that the 'proliferation of concepts in the literature is one indication of the complexity of the [peace building] enterprise'.³³ He describes peace building as having four interrelated facets, namely,

State-building, the reformation of state structures; nation-building, the healing of divides and wounds that the war left behind; democracy-promotion, the creation of political structures and cultures that are in line with predominant thinking in the world today; and shaping of market conditions, the development of the internal economy and its relationship to outside economic activities.³⁴

Some Africans might challenge the notion that 'democracy-promotion ... in line with predominant thinking in the world today' contributes to peace; recent experiences in Kenya and Zimbabwe are the opposite. Western democracy emphasises 'rule by the majority' (usually through the ballot box); the traditional African concept of democracy is 'rule by consensus' thus avoiding winners or losers, which might strain relationships afterwards. Conflict ensues when losers of 'democratic' elections fail to accept their loss. Since this concept of 'rule by consensus' underpins indigenous African approaches to peace building, whereas 'rule by the majority' underpins western peace building; it is unsurprising that 'there is a perceived gap or "disconnect" between modern and indigenous [African] conflict resolution philosophies and practices'.³⁵ (The second section of this Chapter covers African peace building praxis.) It is notable that later in Wallensteen's paper quoted above; he cites research that criticises early elections, suggesting that institution building should be a greater priority.³⁶

Galtung, cited by Gawerc, describes peace building in conjunction with 'peacemaking', efforts towards reaching an official settlement and 'peacekeeping', subsequent efforts to maintain a negative peace. Peace building addresses social,

³⁰ P. Wallensteen, 'Strategic Peacebuilding: Issues and Actors' *Kroc Institute Occasional Paper* 28: OP: 1 (Paris: Kroc Institute, 2006) p 4.

³¹ S. Fisher, *Spirited Living Waging Conflict Building Peace* (London: Quaker Books, 2004) p 7.

³² J. Borger, 'Scorched' *The Guardian* 28/04/2007.

³³ Wallensteen, 'Strategic Peacebuilding: Issues and Actors' p 4.

³⁴ *Ibid* p 4.

³⁵ F. Ben-Mensah, 'Indigenous Approaches to Conflict Resolution in Africa' in *Indigenous Knowledge: Local Pathways to Global Development* (The World Bank, 2004) p 39.

³⁶ Wallensteen, 'Strategic Peacebuilding: Issues and Actors' p 12.

psychological and economic issues at grassroots level.³⁷ Boutros-Ghali also describes peacemaking and peacekeeping in a similar way to Galtung but expands Galtung's description by introducing an initial stage of 'preventative diplomacy'. This he describes as efforts 'to ease tensions before they result in conflict'.³⁸ In the vocabulary of the earlier discussion on conflict and violence, this might be expressed as 'addressing conflict before it results in violence'. However, this endeavour itself appears to risk violence since preventative diplomacy may include 'preventative deployment' of a 'United Nations presence' including military personnel (between belligerents, for example).³⁹

It is over peace building that Boutros-Ghali differs most significantly from Galtung and others since he links it exclusively to post war contexts, describing peace building as 'rebuilding the institutions and infrastructure of nations torn by civil war and strife; and building bonds of peaceful mutual benefit among nations formerly at war'.⁴⁰ 'Bonds of peaceful mutual benefit' include 'for example, projects that bring States together to develop agriculture, improve transportation... or joint programmes through which barriers between nations are brought down by means of freer travel, cultural exchanges and mutually beneficial youth and education projects'.⁴¹ 'Bond building' resonates with Anderson's concept of 'peace connectors'⁴² and may go some way to satisfy Galtung's peace building criteria of addressing social, psychological and economic issues *at grassroots level* but whether they would bring down barriers between nation states after war is debatable.

Lederach challenges Boutros-Ghali's exclusive linkage of peace building to post war contexts and suggests that it is more than 'post accord reconstruction'. He proposes that peace building is 'a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships' and that it can happen before or after formal peace agreements.⁴³

Lederach appears to be proposing that peace building is the tool of conflict transformation, thus its use is not reserved only for situations of direct violence but it can also be used to tackle structural and cultural violence. Schirch seems to hold an opposite view, that conflict transformation is one tool in a peace building toolbox. She suggests conflict transformation depends on dialogue, mediation and negotiation 'to build relationships and address the root causes of conflict' and that peace building 'includes a far wider variety of processes'.⁴⁴ Maybe it is Schirch's narrow vision of conflict transformation, rather than peace building, which is the point of contention.

³⁷ Gawerc, 'Peace Building: Theoretical and Concrete Perspectives' p 439. Gawerc uses 'grassroots' more than 20 times without defining the term. The understanding of the term in this study was mentioned in Chapter 1.

³⁸ Boutros-Ghali, 'An Agenda for Peace' p 13.

³⁹ Ibid p 17.

⁴⁰ Ibid p 8.

⁴¹ Ibid p 32.

⁴² M. Anderson, 'Do No Harm How Aid Can Support Peace – Or War' (USA: Rienner Publishers Inc., 1999) p 2.

⁴³ Lederach, 'Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation In Divided Societies' p 21.

⁴⁴ L. Schirch, 'The Little Book of Strategic Peacebuilding' (USA: Good Books, 2004) p 10.

It is possible that challenges to Boutros-Ghali's 'post-conflict peace building' permeated United Nations' thinking. Ten years after 'An Agenda for Peace', the United Nations said that peace building

Encompasses a wide range of political, developmental, humanitarian and human rights programmes and mechanisms. This requires short- and long-term actions tailored to address the needs of societies *sliding into conflict* or emerging from it. These actions should focus on fostering sustainable institutions and processes in areas such as sustainable development, the eradication of poverty and inequalities, transparent and accountable governance, the promotion of democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence.⁴⁵ [Emphasis mine]

This 'description' is almost prescriptive and open to interpretation (maybe, deliberately). For example, 'development' means different things to different people, economic growth and improved living standards or 'human development', the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) definition of which, reads like a description of peace,

A process of enlarging people's choices. ... At all levels of development the three essential ones are for people to lead a long and healthy life, to acquire knowledge and to have access to resources needed for a decent standard of living. ... Additional choices, highly valued by many people, range from political, economic and social freedom to opportunities for being creative and productive, and enjoying personal self-respect and guaranteed human rights.⁴⁶

It should not be forgotten that certain types of 'development' such as dam construction or extractive activities cause structural violence and conflict by displacing people from their land or degrading their environment, the Ogoni people's clash with the oil industry in Nigeria is an example.

The United Nations' components of peace building resonate strongly with Wallensteen's. Both include governance and democracy, and Wallensteen agrees that *economic* development is significant so long as national income is shared equitably and employment created (if 'war' is the only job around, who wants peace).⁴⁷ Abu-Nimer and colleagues also include 'the economic' in a very broad description of peace building, 'comprehensive, complementary, and changing, and it needs to involve the political, social, economic, legal, psychological, and spiritual'.⁴⁸

Wallensteen and the United Nations also agree on the necessity for a long-term perspective 'even under the optimal circumstances, peacebuilding is likely to be a concerted process for ten or fifteen years'.⁴⁹ Wallensteen bases this timeframe on the economic status of Germany and Japan after World War II, Lebanon in 2005 and Uganda 1986 to 1990s. Whether the success of peace building can be measured in purely economic terms is questionable, in the case of post-World War II Germany, the Berlin Wall did not fall until 1989.

⁴⁵ United Nations 'Resolutions and Decisions of the Security Council 1 January 2001 - 31 July 2002' (USA: United Nations, 2003) p 166.

⁴⁶ UNDP, 'Defining and Measuring Human Development' in R. Ayres, *Development Studies: An Introduction Through Selected Readings* (Kent: Greenwich University Press, 1995) p 23.

⁴⁷ Wallensteen, 'Strategic Peacebuilding: Issues and Actors' pp 10 – 11.

⁴⁸ M. Abu-Nimer, A. Said, and L. S. Prelis, 'Conclusion: The Long Road to Reconciliation' in M. Abu-Nimer (ed) *Reconciliation, Justice and Coexistence*.

⁴⁹ Wallensteen, 'Strategic Peacebuilding: Issues and Actors' p 5.

Next, in this consideration of what is peace building, a view from a 'coal face' practitioner. International Alert (IA) is an independent organisation that claims its approach is unique, combining high-level advocacy (with the United Nations and European Union for example) with grass-roots engagement in over 20 countries.⁵⁰ In line with the writers who describe pre-peace building activities (preventative diplomacy, peacemaking or peace keeping), IA describes peace building as about *consolidating* and *strengthening* relationships and institutions,⁵¹ the implication is that other processes created them previously. This contrasts with Lederach's *encompassing* and *generating* of *processes, approaches* and *stages*. IA separates peace building from development (and humanitarian assistance) unlike those who see development as integral to peace building.

Since writers such as Lederach and Abu-Nimer (above), comment on the need for peace building to be 'comprehensive'⁵² and 'holistic',⁵³ it may be more constructive to look for integration and interconnection between peace building, conflict transformation and development rather than engage in 'chicken and egg'-style debates. Assefa describes a conflict transformation continuum with, at one end, 'peace enforcement' (where third parties intervene militarily to separate disputants) and at the other end, reconciliation, which he defines as a process that 'involves interactive negotiations and allows the conflicting parties to enter into a new mutually enriching relationship'.⁵⁴ In between peace enforcement and reconciliation comes arbitration, negotiation and mediation.⁵⁵ Assefa suggests that what distinguishes these different mechanisms is the degree of participation by disputants in solving their problems. Clearly, peace enforcement may be imposed without prior discussion or consent but reconciliation 'refers to the future and requires the active participation of those who were divided by enmity'⁵⁶ not only to look for solutions to the causes of their conflict but also to alter 'relationships from that of resentment and hostility to friendship and harmony'.⁵⁷ All the mechanisms on Assefa's continuum resonate with the writing on peace building described above. Thus, peace enforcement echoes Boutros-Ghali's 'preventative deployment', arbitration, negotiation and mediation are a dissection of Galtung's 'peacemaking' and reconciliation gives added dimensions to Galtung's peace building criteria of addressing social, psychological and economic issues which, as already mentioned, may partially be addressed through Boutros-Ghali's bond building.

⁵⁰ Accessed on 06/06/2007 via www.international-alert.org/about_alert/index.php

⁵¹ IA, 'Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Building: Tools for Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment' Complete Resource Pack (2004) Chapter 1, p 2 accessed on 21/05/2007 via www.international-alert.org/conflict_sensitivity/resource_pack.html

⁵² For example, Lederach, 'Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation In Divided Societies' and Abu-Nimer, Said, and Prelis, 'Conclusion: The Long Road to Reconciliation' in M. Abu-Nimer (ed) *Reconciliation, Justice and Coexistence*.

⁵³ Fisher, 'Spirited Living Waging Conflict Building Peace' p 38.

⁵⁴ H. Assefa, 'Reconciliation' in L. Reyhler and T. Paffenholz, (eds.) *Peace building: A field Guide* (USA: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001) p 340.

⁵⁵ Assefa, 'The Meaning of Reconciliation' in ECCP *People Building Peace: 38 Inspiring Stories From Around the World* p 38.

⁵⁶ A. Rigby, 'Justice and Reconciliation: After the Violence' (London: Lynne Rienner, 2001) p 12.

⁵⁷ Assefa, 'The Meaning of Reconciliation' in ECCP *People Building Peace: 38 Inspiring Stories From Around the World* p 38.

Lederach's model (see Figure 3 below) shows many of the dimensions that reconciliation can bring to the social, psychological and economic aspects of peace building.

Figure 3

The Place Called Reconciliation⁵⁸

Some of these dimensions have already appeared in the writing on peace building. For example, African writers referred to 'harmony' and 'well being' and both western and African writers mentioned 'justice'. As Gawerc points out, there is a debate as to 'whether justice is a prerequisite of reconciliation as Zehr argues, or a component of reconciliation as Lederach suggests'.⁵⁹ My experience is that this is determined by context. Indeed, the significance/weight given to each element of Lederach's model seems to vary with context. Thus, to the Ugandan Iteso peace is all that matters, 'peace means that the raiding stops, we just want to be left alone',⁶⁰ in Rwanda justice has been paramount, 'after 1994, the Tutsi want justice above all else'⁶¹ and 'forgiveness is irrelevant in Cambodia. How can anyone forgive what happened to us?'⁶²

Lederach writes that justice and mercy are paradoxical, but that justice is achievable in a merciful manner, by respecting people and acknowledging and addressing injustice. This points to another paradox, between process and outcomes.⁶³ Gandhi saw means (process) and ends (outcomes) as inseparable; means are ends-in-creation.⁶⁴ My Ugandan community development / reconciliation work also found that how NGOs operated was as important as what they did and that a practice preach dichotomy undermined their credibility among

⁵⁸ Lederach, '*Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation In Divided Societies*' p 30.

⁵⁹ Gawerc, '*Peace Building: Theoretical and Concrete Perspectives*' p 459.

⁶⁰ An Itesot, Uganda, Jan 2003

⁶¹ Mahmood Mamdani, accessed on 26/05/03 via www.rwandafund.org/sections/about/after.htm

⁶² Meng-Try EA Documentation Centre of Cambodia, April 2003.

⁶³ Lederach, '*Preparing For Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures*' pp 20 – 22.

⁶⁴ B. Parekh, 'Is Gandhi Still Relevant?' in A. Copley and G. Paxton (eds.) *Gandhi and The Contemporary World* (India: Indo-British Historical Society, 1997) 375 – 376.

those with whom they worked.⁶⁵ The 'Reflecting on Peace Practice' project (RPP) has also found that how agencies work communicates 'implicit ethical messages'.⁶⁶

To synthesise these western descriptions of peace building, it can be said to be a multi faceted, long-term process that takes place before, during and after conflict to address direct, structural and cultural violence. Peace building and conflict transformation have many interconnections. These descriptions bring out two main foci of peace building, structures and systems (democracy, justice, rights, economics) and psychosocial concerns (participation, harmony, relationships, forgiveness). Now, this Chapter moves on to consider African descriptions of peace building.

Since peace, to many Africans, is about 'harmony between the community, the individual and the universe', peace building in Africa has to include 'the cosmic totality'⁶⁷ namely, God, creation, the living and the dead. The latter being 'the ancestors [who] are so dear to the heart of Africans',⁶⁸

The world of the spirits is not fundamentally different from the world of the living. The two form one indivisible unity. The African family is composed of the living, the dead and the unborn... The dead are actively interested in what is happening among the living.⁶⁹

African communities are built 'on the consensus model in which communities are seen to be coherent, self contained systems in which economic, political, social and religious practices complement and reinforce one another in a well ordered and harmonious fashion'.⁷⁰ Thus, peace building is about maintaining this integration. According to Ikenga-Metuh, 'the goal of interaction of beings in African-world view is the maintenance of the integration and balance of the beings in it (the world)'.⁷¹

Integration and consensus are encompassed by the African philosophy of Ubuntu (Chapters 1a and 2a). This idea runs through other African cultures, for example, the Mendes of Sierra Leone say, 'it is the other person that makes you a person'. Ubuntu is both a description of ourselves in relationships with other people and the world, 'being-with-others' and a rule of conduct or social ethic prescribing what 'being-with-others' should be all about.⁷² Respect and compassion are key.

In terms in inter-human relationships, peace is built by moral and 'harmonious living ... no attempt is made to deny or cancel differences, rather all effort is devoted to finding a way in which differences can continue to harmoniously co-exist'.⁷³ This may partly explain the ability to hold apparently contradictory views mentioned in Chapter 2c. Ben-Mensah identifies five peace building mechanisms, specifically mediation-negotiation, adjudication,

⁶⁵ Cutter, 'How Can NGO Community Development Programmes Support Reconciliation? Lessons Learned From N.E. Uganda' p 46.

⁶⁶ CDA, 'Reflecting on Peace Practice Project' (Cambridge MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, 2004) p 5.

⁶⁷ Onah, 'The Meaning of Peace in African Traditional Religion and Culture' p 7.

⁶⁸ Ibid p 3.

⁶⁹ P. Sarpong, 'African Theology (A Simple Description)' (Ghana: Cabo Publications, 1988) p 41.

⁷⁰ Ben-Mensah, 'Indigenous Approaches to Conflict Resolution in Africa' p 40.

⁷¹ E. Ikenga-Metuh, 'Comparative Studies of African Traditional Religions' (Onitsha: Imico Publishers 1987) p 78.

⁷² Louw (University of the North) 'Ubuntu: An African Assessment of the Religious Other' p 2.

⁷³ Onah, 'The Meaning of Peace in African Traditional Religion and Culture' p 6.

diplomacy, mystical powers and fission.⁷⁴ The first three appear in western peace building literature but not mystical powers and fission. Ben-Mensah explains that

The resort to mystical powers to resolve conflict was a common practice in pre-colonial Africa... These were normally cases in which the facts were difficult to ascertain through secular means... People would resort to these mystical means when they did not want to bring their grievances into the open.⁷⁵

My more recent experiences in Sierra Leone and Zambia attest that mystical powers (or possibly, psychological manipulation) are still used to settle conflict, particularly involving lovers or when crime has disturbed the harmony of the community.⁷⁶

Fission, when one party to a dispute moves away and starts a new settlement, may be preceded by 'slanging matches' when insulting songs and words are exchanged to dissipate tensions and/or 'joking relationship' when disputants insult each other playfully but are monitored by the wider community to prevent a violent response. At first sight, fission may seem a complete failure of peace building but Lederach also suggests that separation is valid. He believes that 'one of the least understood aspects of reconciliation is how to think about and allow for spaces of separation as an acceptable stage in the spiritual journey toward reconciliation'.⁷⁷

Since, peace building overall is largely about a way of living, there are no timeframes. Indeed, some suggest that peace is not fully realisable in this life. The Igbo have a rhetorical proverb, *Onye ka o zuuru?* 'For who is everything perfect?' The answer is emphatic: 'Nobody!'⁷⁸ The best hope in this life is to obtain an approximation of peace.

To summarise, peace building in the African context concerns maintaining the integration of the social, political, economic and spiritual (harmony). Various mechanisms exist to handle disruptions to this integration.

African descriptions of peace building have strong resonance with the broad description of peace building supplied by Abu-Nimer and colleagues but the starting point for peace building in African and western descriptions are generally different. The western view is that peace building is related somehow to conflict; thus, conflict is the starting point for peace building. The African view is that peace is a state in and of itself and therefore the starting point for peace building is the individual. Peace flows out (or not) from individuals continuously and hence is never definitively built. Although western writers agree that peace

⁷⁴ Ben-Mensah, 'Indigenous Approaches to Conflict Resolution in Africa' p 40 – 41.

⁷⁵ Ibid p 40.

⁷⁶ An example from Mangango, Western Province, Zambia, 1993: An on-call member of staff's bicycle was stolen from outside the hospital gate. There was uproar, because the owner had suffered loss while performing duties in service of the community. A fellow with 'mystical powers' arrived with a black snake in a basket. The snake was put on ground at the spot where the bicycle had been parked to 'investigate' the crime scene. The snake's investigations continued for some time and a bigger and bigger crowd arrived to watch. Two days later, a man arrived in my office in a state of great agitation and confessed to being the bike thief. Apparently, he had been working in his garden along the riverbank when he saw the black snake among his vegetables. Therefore, knowing 'the game was up', he rushed to confess before something terrible happened to him. Snakes of all colours were relatively common, but colleagues would not accept the possibility that the snake in the garden was not the one belonging to the witch doctor.

⁷⁷ Lederach, *'The Journey Toward Reconciliation'* p 20.

⁷⁸ F. Combey, *'Explore the Relationship between Individual and World Peace as Expressed in One of The World's Religious Traditions'* (unpublished essay for MA in Peace and Reconciliation studies at Coventry University, 2007) p 9.

building is a process, often long-term, some attempt to mark a time when it is built, logical if building peace is connected to a conflict that produced a 'visible' or definable social change. As mentioned earlier, peace and peace building cannot be disassociated from a general worldview; Africans are generally more interested in processes and westerners, in outcomes.

(b) Peace Building: Prescriptions

Having considered what peace building is, the next deliberation is how to do it. This section starts by considering western peace building prescriptions, which are particularly salient to the externally driven peace building activities of this study's hypothesis. First, there is a brief overview of the changes and expansion in this literature since the early 1990s. Discussion then covers four different peace building approaches, peace building's relationships with culture and social hierarchies and ends with a brief mention of justice. The final part of this section, outlines African ways of peace building, bringing into focus 'local culture and priorities'.

In the early 1990s, intuition, common sense and community development⁷⁹ were all that seemed to inform 'peace positive' approaches. Peace building was seen as an 'added value' to humanitarian assistance. Respect, trust, listening and participation were 'good'. Also 'good' was assisting host populations as well as refugees and displaced people and bringing people from 'opposing groups' to work together on issues that transcended the immediate conflict (such as water supply or mass immunisation days). 'Bad' was mainly not 'practising what you preached'; for example, sneering at other agencies showed that intolerance was normal, armed guards and escorts legitimised guns, using humanitarian aid as a bribe for sex regularised the abuse of women and children.⁸⁰ 'Mistakes' (disasters) happened; for example, during the 1994 Goma Crisis (in the then Zaire), 50,000 refugees died from cholera and other diarrhoeal diseases in the first month and génocidaires were fed in the refugee camps for months.⁸¹ 'The utter failure of peacebuilding in Rwanda prior to the 1994 genocide'⁸² and of responses to it from a wide range of international actors, proved a watershed. Organisations from the United Nations, through national governments to NGOs were forced to re-examine their approaches to working in conflict situations. Although, the United Nations had started the process with Boutros-Ghali's 1992 'An Agenda for Peace' (mentioned earlier).

⁷⁹ For example: R. Chambers, *'Rural Development, Putting The Last First'* (UK: Longman Group Inc., 1983), A. Hope and S. Timmel et al *'Training for Transformation A Handbook for Community Workers'* Books 1-3 (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1984), M. De Graaf, 'Catching Fish Or Liberating Man: Social Development In Zimbabwe' *Journal of Social Development in Africa*, 1 (1986) p 7 – 26, Ayres, 'Development Studies; An Introduction Through Selected Readings', A. Sen, 'Development As Freedom' (UK: Oxford University Press, new edition 2001).

⁸⁰ Personal experience in Albania, DRC, Liberia, N. Iraq, Rwanda and Sierra Leone.

⁸¹ D. Millwood, *'The International Response to Conflict And Genocide: Lessons From The Rwanda Experience'* (Denmark: Steering Committee of the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, March 1996) p 2 and Human Security Centre, *'Human Security Report 2005 War and Peace in the 21st Century'* p 105.

⁸² R. Paris and T. Sisk, *'Managing Contradictions: The Inherent Dilemmas of Postwar Statebuilding'* (USA: International Peace Academy, 2007) p 9.

During the latter half of the 1990s, more guidance supporting peace building praxis was published;⁸³ aimed either at field workers or those in more strategic planning positions. Material for field workers tended to be didactic (how to do it) with a 'do no harm'⁸⁴ focus (championed by IA).⁸⁵ Planners were provided with 'food for thought' through case studies and 'lessons learned';⁸⁶ Lederach's work, based on years of field experience, offered accessible conceptual frameworks.⁸⁷ There were a number of limitations; firstly, 'do no harm' focused on not making conflict worse, rather than on actively building peace. Secondly, 'lessons learned' had to be applied with experience⁸⁸ (not always available) otherwise they were in danger of becoming 'one size fits all' prescriptions and, thirdly, those 'at the coal face' still needed to be envisioned and equipped to reflect and contribute to planning.

This literature reflected the two foci identified in descriptions of peace building, structures and systems (for example, Kritz, rule of law; Doyle and Sambanis, economics) and psychosocial concerns (Lederach and those writing for IA). These foci persisted into the new millennium, as did the distinction between didactic and illustrative writing. In all categories, the amount of material increased dramatically as more existing organisations included peace building in their remits and the number of Conflict Transformation Agencies grew.⁸⁹ According to Rigby, 'States have turned increasingly to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other agencies to take up the challenge [of peace building].'⁹⁰ Not only States but academia; Aall, for example, suggested that NGOs continue their traditional relief and

⁸³ P. Aall, 'Nongovernmental Organisations and Peace Making', in C. Crocker et al. (eds) *Managing Global Chaos* (Washington: United States Institute Of Peace Press, 1996), N. J. Kritz, 'The Rule of Law in the Post-Conflict Phase: Building a Stable Peace' (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 1996), J. Borton et al., 'The State Of The International Humanitarian System: Overseas Development Institute Briefing Paper' (London: ODI 1998), M. Doyle and N. Sambanis, 'Building Peace: Challenges and Strategies After Civil War' (USA: The World Bank, 1999).

⁸⁴ 'When given in conflict settings, aid can reinforce, exacerbate, and prolong the conflict; it can also help to reduce the tensions and strengthen people's capacities to disengage from fighting and find peaceful options for solving problems. Often, an aid program does some of both', Anderson, 'Do No Harm How Aid Can Support Peace – Or War', p 1. The 'Do No Harm' approach tries to avoid fuelling or creating conflict or endangering the security of beneficiaries.

⁸⁵ IA, 'Resource Pack For Conflict Transformation' (UK: IA, 1996) accessed on 30/11/2002 via www.international-alert.org, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 'Peace, Security and Conflict Prevention: SIPRI-UNESCO Handbook' (UK: Oxford University Press, 1998). C. Gaigals with M. Leonhardt, 'Conflict-Sensitive Approaches To Development' published jointly by IA, International Development Research Centre and Saferworld from web site www.international-alert.org

⁸⁶ W. Kuhne (ed), 'Winning the Peace: Concepts and Lessons Learned of Post Conflict Peace Building' Report from an international workshop, Berlin, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Ebenhausen, Germany 1996, L. Diamond, 'Multi-Track Diplomacy in the 21st Century' in ECCP *People Building Peace: 35 Inspiring Stories From Around the World* (Utrecht: ECCP, 1999).

⁸⁷ Lederach, 'Preparing For Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures', 'Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation In Divided Societies' and 'The Journey Toward Reconciliation'.

⁸⁸ An example, Touch of Hope, working Croatia, used big meals as a tool for bringing former enemies together, people relaxed, ate, talked, shared stories and went away committed to meeting again. This approach would not normally be acceptable in Sierra Leone or Liberia because it is considered very rude to talk during meals; people eat from one huge plate so talking wastes eating time and potentially means a smaller portion. Traditional 'peace meals' require particular planning, organisation and ritual; for example, who supplies and who prepares the food has a significance which cannot be overlooked.

⁸⁹ Estimated to be 400 worldwide in 2001. Rigby, 'Humanitarian Assistance And Conflict Management: The View From The Non-Governmental Sector' p 957.

⁹⁰ Rigby, 'Humanitarian Assistance And Conflict Management: The View From The Non-Governmental Sector' p 957. Even in 2007, the European Union representative in Nyala, South Darfur, explained that what the aid agencies did was not as important as the mere fact of their presence, 'an international presence offers some protection'. Villagers agreed, 'I can sleep easily tonight because I know my friends [aid workers] are here' (personal communication).

development activities but also 'monitor human rights abuses ... provide early warning of potentially violent conflicts and should pursue conflict resolution activities such as mediation and reconciliation'.⁹¹ This all required different knowledge, skills and operating frameworks; thus skills and training manuals,⁹² codes of conduct⁹³ and 'lessons learned' materials⁹⁴ proliferated.

'Prescriptions' varied depending on the writers' targeted practitioners, their partners/beneficiaries, the aims and objectives of those practitioners' organisations and whether they held a 'psychosocial' or 'structuralist' view of peace building. Caritas is an example of the former, which sees close links between development and peace building and wants 'peacemaking and reconciliation' [to] gradually permeate all our work'.⁹⁵ Caritas published a skills-based manual for trainers of community-based personnel and their partners/beneficiaries engaged in community development. Their notion that peace building should underpin all activities marks a shift from 'do no harm' to 'do peace'. It also puts into practice Lederach's idea of peace building as a tool for conflict transformation (and development, in this case). Caritas suggests three fundamentals to peace building praxis; make relationships central, make processes participatory and address injustice (presumably, in the sense of structural violence rather than judicial incapacity).⁹⁶ Relationships include those between disputants, between Caritas personnel and the communities with which they work and between trainers and participants.⁹⁷ Although the manual is very detailed (including workshop programmes and even suggestions for 'ice breakers'), it makes the

⁹¹ Aall, 'Nongovernmental Organisations and Peace Making', in Crocker et al. (eds) *Managing Global Chaos* p 436.

⁹² S. Fisher et al., 'Working With Conflict, Skills And Strategies For Action' (UK: Zed Books Ltd., 2000), R. Fisher, 'Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation: Methods of Third Party Intervention' (Berlin: Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management, 2001), R. Kraybill et al, 'Peace Skills: A Manual For Community Mediators' (USA: Jossey-Bass, 2001), J. Cilliers, L. Fast et al 'Peacebuilding: A Caritas Manual' (Vatican: Caritas Internationalis, 2002), J. P. Lederach and J. Jenner (eds), 'A Handbook of International Peacebuilding: Into The Eye of The Storm' (USA: Jossey-Bass, 2002), IA, 'Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Building: Tools for Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment', M. Juergensmeyer, 'Gandhi's Way: A Handbook of Conflict Resolution, Updated With A New Preface and New Case Study' (USA: University of California Press, 2005), M. Deutsch et al, 'The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice' (USA: Wiley [distributor], 2006), J. Dobbins et al, 'The Beginner's Guide to Nation-building' (USA: Rand Corporation, 2007), J. P. Lederach et al, 'Reflective Peacebuilding: A Planning, Monitoring And learning Toolkit' (Paris: Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies 2007).

⁹³ IA, 'Code of Conduct: Conflict Transformation at Work' (London, UK: IA, 1998) accessed on 21/05/2007 via http://www.internationalalert.org/pdfs/coc_full.pdf

⁹⁴ J. Galtung, 'TRANSCEND: 45 Years, 45 Conflicts' in J. Galtung et al. *Searching For Peace, The Road To Transcend* (UK: Pluto Press, 2000), M. Anderson (ed), 'Options for Aid in Conflict, Lessons From Field Experience' (Cambridge, MA: CDA, 2000), M. Abu-Nimer (ed.) *Reconciliation, Justice, and Coexistence: Theory And Practice* (USA: Lexington Books, 2001), USIP 'Special Report, Faith-Based NGOs And International Peacebuilding' (Washington: USIP, October 2001), A. Galama and P. van Tongeren (eds), 'Towards Better Peacebuilding Practice' (Netherlands: ECCP, 2002), N. Frieters et al, 'Joint Utstein Study of Peacebuilding. National Report From Germany' (Eschborn: GTZ, 2003), M. Anderson et al, 'Confronting War: Critical lessons for Peace Practitioners' (Cambridge MA: CDA, 2003), M. Lange and M. Quinn, 'Conflict, Humanitarian Assistance and Peacebuilding: Meeting The Challenges' (UK: IA, 2003), A. Fryeburg, 'Afghanistan, Lessons Learned From A Post-War Situation' (Denmark: DAIS, 2004), N. Scherg, 'From Dealing With The Past To Future Cooperation: Regional and Global Challenges of Reconciliation' (Germany, GTZ, 2005).

⁹⁵ Cilliers, Fast et al 'Peacebuilding: A Caritas Manual' p vii.

⁹⁶ Ibid p 4.

⁹⁷ Fisher also suggests that interveners and analysts (with all their accompanying cultural baggage) should include themselves as part of the context with which they are interacting. Fisher, 'Spirited Living Waging Conflict Building Peace' p 38.

proviso that 'this manual is not a recipe'⁹⁸ and encourages practitioners to make their own adaptations. There is also a short paragraph noting that culture 'plays an important role in how conflicts unfold and ... are interpreted'.⁹⁹ Since visual perception varies with culture, the exercises that require artwork (for example, self-portraits or pictures of fruit trees) may not always be adaptable.¹⁰⁰

IA provides another example of a more psychosocial view of peace building; it advocates using conflict-sensitive approaches which expand 'do not harm' to include 'Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment' (PCIA) and approaches from Southern practitioners. Unlike Caritas, which sees peace building as the tool, IA conceives their conflict-sensitive approaches as the tool to be used on peace building itself (and also on humanitarian assistance and development) by 'governments, donors and civil society (local and international)'.¹⁰¹ The three fundamentals to conflict-sensitive approaches are, understand the context, understand the dynamics between the context and your activities (in both directions) and use this understanding to avoid negative, and build on positive, impacts. These understandings must be gained through systematic conflict analysis.¹⁰² Carl, cited by Rigby, also stresses that 'conflict analysis, in one form or another, is absolutely central to conflict prevention and transformation'.¹⁰³ However, the centrality of conflict analysis is called into question by RPP, which found that 'there is no consistent practice or accepted methodology for conducting such analyses... some good programs did little or no analysis, and some programs that did quite thorough analyses ran into difficulties'.¹⁰⁴

In terms of implementation, IA has similar concerns to Caritas, the process should be participatory and although they do not specifically mention relationships, they are concerned about relational issues such as respect, inclusiveness, impartiality, partnership and coordination. In addition, IA produce, like Caritas, a large detailed Resource Pack but say 'there is no one-fits-all recipe'¹⁰⁵ and allude to culture by including a few brief notes on 'African principles of conflict resolution and reconciliation'.¹⁰⁶

A recent contribution from a structuralist view is Dobbins et al 'Beginners Guide to Nation Building' (an interesting premise that beginners should be nation builders). It focuses on first establishing security with chapters on the military, police and the rule of law and then on relief, governance, democratisation and economic development, 'each chapter ends

⁹⁸ Cilliers, Fast et al *'Peacebuilding: A Caritas Manual'* p 13.

⁹⁹ Ibid p 110.

¹⁰⁰ Models, flow charts and diagrams are not helpful in all cultural contexts. In some cultures, people do not perceive printed images as related to the 'real' world. For example, when the author showed Zambian villagers pictures of elephants no one knew what they were, although many elephants roamed the area. To the villagers elephants are three dimensional, huge and grey, not flat and a few inches high.

¹⁰¹ IA, *'Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Building: Tools for Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment'* p 2.

¹⁰² Ibid p 2.

¹⁰³ Rigby, 'Humanitarian Assistance And Conflict Management: The View From The Non-Governmental Sector' p 963.

¹⁰⁴ CDA, *'Reflecting on Peace Practice Project'* p 12.

¹⁰⁵ IA, *'Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Building: Tools for Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment'* p 3.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid p 11.

with a section on sizing or costing'. Relationships only appear in terms of power (seven times) and inter-structural interactions such as, military civilian, authoritarian regimes and diasporas, local security forces and criminals, international civil servants and 'locals', (three times).

Some statements call into question the analysis up on which the Guide is based and indicate an answer to the Guide's own rhetorical question, 'how could the United States perform this mission so frequently and yet so poorly?'¹⁰⁷ An example,

Nation-building missions are not launched to make poor societies prosperous, but rather to make warring ones peaceful ... in most conflicts, people are not killing each other because they are unemployed. Rather, they are unemployed because they are killing each other.¹⁰⁸

Clearly, Dobbins et al know little about the causes of the Sierra Leonean civil war and less about its peace, '...Sierra Leone and Liberia, are all at peace today because U.S., NATO, or United Nations peacekeepers came in, imposed order, separated combatants, disarmed and demobilized contending factions, organized elections, installed representative governments and promoted economic and social reconstruction'.¹⁰⁹

On one point, the Guide moves close to agreement with psychosocial peace builders, namely that each conflict is unique and therefore nation-building cannot be reduced to 'a few simple formulae' but 'the nation-builder has only a limited range of instruments on which to rely. These are largely the same from one operation to the next'.¹¹⁰

Gawerc suggests that it has recently been recognised that psychosocial and structuralist peace building are complementary, that structures and systems need to be developed that 'respond to the full range of psychopolitical and socioeconomic communal needs'.¹¹¹ Indeed, Abu-Nimer, cited by Gawerc, suggests that 'reconciliation only succeeds... if it is *not* divorced from structural arrangements. Reconciliation without addressing... physical reconstruction of houses, returnees, infrastructural elements ... and other economic needs will be resented'.¹¹² The German Government's 2003 report for the 'Joint Utstein Study of Peacebuilding' provides one example of this complementarity. Although designed to inform an interstate (Germany, Netherlands, Norway and UK) review of knowledge and experience in peace building, it shows that German development cooperation is as much concerned with trauma healing, reconciliation, youth in conflict and peace media/journalism as it is with statist issues such as political participation and rule of law. Although placing peace building within the context of *armed* conflict (ending or avoiding, before, during or after), the Utstein Report closely links peace building to the German Government's Crisis Prevention strategy and the need to address structural causes of conflict such as poverty. According to the Utstein Report, the Utstein partners subscribe to four principles of peace building, provide security, establish socio-economic foundations and political frameworks for long-term peace and generate 'reconciliation, a healing of the

¹⁰⁷ Dobbins et al, '*The Beginner's Guide to Nation-building*' p IV.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid p 13.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid p VI.

¹¹⁰ Ibid p vii.

¹¹¹ Gawerc, 'Peace Building: Theoretical and Concrete Perspectives' p 438.

¹¹² M. Abu-Nimer, cited Gawerc, 'Peace Building: Theoretical and Concrete Perspectives' p 459.

wounds of war and justice'.¹¹³ The Utstein Report suggests that to be most effective peace building must be mainstreamed across all activities, sectoral approaches and levels of planning and implementation. Thus, while GTZ is working with Community Based Organisations (CBOs) in Kenya to incorporate conflict-specific tools (such as conflict analysis) into all stages of the project cycle¹¹⁴ the German Government is, at the same time, advocating for the Utstein group to spearhead the mainstreaming of peace building within the European Union.¹¹⁵ The range of these mainstreaming examples also illuminates another aspect of peace building praxis, namely direct or indirect peace building. Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) and demining are examples of the former and the construction of roads, schools and clinics, examples of the latter.

A number of the prescriptions for peace building presented by Dobbins, IA and Caritas are brought together in the Utstein Report, making clear the complementarity of structural and psychosocial peace building. The Utstein report agrees with Dobbins that peace building should include security, relief, good governance, democratisation and economic development but takes a generally boarder view of what these encompass. For example, the German Government favours,

A widened definition of 'security', focusing on 'human security' and encompassing political, economic, ecological and social stability. The basis for such stability, as identified in the concept, lies in respect for human rights, social justice, the rule of law, participatory decision making, protection of natural resources, development opportunities in all regions of the world, and the use of peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms.¹¹⁶

Indeed, the Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development is quoted as saying that development is integral to global security.¹¹⁷ Governance, using GTZ's work in Afghanistan as an example, encompasses gender, health, education, supporting the judiciary and fiscal institutions 'as well as conflict prevention/peace building involving aspects of conflict assessment, security sector reform and the demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants.'¹¹⁸

The Utstein Report advocates the use of PCIA as described by IA 'as a cornerstone of future peace building work'.¹¹⁹ Since GTZ partners Caritas in many countries, it is unsurprising that they advocate similar peace building praxis; for example, Caritas's aim that peace building should permeate all activities is akin to the German view of mainstreaming. Although the Utstein report does not focus as sharply as Caritas on relationships, participation and justice, they recur as themes particularly in the context of reconciliation; for example, it suggests that post conflict societies must 'deal with both the trauma of victims of violence and the twin processes of justice and reconciliation that link victims and perpetrators'.¹²⁰ The

¹¹³ Frieters et al, 'Joint Utstein Study of Peacebuilding. National Report From Germany' p 4.

¹¹⁴ Ibid p 51.

¹¹⁵ Ibid p 77.

¹¹⁶ Ibid p 12.

¹¹⁷ Ibid p 14.

¹¹⁸ Ibid p 30.

¹¹⁹ Ibid p 72.

¹²⁰ Ibid p 56.

Utstein report makes the valid comment that the quality of communications is as important as more and more participation.

As with all the peace building prescriptions cited earlier, the Utstein report points out that solutions for specific conflicts need to be developed on a case-by-case basis.¹²¹ It also implies concern for cultural dimensions by mentioning 'cultural bridge building' and 'intercultural dialogue'.¹²²

These four examples from the literature on peace building praxis put forward a wide range of activities (DDR, organising elections, installing representative governments through to community development) and approaches (participation, PCIA, mainstreaming). 'Structuralists' tend to prescribe activities; it would negate their stance on participation if psychosocial peace builders prescribed activities so they favour suggesting approaches. It is relevant to this diversity to note Zartman's comment, cited by Gawerc,

Unfortunately there is no order of priority amongst them to prescribe ... All of this must be done at once and at the same time, and the steps kept apace of each other as the process moves along ... rather than as a series of discrete steps taken one step at a time.¹²³

This wide range of activities and approaches lends credence to Fisher's view that

No single individual or organisation could know the answers to the problems of building peaceful and just societies ... Differing culture; context and values ensure that each of us has to work these out for ourselves anew... Peace work learns from experience but has no blueprints.¹²⁴

Sisk and Paris and Lederach concur, 'nor can statebuilding actors rely on any universally applicable, surefire formulas for creating the conditions for lasting peace in postwar societies, because there are none'.¹²⁵

Standardized formulas do not work. What we must acknowledge ... [is] the uniquely human dimensions of the types of conflict under consideration... peace building must be rooted in and responsive to the experiential and subjective realities shaping people's perspectives and needs.¹²⁶

In fact, when it comes to reconciliation, Galtung suggests that 'nobody really knows how to successfully achieve it [reconciliation]'.¹²⁷

Since Lederach and others believe that peace is culturally defined, Lederach suggests that 'developing appropriate models of handling it [conflict] will necessarily be rooted in, and must respect and draw from, the cultural knowledge of the people'.¹²⁸ He defines 'culture' as 'the shared knowledge and schemes created and used by people for perceiving, interpreting, expressing, and responding to social realities around them'. Thus, Lederach proposes elicitive peace building 'based on building from cultural resources in a given setting' rather than a prescriptive model 'based on transferring conflict resolution technology

¹²¹ Ibid p 12.

¹²² Ibid pp 34 and 41.

¹²³ Gawerc, 'Peace Building: Theoretical and Concrete Perspectives' p 442.

¹²⁴ Fisher, 'Spirited Living Waging Conflict Building Peace' pp 3 and 7.

¹²⁵ Paris and Sisk, 'Managing Contradictions: The Inherent Dilemmas of Postwar Statebuilding' p 1.

¹²⁶ Lederach, 'Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation In Divided Societies' pp 23 and 24.

¹²⁷ J. Galtung, 'After Violence, Reconstruction, Reconciliation, And Resolution' in M. Abu-Nimer (ed.) *Reconciliation, Justice, and Coexistence: Theory And Practice* p 4.

¹²⁸ Lederach, 'Preparing For Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures' p 10.

from one setting to another'¹²⁹. The development of elicitive methods was informed by ethnographic research, ideas from appropriate technology and Paulo Freire's popular education theory. These all informed the community development praxis up on which the 'peace positive' approaches from the early 1990s, mentioned earlier, were based. In fact, as recently as 2007, Lederach et al confirm that 'good peace building practices are very similar to good sustainable development strategies... it is not easy to distinguish development practice from peacebuilding'.¹³⁰ This begs the question whether the huge expansion in peace building literature over the last 20 years has really contributed more than development to outcomes for grassroots communities.

Another aspect of Lederach's writing finds resonance in the Utstein Report; the necessity to work with all levels of leadership in the conflict. For example, GTZ is working with Kenyan CBOs to mainstream peace building while at the same time facilitating a national network of peace building practitioners. Lederach suggests that peace building should target three leadership levels simultaneously. Namely, strategic leaders from government, civil service, military and faith groups, middle level leaders maybe from the professions (such as head teachers), religions, NGOs and traditional societal structures (Chiefs) and thirdly, leaders of grassroots communities such as leaders from refugee camps, village elders and headmen. Peace building depends on open interaction and relationships between the different leadership levels. Thus, middle level leaders are crucial to peace building since they are likely to have connections with both the top-level and the grassroots. This reflects the 'key people approach' to peace building (identified by RPP) which focuses on those 'deemed critical to the continuation or resolution of conflict because of their leverage or their roles. Who is "key" will depend on the particular context'.¹³¹ Lederach proposes that peace building with middle level leaders include problem solving workshops, conflict resolution training and establishment of peace commissions.¹³² However, Mitchell, who only considers two levels of society, sees the grassroots as key, 'peace must also begin at the grassroots. Politicians can only put in place what the people desire'.¹³³ This assumes political participation of some form rather than authoritarian rule.

Other writers, Wallensteen and Miall et al for example, extend the idea of a hierarchy of leaders beyond the immediate conflict. Miall et al argue that peace building often requires transformation regionally and/or internationally¹³⁴ and Wallensteen writes of neighbours (citing Sierra Leone and Liberia among his examples),

¹²⁹ Ibid p 7.

¹³⁰ Lederach et al, *'Reflective Peacebuilding: A Planning, Monitoring And learning Toolkit'* p 2.

¹³¹ CDA, *'Reflecting on Peace Practice Project'* p 7. The opposite approach to 'key people' is 'more people', which aims to 'engage large numbers of people' believing that peace requires many people to be active in the process. RPP has found that all peace building activities adopt one of these two approaches.

¹³² Lederach, *'Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation In Divided Societies'* pp 37 – 46.

¹³³ G. Mitchell cited by G. Kimber *'Report On Visit To Northern Ireland 3-8 June 2002'* unpublished.

¹³⁴ H. Miall, et al, *'Contemporary Conflict Resolution'* (USA: Polity Press in association with Blackwell Publishers, 1999) pp 156–157.

Clearly, what happens in one country is to some extent dependent on what happens with the neighbours. Neighbouring countries may contribute to a civil war directly (by supplying their own troops, allowing bases for warring parties, expressing political support, etc.) or indirectly (e.g., by not being capable to control their own borders).¹³⁵

Throughout this Chapter 'justice' has been a recurring theme, essential to positive peace, synonymous with peace in the African view, a prerequisite for, or a component of, reconciliation and to be addressed by peace building. The number of adjectives that justice attracts (distributive, social, restorative, retributive, transitional, divine) suggest that stakeholders, time and context give it different meaning. Justice alone could be the subject of a literature review but only transitional justice is mentioned here since it is most closely linked to 'externally driven peace building activities'.

Transitional justice encompasses a range of mechanisms that states can adopt to address the human rights abuses that inevitably accompany violent conflict or oppression. Rigby suggests that states can choose from three possible approaches, amnesties and official amnesia, trials and purges, and truth commissions. The choice, according to Rigby, depends on power dynamics during the transition process. Regimes in power because of negotiated settlements tend to favour amnesty and amnesia. Victors pursue trials, which individualise guilt by focusing on perpetrators and punishing them in some way. Truth commissions are favoured by regimes that lack the will or means to prosecute human rights abusers because the abusers continue to wield power and/or public opinion strongly opposes amnesty and amnesia. Truth commissions focus on the victims and may determine compensation or reparations.¹³⁶ More recently, in West Africa, post conflict regimes have had less choice about truth commissions since they have been a condition of externally facilitated formal peace agreements (Article XXVI, Lomé, 1999 and Article XII, Accra, 2003).¹³⁷ Wallensteen concurs that peace building praxis depends on how wars end (as well as by how they start).¹³⁸ Dobbins et al warns that 'war crime trials, truth commissions, and other types of transitional justice can also trigger nationalist backlashes and revive tensions'.¹³⁹

To recap this outline of western literature on peace building praxis. Most writers suggest that the uniqueness of each conflict, culture and context make it difficult to prescribe generic peace building praxis. However, many try; proposing to stakeholders at all levels of society a wide range of activities and approaches that largely reflect either structuralist or psychosocial views of peace building, although recently, there has been a move to integrate the two. Opinions differ as to whether peace building is a discrete intervention in itself (direct peace building) or an underpinning of other interventions like all forms of development

¹³⁵ Wallensteen, 'Strategic Peacebuilding: Issues and Actors' p 13.

¹³⁶ Rigby, *'Justice and Reconciliation: After the Violence'* pp 1 – 10.

¹³⁷ Although the Marcoussis Agreement (Ivory Coast) established a 'Government of National Reconciliation', it was tasked with establishing 'an international board of enquiry... in order to identify cases of serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law since 19 September 2002'. This suggested that trials were favoured over a truth and reconciliation commission, despite the establishment (in October 2001) of a National Reconciliation Forum. For full texts of all peace agreements, see www.usip.org/library/pa.html.

¹³⁸ Wallensteen, 'Strategic Peacebuilding: Issues and Actors' p 5.

¹³⁹ Dobbins et al, *'The Beginner's Guide to Nation-building'* p 76.

(indirect peace building). There is consensus that peace building requires security, critical analysis of the context and intervention dynamics, participation and concern for relationships (only extreme structuralists omit the last two requisites). Transitional justice mechanisms relate to peace building praxis since they address societal relationships after periods of direct violence.

Next, this Chapter turns again to African perspectives, this time about peace building praxis, both spiritual and temporal. Compared to the large amount of western literature now available, there is a dearth of African literature specifically about how to build peace. There are a number of likely reasons for this; external actors (and some African) do not value or understand African peace building approaches.

The current methods of conflict resolution from the Americas, Europe, Asia and Australia impress us on account of their professional quality and their scientific underpinning by several human sciences. But we should not allow the appeal of such contemporary material to make us forget the time-proven methods, which originated on African soil.¹⁴⁰

The Centre for Conflict Resolution (CECORE) in Uganda has also found indifference, even hostility, to traditional methods by national governments and some young people.¹⁴¹ Although IA states that their Complete Resource Pack about conflict-sensitive approaches is informed by 'organic approaches developed by practitioners in the South',¹⁴² only half a column in a 124-page document is devoted explicitly to 'African principles of conflict resolution and reconciliation'.¹⁴³ Another reason for this dearth could be that, in Africa, peace building is not separated from life in general. Earlier in this Chapter, Onah and Rweyemanu showed that, in Africa, peace building is largely about moral and 'harmonious living' concerned with preserving 'good relationships' between people, the environment and God. Also mentioned earlier is that God is irrefutable to Africans; since religion manages and codifies humankind's interaction with the deity, religion (of any variety) is as integral to African life as God's being. 'For the African, religion is life and life is religion... the African carries his religion everywhere he goes, wherever he is, there too is his religion.'¹⁴⁴ Sarpong adds, 'installing a Chief is meaningless without some religious act. The hunter is deeply involved in a religious experience'.¹⁴⁵

This means that society's general religious and moral codes (essentially the same since religion and life are integrated) are effectively guides to peace building and that what literature there is about peace building often comes from a religious perspective (Arinze, Ikenga-Metuh, Mbiti, Onah, Rweyemanu, Sarong). 'In describing the concept of peace in the African culture, therefore, one is at the same time linking peace to religion'.¹⁴⁶ A problem for outsiders (or for young refugees and displaced estranged from their culture) is that these

¹⁴⁰ J. Malan, *'Conflict Resolution Wisdom in Africa'* (Durban: ACCORD, 1997) p 16.

¹⁴¹ CECORE, *'African Traditional Methods In Conflict Resolution'* accessed on 08/06/2003 via www.cecure.org

¹⁴² IA, *'Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Building: Tools for Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment'* p 1.

¹⁴³ Ibid p 11.

¹⁴⁴ J. S. Mbiti, *'African Religions and Philosophy'* (London: Heinemann, 1970) p 7.

¹⁴⁵ Sarpong, *'African Theology (A Simple Description)'* p 26.

¹⁴⁶ Sarpong, *'African Traditional Religion and Peace'* (with Special Reference to Ashanti)' p 352.

religious and moral codes have been handed down orally. Not only are oral traditions at greater risk of extinction than written ones but also, as they diffuse through society and the generations, they are open to such flexible narration and interpretation that even within the same cultural group, there is variation about the meaning of important concepts and practices.¹⁴⁷

Ubuntu, as a code by which to live, has already been mentioned. Practically, it means that living as a cooperant community member is a moral obligation and de facto, a way of building peace. Moral/social codes include many taboos, among which (unsurprisingly) are murder, suicide, incest, lying,¹⁴⁸ all of which would disturb the peace and harmony of any community. The peace implications of other taboos are not always immediately clear. For example, among the Lozi of Zambia it is taboo for children to eat eggs. The 'rationale' is that children who acquire a taste for eggs may be tempted to steal them, this being within the capacity of the smallest child (unlike stealing a goat or pig). Stealing always disturbs somebody's peace and in this case also risks launching the child on a life of crime and untold disharmony. Breaking a taboo (even in secret) risks misfortune for the whole community since 'sin rebounds to the whole community';¹⁴⁹ thus enforcing moral/social codes becomes everybody's responsibility. The ideas of people having 'private business' or of religion as a private matter, to be kept out of the public space, are non-existent.

Since, moral/social codes including taboos come from God and the ancestors, breaking them offends God and destroys peace. So, in much of Africa, 'restoring peace in society is to find out what has gone wrong spiritually, and through special rituals to restore the state of equilibrium'.¹⁵⁰ Such rituals include pouring of libation, a simple ceremony where Elders pour a little water or alcoholic beverage onto the ground and call on the ancestors to appeal on their behalf to God for peace and well-being in the family or community. Other peace building rituals include sacrifices, offerings, prayers, praises, music and dance. Indeed, peace building in African Traditional Religion includes petitions for peace as part of daily prayer and the supplicant attains a state of peace through the act.¹⁵¹ These rituals are used to prevent conflict as well as in expiation during or after conflict.

In terms of inter-human relationships, African peace building traditionally involves accommodating the various opinions of all stakeholders. The primary goal of peace building is always to reach consensus decisions that will be binding on all. In the interest of harmony, the discussion continues until the last sceptic has been won over. Often, the few who do not share the opinion of the majority give up their opinions in fulfilment of their moral obligation to be cooperant community members. As late President Nyerere of Tanzania put it, 'Africans will talk and talk until they agree.' Louw confirms that,

¹⁴⁷ Onah, *The Meaning of Peace in African Traditional Religion and Culture* p 2.

¹⁴⁸ Sarpong, 'African Traditional Religion and Peace' (with Special Reference to Ashanti)' pp 360 – 361.

¹⁴⁹ Sarpong, *African Theology (A Simple Description)* p 28.

¹⁵⁰ Sarpong, 'African Traditional Religion and Peace' (with Special Reference to Ashanti)' p 360.

¹⁵¹ A. Shorter cited by Sarpong, 'African Traditional Religion and Peace' (with Special Reference to Ashanti)' p 367.

African traditional culture, it seems, has an almost infinite capacity for the pursuit of consensus and reconciliation. ... Traditional African democracy operates in the form of (sometimes extremely lengthy) discussions. Although there may be a hierarchy of importance among the speakers, every person gets an equal chance to speak.¹⁵²

The subordination of individual rights in favour of the extended family or community is a concern from an international human rights perspective. However, African societies do not all recognise the precedence of individual rights, Sarpong is clear; 'we have no rights outside the context of other men'.¹⁵³ There is also the risk that the enthusiastic pursuit of consensus can stifle innovation and positive social change by demanding 'oppressive conformity and loyalty to the group'.¹⁵⁴ However, Louw stresses that this would be a 'derailment' of Ubuntu since it would not show respect and an 'honest appreciation of differences'.¹⁵⁵

During these protracted peace building discussions, mediation ('the cluster of activities that occur during peacemaking sessions'¹⁵⁶) is the responsibility of both invisible and visible mediators; namely, the ancestors and older community members such as Chiefs, religious leaders or family heads. Advancing age is assumed to bring people closer to the ancestors, so the elderly command greatest respect. As well as meeting separately with disputants, mediators sometimes leave plenary meetings to consult with the ancestors.

Mediators with close links to disputants or the communities in disharmony, is at odds with the western idea that mediators should be impartial third parties.¹⁵⁷ Davidheiser's research into mediation in The Gambia found other differences

Gambian mediators frequently actively engage in discussions and negotiations, rather than restricting themselves to facilitation... They may judge between disputants, express sympathy, agreement, or disagreement with disputants, appease and advise the parties, and pressure the disputants to agree... [They] do not always include bargaining, or the generation and selection of options for agreements that will end the conflict.¹⁵⁸

Among the Mendes of Sierra Leone, mediators also tend to exhort, 'Chiefs and the elders used to advise both parties involved in the conflict about the importance of community life and encourage them to continue a good relationship in the future'.¹⁵⁹

Of most relevance to this discussion of 'African perspectives' is Davidheiser's finding in relation to 'heterogeneity of mediation praxis'.¹⁶⁰ Even among mediators of similar backgrounds he found a 'remarkable diversity'¹⁶¹ of approaches. This may relate to the earlier point about the flexibility of oral traditions or demonstrate that mediators have great

¹⁵² Louw 'Ubuntu: An African Assessment of the Religious Other' p 2.

¹⁵³ Sarpong, 'African Theology (A Simple Description)' p 19.

¹⁵⁴ Louw 'Ubuntu: An African Assessment of the Religious Other' p 3.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ M. Davidheiser, 'Culture And Mediation: A Contemporary Processual Analysis From Southwestern Gambia' *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 29 (2005) p 715.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid p 718.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid p 732.

¹⁵⁹ F. Combey, 'Describe an Indigenous, Non-Western Form of Conflict Resolution. Discuss the Cultural Values and Assumptions upon Which It Is Based, And Analyse What You Consider Its Strength And Weaknesses' (unpublished essay for MA in Peace and Reconciliation studies at Coventry University, 2007) p 7.

¹⁶⁰ Davidheiser, 'Culture And Mediation: A Contemporary Processual Analysis From Southwestern Gambia' p 734.

¹⁶¹ Ibid p 713.

skill at adapting to the specifics of each situation. The latter may show an advantage to having mediators who are closely engaged with the community experiencing the problem. Whatever the case, Davidheiser's finding mitigates any discussion of generic African perspectives. This parallels the western peace building literature, which, while proposing a wide range of activities and approaches, always warns that there are no 'recipes' or 'prescriptions' because of the uniqueness of each conflict.

Although there may be no generic African peace building praxis, two other aspects of peace building recur in the literature from different parts of the continent; namely 'peace seasons' or spaces, and justice. Referring to 'peace seasons', Onah explains that

In many African societies, there are specific periods of the year marked out for the promotion of peace. During this period... litigations are suspended while quarrels and all forms of violent and unjust acts are avoided for fear of incurring the wrath of God, the deities and the ancestors. This sacred period sometimes precedes the planting season.¹⁶²

The rationale is that any violation not atoned for could produce a poor harvest. Sierra Leonean Mendes have a 'peace season' after harvest. Then families or village communities gather to thank God through their ancestors for the gift of life ensured by the harvest but before the main thanksgiving ceremony, all family conflicts are highlighted, dealt with and transformed.¹⁶³ Sarpong describes an annual ceremony at Techiman where everybody is free to say exactly what he or she likes to anybody else, including the Chief, without punishment or victimisation. This 'clearing the air' apparently builds peace.¹⁶⁴

The proposal by some African writers that peace and justice are inseparable was mentioned earlier; thus, peace building praxis has to include justice, 'any person who causes a breach in the harmonious co-existence of members of the community is made to make up for it through just reparation or restitution'.¹⁶⁵ African moral/social codes and taboos not only prescribe required behaviour but also the required compensation or reparation for breaking them; for example a Maasai reported, 'if you kill somebody you must pay 49 cows, even if you've removed somebody's tooth – it's one sheep'.¹⁶⁶ Reparation may be to God (rituals of cleansing and purification), to the community (for example providing food and drink for a community feast) or to individuals. Confession and forgiveness are crucial to the justice process, 'Africans readily admit that reparations and restitutions are in most cases only symbolic. What is important and indispensable is the admission of guilt'.¹⁶⁷ If guilt is admitted, forgiveness is almost mandatory, again to fulfil the moral/social obligation of social harmony. Rigby mentions that forgiveness is not a right,¹⁶⁸ but if a society does not subscribe to the supremacy of individual rights that changes. Tutu makes the case that, from an Ubuntu

¹⁶² Onah, 'The Meaning of Peace in African Traditional Religion and Culture' p 7.

¹⁶³ Combey, 'Describe an Indigenous, Non-Western Form of Conflict Resolution. Discuss the Cultural Values and Assumptions upon Which It Is Based, And Analyse What You Consider Its Strength And Weaknesses' p 6.

¹⁶⁴ Sarpong, 'African Traditional Religion and Peace' (with Special Reference to Ashanti)' p 367.

¹⁶⁵ Onah, 'The Meaning of Peace in African Traditional Religion and Culture' p 6.

¹⁶⁶ Accessed on 12/08/2008 via <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3655190.stm>

¹⁶⁷ Onah, 'The Meaning of Peace in African Traditional Religion and Culture' p 11.

¹⁶⁸ Rigby, 'Justice and Reconciliation: After the Violence' p 191.

perspective, forgiveness is not altruistic but pragmatic self-interest, since hatred and a desire for revenge damages all humanity to which the victim and perpetrator both belong, 'my humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours', contrasting with the western idea that 'I think therefore I am'.¹⁶⁹

African peace building praxis can be summarised as a way of living that upholds social integration since, as mentioned earlier, peace building in the African context starts with the person in a community rather than starting with conflict over specific issues, as in western thinking. How to live in such a socially responsible manner is established by moral/social codes and taboos that are moderated by the wider community, the ancestors and ultimately God.

Although differing about the genesis of peace building, African and western praxis have many analogies. For example, living a peace building life is the ultimate expression of mainstreaming (or underpinning) propounded by Caritas, IA and the German Government. Participation, justice and concern for relationships including forgiveness and reconciliation, all feature in western writing on peace building (from a psychosocial stance). Moral/social codes and taboos are tools of social control aimed at achieving peace and security in a similar way to the 'rule of law' beloved of structuralists such as Dobbins. The tendency for mediators to have close links with the communities in difficulty gives tacit support to the idea that actors wishing to engage from outside need to undertake conflict/context analysis (thus gaining formally insights that are innate to 'insiders'). The differences are of emphasis and priority, based on whether a person is a discrete being with inalienable rights or an inseparable member of a paramount social network.

This consideration of peace building prescriptions has ended with people, in relationships; this leads to the next Chapter, which focuses more sharply on people, namely the actors involved in peace building.

¹⁶⁹ D. Tutu, *'No Future Without Forgiveness'* (USA: Doubleday, 1999) p 31.

4 PEACE BUILDING: ACTORS

Praxis only becomes reality through practitioners; so intertwined are the two that many peace building actors, both individual and collective, already emerged in Chapter 3. On the first page of that Chapter, states, governments, civil society, counsellors, faith-based groups, the military, ethnic groups, writers, academics and activists all came into focus. Latterly God, ancestors, social networks, NGOs (Caritas and IA) and external actors also emerged. Among those listed are actors responsible for 'externally driven peace building activities' and others who establish local priorities within the context of their own culture. This Chapter starts with a few general observations relating to all peace building actors; namely, the timing of actors' interventions, their roles, effectiveness and impact. Next follows a discussion about the broad groups of actors that are most relevant to this study's hypothesis explicitly, external, internal, civil society and governmental actors. Once again, there are omissions, mainly of actors from the international peace building arena such as the United Nations Security Council and Peace Building Commission.

When the broadest views of peace building are accepted (Lederach and Onah, Chapter 3a), it is clear that peace building actors engage before, during or after conflict. Actors may undertake a range of direct peace building activities, including those summarised by Assefa's conflict transformation continuum (Chapter 3a) or indirect activities through humanitarian relief and socio-economic development as described by the United Nations (Chapter 3a). The latter may address the root causes or the structural violence associated with a conflict.¹ Wehr and Lederach identified up to 25 different roles for peace building actors during a conflict's progress,² although any one actor may only assume two or three of these roles. For those engaged in direct peace building, Egeland suggests certain criteria; namely, that such actors must have the trust of the disputants and no vested interest other than the desire for peace, that they must have the expertise, human and financial resources to support their efforts and the coordination capacity to bring in humanitarian support as required.³ Fisher is more realistic about peace builders' own interests suggesting that, for example, states may engage 'to advance their own security or economic interests, to maintain or increase their sphere of influence or to help keep an alliance together'. Mitchell, cited by Fisher, suggests that even individual peace builders may not be wholly altruistic but motivated by status or material gain.⁴

Evaluating the effectiveness of peace building beyond individual project goals and objectives is a challenge for a number of reasons. 'Effectiveness' is multifaceted, what is effective to one person may not be for another; particularly 'there is a permanent dilemma

¹ School of Advanced International Studies, John Hopkins University, 'The Conflict Management Toolkit' 2000 – 2005 accessed on 24/07/2007 via <http://cmtoolkit.sais-jhu.edu>

² P. Wehr and J. P. Lederach, 'Mediating Conflict in Central America' *Journal of Peace Research*, 28:1, (1991).

³ J. Egeland, 'Peace-making And The Prevention Of Violence: The Role Of Governments And Non-governmental Organizations' *International Review of the Red Cross* Nr. 833, (1999) pp 73 - 83.

⁴ Fisher, 'Methods of Third-Party Intervention' in *Berghof Handbook of Conflict Transformation* p 7.

between the priority of the donor and the recipient'.⁵ For example, who decides if DDR is effective? Donors and governments deem it effective when certain numbers of weapons are decommissioned and of ex-combatants re-trained. For farmers in Eastern Sierra Leone DDR was not effective; hunters' shotguns were collected in so bush animals and rodents proliferated and decimated their rice crop. It was not effective for those ex-combatants who were not given tools to practise the skills they had acquired or were trained as vehicle mechanics and then reintegrated into remote rural communities where there were no vehicles for miles. Neither did artisans trying to re-establish their businesses in a market swamped with newly (half) trained competitors deem it effective.

Another group that may perceive effectiveness differently from most are those benefiting from a war economy. Such potentially 'negative actors' include not only combatants, arms dealers and those looting minerals or humanitarian resources but 'ordinary' civilians who rent out property, provide entertainment and services or work for the myriad of United Nations agencies and NGOs that follow in the wake of conflict.

Desegregating the significance of one actor's contribution towards effective peace building from all others is difficult. In addition, political, economic or environmental factors external to the conflict context and beyond the control of peace builders can influence the effectiveness of peace building. For example, peace building between the Iteso and Karimojong in Uganda was disrupted when the Lord's Resistance Army swept down from the North and attacked both communities (August 2002 onwards) and later, when the whole area was flooded. Similarly, the 2004 Tsunami influenced peace building in both Sri Lanka and Banda Aceh (Indonesia).

RPP proposes five criteria for evaluating whether peace building activities make effective contributions to overall peace. Namely, that the activity contributes to stopping a key driver of the conflict, stimulates internal peace initiatives and resistance to violence, results in new or reformed political institutions and increases security and people's sense of security.⁶ Although laudable goals, as effectiveness benchmarks these criteria still present a challenge since measuring 'sense of' and 'resistance to' is complex and time consuming (relative to the short timeframe of many peace building activities).⁷ In addition, desegregation is not addressed; stopping key conflict drivers such as unemployment or poverty is unlikely to be attributable to one actor's activities. Galtung cautions 'causal chains in such matters are complex; and it is the epitome of megalomania to see one person as the cause and "peace" as the effect'.⁸

It is important to note that not only actors that work *on* conflicts (with an overt peace building agenda) but also those who work *in* conflicts (maybe without a specific peace

⁵ K. Rudischhauser, European Union Commission, contribution to plenary session '*African Peacebuilding: A Radical Analysis*' International Peace Research Association (IPRA) Conference, Leuven Belgium, 15 - 19/07/2008.

⁶ CDA, '*Reflecting on Peace Practice Project*' p 15.

⁷ Regarding measuring attitudes and beliefs see C. Moser and G. Kalton, '*Survey Methods in Social Investigation*' (UK: Heinemann Educ, 1971)

⁸ Galtung, 'TRANSCEND: 45 Years, 45 Conflicts' in J. Galtung et al. *Searching For Peace, The Road To Transcend* p 182.

building agenda) have impact (positive or negative) on the progress of a conflict towards peace. There is no such thing as a neutral presence during or post conflict.⁹ Echoing the 'do no harm' rationale in Chapter 3b, Galama and Tongeren write 'the context in which humanitarian agencies provide food, shelter and other necessary material to people affected by war, cannot be separated from the conflict or post-conflict situation'.¹⁰ Further, Fisher suggests that 'there is now a lot of evidence that aid and development programmes operating in unstable and violent contexts can help to fuel the escalation of violence, or reduce it'.¹¹ IA suggests that even actors with specific peace building mandates can aggravate conflict because,

Their mandate to build peace leads them to assume that their activities are bound to contribute to... peaceful environments. This assumption may lead to a non-systematic analysis of the context... lack of planning when implementing peace building projects; an uncoordinated or non-integrated approach... dubious claims of success based on... questionable cause-and-effect scenarios.¹²

'War economy', mentioned earlier, provides one example of how actors can sustain a conflict or create resentment and new tensions within a society. Poorer local people are further marginalised when agencies pay exorbitant house rents leaving them unable to afford accommodation, force up prices beyond their reach and create shortages by large scale local procurement¹³ and undermine local producers by creating a glut when imported materials 'seep' into local markets.¹⁴

Writers employ various categorisations for peace builders for example, external, internal, international, local, governmental, civil society, non-governmental, or grassroots, four are discussed here; external, internal, civil society and governmental. However, there is overlap and blurring between these categories, for example, civil society and governmental actors can be either external or internal to a conflict. In addition, although external actors are generally assumed to be foreign individuals and agencies from outside the country experiencing conflict, actors from within that country may also exhibit 'externality' or foreignness. For example, many Southern Sudanese working in Darfur are very committed to peace building but grasp little about that conflict because they see the situation through the lens of their own experience of oppression and conflict in S. Sudan. This resonates with IA's comments above about peace builders' potential weaknesses. In addition, unlike most Europeans in Darfur, many Southern Sudanese Christian women do not cover their heads, arms and ankles believing that this gives Darfuri women a vision of freedom and liberation. Such 'foreign' behaviour only seems to generate distrust and disrespect that undermines their

⁹ CDA, 'Reflecting on Peace Practice Project' p 5.

¹⁰ Galama and Tongeren (eds), 'Towards Better Peacebuilding Practice' p 11.

¹¹ Fisher et al., 'Working With Conflict, Skills And Strategies For Action' p 68.

¹² IA, 'Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Building: Tools for Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment' p 9.

¹³ Personal experience, Lulingu, DRC, 1997. Local purchase of beans (to feed severely malnourished Rwandans) doubled the price of beans overnight and left Congolese families without a dietary protein.

¹⁴ Personal experience, Kenema, Sierra Leone 2002. United Nations peacekeepers imported all their food. Large quantities of their instant coffee became available in the local markets undercutting established traders. Locally produced and processed ground coffee is no longer seen in local markets.

credibility as peace builders.¹⁵ RPP suggests that external actors are those who choose to engage in a conflict and have the freedom to leave if they wish. Whereas internal actors are engaged through circumstances (rather than choice) and 'usually live in the area, experience the conflict, and suffer its consequences personally. They include activists and agencies from the area, local NGOs, governments, church groups, and local staff of outside or foreign NGOs and agencies'.¹⁶ Not mentioned is the contribution to 'internality' of a common linguistic and cultural heritage among peace builders and the affected communities.¹⁷

There is much debate in the literature concerning the relative contributions to peace building of external and internal actors (although who falls into which category is not always clearly defined, see above). Kuhne believes that external actors generally dominate peace building.¹⁸ This is likely if dominance is measured by the amount of funding they commit to 'broad brush' peace building (see United Nations' definition, Chapter 3a). The Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD)¹⁹ reports that, in 2007, total net official development assistance was US\$ 103.5 billion of which sub-Saharan Africa received US\$ 34.2 billion (roughly two-thirds as bilateral aid). This does not include funding from non-OECD countries and from non-official providers such as private and corporate foundations.²⁰

Donors' priorities stem from their own (and sometimes their Government's) specific values and beliefs, which can be multi layered. For example, DFID²¹ hold that 'poor governance is a cause of poverty' and that corruption is a 'major obstacle to development', this is underpinned by the UK government's well-documented belief that democracy and peace go hand in hand. Thus, DFID gives financial and technical support to anti-corruption commissions (Sierra Leone and Kenya for example), civil service and security sector reform and management of public finances as a way to tackle poverty and build sustainable peace, a rather 'structuralist' approach. Whereas 'GTZ's cooperation focuses on measures that nurture and preserve peace, such as basic education, vocational training and the creation of employment opportunities for population groups living on the fringes of society'²² this is underpinned by a belief in capacity building, 'to strengthen people to improve on their own living conditions through their own efforts'. The German Government's integration of

¹⁵ Personal experience, Darfur, Spring 2007.

¹⁶ CDA, *'Reflecting on Peace Practice Project'* p 22.

¹⁷ In a speech on 06/12/2004, the then President of Sierra Leone Tejan Kabbah mentioned this, 'the peoples of the three countries [Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone] share closer cultural and ethnic affinity. There is therefore a great potential to derive substantial benefit in the areas of security...' accessed on 12/08/2007 via www.statehouse-sl.org/speeches/germ-vis-dec6-04.html

¹⁸ Kuhne (ed), *'Winning the Peace: Concepts and Lessons Learned of Post Conflict Peace Building'* p 5.

¹⁹ A consultative forum of 22 donor countries and the European Commission, which produces annual reports on aid flows (and sets international reporting practices).

²⁰ In 2007, the largest OECD donor was the United States (US\$ 21.8 billion), the UK was fourth and Iraq was the largest recipient (US\$ 9 billion, over half of which was debt relief). The largest non-OECD donor was Saudi Arabia (US\$ 2.1 billion); however, figures were not available for China or India. OECD, *'Aid Targets Slipping Out Of Reach'* accessed on 29/01/2009 via www.oecd.org/dac/stats

²¹ In 2006/7 DFID had a budget of £4,923 million, 66 per cent of total UK official development assistance, 52 per cent went as bilateral assistance. Nigeria was the biggest beneficiary of overall UK official development assistance, mostly in the form of debt relief. Sierra Leone was not among the UK's top ten beneficiaries, DFID, *'Statistics on International Development 2007'* accessed on 29/01/2009 via www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/sid2007/contents.asp

²² 'GTZ in Sierra Leone' accessed on 23/04/2007 via www.gtz.de/en/weltweit/afrika/597.htm

structural and psychosocial approaches to peace building (set out in their Utstein report) was discussed in Chapter 3b.

Lederach does not agree with Kuhne (that external actors dominate peace building), holding instead that peace building is dominated by a hierarchy of internal actors, beginning from the elite at the top, professionals in the middle and local people at the grassroots.²³ He believes that peace building must be owned by internal actors not imposed from outside, 'peace building initiatives and solutions... must be rooted in the soil where the conflict rages and must be built on contextualised participation of people from that setting'.²⁴ He argues that one weakness in peace building is that actors tend only to interact with 'people who are at a relative equal status within the context of the conflict'²⁵, thus government ministers meet with other ministers, health workers with health workers and villagers with villagers. Lederach sees this 'gap of interdependence ... rooted in the lack of responsive and co-ordinated relationships up and down the levels of leadership in a society affected by protracted conflict'²⁶ as one of the biggest challenges to peace building. Thus, improved vertical, as well as horizontal, interaction between actors from the different societal levels is essential. Lederach's view on the crucial role of middle level actors to this process was discussed in Chapter 3b.

Wallensteen supports Lederach, 'there is increasing evidence to underline the significance of basing peacebuilding on local capacity... international efforts may lead to a stifling of local initiative and delay or prevent the emergence of local capacity'.²⁷ His second comment is based on studies in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Tajikistan, Liberia seems to provide another; factionalised rather than polarised, the country effectively became an United Nations protectorate in 2003; Liberians even spoke of the United Nations' Secretary General's Special Representative as 'President' Jack Klein. In 2008, when a colleague returned to Liberia to research local peace building NGOs, he found there were none and that the United Nations' fund for such was unspent.²⁸

Wallensteen concludes that external actors should have as their 'primary goal to enhance local capacity that is in place, and thus peacebuilding will have to be shaped differently in different situations',²⁹ once again echoing Lederach. Others support the notion of external actors as facilitators or 'midwives to a process that has a life of its own'.³⁰

The task, as I see it now, is to be an ally to those with a vision for healing, who are present in every society and situation of conflict, to support them in finding ways to bring their dreams for creating institutions and networks of peace builders in their own context into practical expression.³¹

²³ Lederach, 'Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies' pp 93 - 97.

²⁴ Ibid p 107.

²⁵ J.P. Lederach, 'The Challenge of the 21st Century, Justpeace' in ECCP *People Building Peace: 38 Inspiring Stories From Around the World* (Utrecht: ECCP, 1999) p 29.

²⁶ Ibid p 30.

²⁷ Wallensteen, 'Strategic Peacebuilding: Issues and Actors' p 12.

²⁸ Personal communication, Molin Doelu, Coventry 01/05/2008.

²⁹ Wallensteen, 'Strategic Peacebuilding: Issues and Actors' p 13.

³⁰ Comment attributed to Senator George Mitchell with reference to Northern Ireland peace process.

³¹ R. Kraybill, 'Reflections On Twenty Years In Peacebuilding' C. Sampson and J. P. Lederach (eds) *From The Ground Up: Mennonite Contributions To International Peacebuilding* (New York: Oxford University Press 2000) p 39.

Kraybill goes on to warn that skills training (a favoured activity of external peace builders) is an insufficient contribution to peace building, Diamond frames facilitation in terms of providing role models,

Many who stepped forward as local peace builders in their own communities are influenced by third party actors, a growing force of professionals and private citizens who design and implement programmes of peace-building or conflict prevention, resolution and transformation in places of conflict around the world.³²

However, Brand-Jacobsen and Jacobsen have fears about negative role models and concerns that grassroots and indigenous capacities will be delegitimised as peace and reconciliation becomes big business, 'elitised' and monopolised by governments and NGOs,

NGOs ... are the ones in 'suits and limousines', driving around in Range Rovers and with salaries far beyond those available to most living in conflict areas, and often with little or no knowledge or understanding of the underlying dynamics of the conflict.³³

They advise external actors to 'be humbler... and work to promote greater co-operation between efforts and greater support for indigenous forces and capacities for peace'.³⁴

Ould-Abdallah's comments on conflict offer indirect support to both Kuhne and Lederach. He states that conflicts are only internal in principal, external actors are always involved and that the elites of the countries experiencing conflict bare most responsibility.³⁵ Clearly, those that are part of the problem have to be part of the solution if it is to be sustainable.

Among internal actors, Orjuela, cited by Gawerc, suggests there is an increasing focus on citizens or 'ordinary people', maybe because civilians have been more visible in the conflicts of the last two decades, not only as victims³⁶ but also as perpetrators. Indeed, the distinction between victims and perpetrators is sometimes blurred, in the case of child soldiers for instance.³⁷ Since 'ordinary people' have been

³² Diamond, 'Multi-Track Diplomacy in the 21st Century' in ECCP *People Building Peace: 35 Inspiring Stories From Around the World* pp 77-8.

³³ K. Brand-Jacobsen with C. Jacobsen, 'Beyond Mediation: Towards More Holistic Approaches To Peace-building And Peace Actor Empowerment' in J. Galtung et al. *Searching For Peace, The Road To Transcend* (UK: Pluto Press, 2000) p 76.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ A. Ould-Abdallah, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General in Somalia contribution to plenary session 'African Peacebuilding: A Radical Analysis' IPRA Conference, Leuven Belgium, 15 - 19/07/2008.

³⁶ 'While the number of armed conflicts being waged around the world declined by more than 40 percent from 1992 to the present [2006], the number of violent campaigns that intentionally target civilians increased by more than half... Most of these campaigns... have been concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa... Fifty-three different actors (governments and non-state armed groups perpetrated violent campaigns against civilians in 19 different countries.' Human Security Centre, 'Human Security Brief 2006' pp 11 - 13 accessed on 27/07/08

via www.hsrgroup.org/images/stories/HSBrief2006/contents/finalversion.pdf

³⁷ 'In at least 17 countries around the world, children are direct participants in war... hundreds of thousands of children are serving as soldiers for both rebel groups and government forces in current armed conflicts.' Human Rights Watch accessed on 27/07/08 via www.hrw.org/en/topic/children039s-rights/child-soldiers.

Deeply involved in the structures of war, they also need to participate in efforts to prevent and end wars... Civilian action or protest can be the decisive factor in efforts for peace (as well as war)... for peace to be achieved and sustained, it needs to involve civilians.³⁸

Civilians who undertake such 'action or protest' are obviously active peace builders. However, many internal actors passively engage with peace building by cooperating with (or not resisting) processes initiated by others. For example, ex-combatants (including the child soldiers, above) become internal peace building actors by participating in DDR and re-assuming civilian identities. Failure to cooperate with DDR would threaten any fragile peace.

This 'people' focus parallels the evolution of the human security (rather than national security) discourse, which centres attention on individuals' dignity, freedom from fear and freedom from need, rather than on state sovereignty, borders or armies. The broadest view of human security³⁹ is resonant with positive peace envisioned in the Hiroshima Declaration (Chapter 3a), which speaks of people, individuals, living rich and rewarding lives. In reality, the notion of human security is often manifested by its absence and threats to people's well-being. Chapter 3b quoted the German Government suggestion that respect for human rights is one of the foundations for human security. Human rights are also 'people' focused so it may not be coincidence that rights-based approaches to development,⁴⁰ if not peace building itself, followed the emergence of human security discourse.

Wallensteen concurs that involving internal actors, 'civil society', from the early stages of peace building (making) increases the likelihood that agreements will stick, 'results may become more lasting, as there are more actors with an interest in the agreement'.⁴¹ Wallensteen continues that 'it goes without saying that this also means giving more of a role

³⁸ Gawerc, 'Peace Building: Theoretical and Concrete Perspectives' p 441.

³⁹ There are different conceptions of human security. The narrowest concerns physical violence against individuals, not just wars but threats such as state violence (torture), terrorism, crime or domestic violence. Whereas the broader view of human security also encompasses structural and cultural violence and is concerned about threats to individual well being from, for example, disease, hunger, unemployment, political repression or environmental hazards. For more information, see <http://www.humansecurityreport.info/index.php?option=contentandtask=view&id=24&Itemid=59> and UNDP, 'Human Development Report 1994' (New York: UNDP, 1994) Chapter 2.

⁴⁰ The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) suggest that, 'a rights-based approach to development sets the achievement of human rights as an objective of development' and clarifies that 'rights' not only include the right to a trial or not to be tortured but also the right to food, housing, employment, education, religious expression and privacy (among others). ODI, 'What Can We Do With A Rights-based Approach to Development?' Briefing Paper 1999 (3) September p 1. Human rights also became a means of development (and humanitarian assistance) as well as a goal and shifted thinking from charity to justice, from 'meeting needs to enabling people to recognise and claim rights that are enshrined in the UDHR [Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948]. C. Nyamu-Musembi and A. Cornwall, 'What is the "rights-based approach" all about? Perspectives from International Development Agencies' IDS Working Paper 234 (Brighton, Institute of Development Studies, 2004) p 45. DFID suggest that participation is 'central to enabling people to claim all their human rights' and is implicitly a right itself in the UDHR through people's rights to take part in formal political processes (Article 21), freedom of association (Article 20) and trade unionism (Article 23). DFID, 'Realising Human Rights For Poor People' (London, DFID, 2000) p 12. Rights infer accountability; it is a paradox that, unlike state actors, international agencies and NGOs that advocate human rights are not parties to international treaties and obligations under international law. Thus, 'rights-based' thinking led to attempts at self-regulation including the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief (approved in 1995) and The Sphere Project, 'Humanitarian Charter And Minimum Standards In Disaster Response' (UK: Oxfam Publishing, 2004).

⁴¹ Wallensteen, 'Strategic Peacebuilding: Issues and Actors' p 7.

to women in the peace process as such'.⁴² Maybe true for western liberal peace builders but it does not 'go without saying' in many contexts. During the Sierra Leonean peace process, women were not represented when the Abidjan Peace Accord was signed in 1996 and only two women attended the Lomé Peace negotiations in 1999, one each from the Government and the 'rebels'. Of the 12 signatories to the Lomé Accord, none of them was a Sierra Leonean woman.⁴³

'Civil society' is a frequently used, but less frequently defined, categorisation for peace building actors. Paffenholz suggests that civil society changes with context so each country has its own understanding of 'civil society' but that generally it exists in the 'space' between governments, business and family and includes NGOs, religious groups, associations and unions.⁴⁴ She includes the media when organised into journalists' unions or press associations but does not clarify the position of academia. Wallensteen adds that civil society is 'non-armed'; an important clarification, particularly regarding religious groups since these are among the armed disputants in some conflicts (Nigeria historically, Iraq currently) ergo Paffenholz's first point.

The number of identities (based on connection to various social entities and institutions) which an individual assumes, carries simultaneously and discards during a lifetime, suggests that membership of civil society is more complex. It must also be concerned with precedence of identities and roles and the 'space' occupied during the performance of the precedent role. Everybody belongs to a family (at least at the beginning of their life) but could be a member of a religious group, a trade unionist and Member of Parliament all at the same time. Being an MP is likely to be the precedent role, which takes them out of civil society 'space'. If such a person retires from parliament, their prior religious affiliation may become their precedent role, allowing them to enter civil society 'space' (according to Paffenholz's definition). The determination of the precedent identity or role must be what underpins each country's own understanding of 'civil society'. For example, religious identities and roles are more to the fore in some countries whereas in others they are considered private, almost to be hidden.

In much of Africa, peace building is commonly part of the role of civil society actors such as Chiefs, Elders and religious functionaries. They have to settle disputes, offer sacrifices and pray for peace. Among the Nuer of Sudan, a sacred person with no political authority (the Leopard-Skin-Chief) acts as the chief arbiter in settling disputes. Rweyemamu explains that, 'the peacemaker represents divine power on the one hand and social harmony on the other. In his person, he expresses the divine origin of peace.'⁴⁵ In Sierra Leone, the Chiefs are the traditional custodians of peace and responsible for conflict transformation in line with the beliefs and practices of traditional religion.

⁴² Ibid p 7.

⁴³ D. Molloy, 'The Gender Perspective as a Deterrent to Spoilers: the Sierra Leone Experience' *Conflict Trends* 2004/2 (South Africa: ACCORD, 2004) p 19.

⁴⁴ T. Paffenholz contribution to plenary session 'Civil And Uncivil Society: Conditions For Supporting Conflict And Peacebuilding' IPRA Conference, Leuven Belgium, 15 -19/07/2008.

⁴⁵ Rweyemamu, 'Religion and Peace (An Experience with African Traditions)' p 376.

Worldwide, NGOs, both external and internal, are a particularly significant group within civil society, not least because of the funding they control.⁴⁶ 'The diversity of NGOs strains any simple definition'⁴⁷

NGOs do not comprise a tight community but a broad spectrum – too broad, perhaps, to leave the term with much meaning. It embraces multi-million dollar food aid managers and trade unions of peasants and street hawkers, lawyers advocating the environmental cause and illiterate barefoot midwives.'⁴⁸

On average about one third of NGO funds come from governments, although proportions vary, from an average of 10 per cent in UK to 80 per cent in Belgium and Italy.⁴⁹ This calls into question how 'non-governmental' NGOs really are. It is a paradox that NGOs can be criticised for being too close to the governments from which they receive funding and not close enough to the governments of the countries in which they operate. Another paradox is that it is governments that create (or not) the space in which NGOs, indeed civil society as a whole, operates. The obstruction by the Burmese authorities in the aftermath of the 2008 cyclone illustrated this graphically. The priorities and beliefs of governmental and other donors (mentioned earlier) also circumscribe the activities of those NGOs that have little independent funding.⁵⁰

In terms of peace building, donors' preferred strategy is to fund external NGOs with the understanding that they will partner local NGOs. RPP has evidence that well designed and managed partnerships promote effectiveness 'because conflicts often have both domestic and international dimensions'. While such partnerships may not produce huge impacts on overall peace, bad partnerships put peace building at risk. 'Bad' included the imposition of external, western, models and values making it hard for internal actors to put across their own ideas, external actors' arrogance and neo-colonial attitudes, failure to understand and address root causes and ignorance of how their own identities relate to the conflict.⁵¹ Such issues reflect power imbalance, often stemming from funding mechanisms, local NGOs 'are only too well aware that the one-sided control of the wallet gives the lie to the equality implied by the term [partnership]'.⁵²

Preliminary results from the three-year international research project 'Civil Society And Peacebuilding' suggest that civil society's most important peace building functions are advocacy, protection and monitoring. Further, peace education outside the formal

⁴⁶ It is suggested that there are at least 40,000 internationally operating NGOs (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NGO#cite_note-13) and many more nationally, one to two million in India and 277,000 in Russia (http://archives.chicagotribune.com/2008/may/07/news/chi-russia-civil_rodriguezmay07).

⁴⁷ World Bank 'How the World Bank works with Non-Governmental Organisations' 1990 accessed on 01/07/2003 via web site of the Global Development Research Centre.

⁴⁸ J. Clark, 'Democratising Development - The Role of Voluntary Organisations' (London: Earthscan Publications Ltd., 1991) p 40.

⁴⁹ UNDP, 'Human Development Report 1993' (New York: UNDP, 1993) p 88.

⁵⁰ In Kakata, Liberia (2003) and the South West Corridor, Darfur (2007), displaced people ranked (primary) education as their highest priority. However, external donors were adamant that such people must have other priorities, tarpaulins (local thatch was available) and food (people did not rely on rations because food distributions were so irregular). Thus, without donor funding for education, NGOs were impotent and lost credibility with communities because they did not respond to people's greatest want. Personal experience.

⁵¹ CDA, 'Reflecting on Peace Practice Project' p 24.

⁵² Clark, 'Democratising Development - The Role of Voluntary Organisations' p 70.

education system and inter group cohesion activities, 'bridge building' (which attract large donor funding, indeed 'are often made a condition for international support⁵³), have little effect.⁵⁴ This contradicts Gawerc,

The literature is clear that regardless of what form people-to-people initiatives take, the work of ordinary people meeting the other, building integrative ties... is critical and irreplaceable as long as it is designed by both communities, taking into account both sides' needs.⁵⁵

She adds that such contacts work best 'when members of the different groups are of equal status',⁵⁶ which challenges the significance of Lederach's 'gap of interdependence'. Similarly, my Uganda (albeit very small) study, found that 'the activity... enthusiastically espoused as a contribution to reconciliation is exchange visits, for example between church choirs, preachers or cultural groups'.⁵⁷ One reason was that 'communication reduces fear'.⁵⁸ At the micro level, it seems that common interests such as singing, the Bible, playing football and other sports act a mini 'peace connectors' that can bring some people together before the big differences are addressed.

Evidence emerging from the 'Civil Society And Peacebuilding' project suggests that overall civil society only has a small impact on peace building. Internal political actors have the most.⁵⁹ Maybe, the final published results of this project will illuminate the relative impacts of internal political actors and of donors and their conditions (mentioned earlier). Civil society is where the 'social life' of the majority in a conflict-affected society (in fact of any society) occurs. If it is proved that civil society has little impact on peace building, that is to say, people have little control over what happens to them, it should not be considered a weakness of civil society but of peace building. Such findings would make a mockery of the human security framework, rights-based approaches and the democratisation agenda (which presumably is about participation). The risk is that civil society will be further marginalised because donors decide that civil society is not an effective place to put their peace building funds. However, former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan is clear

Engagement with civil society is not an end in itself, nor is it a panacea, but it is vital to our effort to turn...peace agreements into... peaceful societies and viable states. The partnership between the United Nations and civil society is therefore not an option; it is a necessity.⁶⁰

Wallenstein concurs that internal political actors and governments are the ones 'to watch, but also who controls it [the government], and the way opposition acts...'⁶¹ He conceded that in situations of extreme polarization 'international efforts at peacebuilding

⁵³ Palestinian Health Organisation, cited Gawerc, 'Peace Building: Theoretical and Concrete Perspectives' p 457.

⁵⁴ T. Paffenholz presentation of preliminary results from the international Project 'Civil Society And Peacebuilding' IPRA Conference, Leuven Belgium, 15 -19/07/2008.

⁵⁵ Gawerc, 'Peace Building: Theoretical and Concrete Perspectives' p 448.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Cutter, 'How Can NGO Community Development Programmes Support Reconciliation? Lessons Learned From N.E. Uganda' p 32.

⁵⁸ Meeting with the Rt Revd Charles Obikel, Bishop of Soroti, Soroti, 06/01/2003.

⁵⁹ Paffenholz presentation of preliminary results from the international Project 'Civil Society And Peacebuilding'.

⁶⁰ United Nations Security Council 4993rd meeting, United Nations document S/PV4993, 22 June 2004.

⁶¹ Wallenstein, 'Strategic Peacebuilding: Issues and Actors' p 12.

enter as a replacement for local capacity' with the risk of delaying or destroying local capacity, as mentioned above.⁶²

Clearly all the actors mentioned, external, internal, civil society and governments, have different capacities and resources to contribute to peace building, although the consensus is that the process is best generated and managed from within the conflict context. Therefore, a joint effort seems most logical, 'sustainable peace requires a convergence of activities and actors, in different spheres and at different levels, from local to global.'⁶³ As Galtung is quoted as saying 'there are enough peace building tasks for everyone'.⁶⁴ Often only external actors have the financial and logistical capacity to spearhead early peace building activities such as peacekeeping, humanitarian relief and reconstruction. Later, development aid should help transform the structures that underpinned the conflict's root causes.⁶⁵ On the other hand, transforming relationships is primarily the work of internal actors since they have intimate knowledge, and more importantly, the emotions surrounding the relationships involved. Internal actors are also more likely to commit to the long-term effort that peace building requires. In Chapter 3a, 10 to 15 years transpired as a minimum timeframe for peace building yet, in 20 years of field experience, I have not known a donor accept a funding proposal for more than five years; three is usual. In relief and, even reconstruction, six months is a common funding period and leads to ineffective interventions.⁶⁶ It is an anomaly that internal actors with long-term vision do not usually have the money to implement developmental peace building activities; yet external actors, with access to funds, opt for shorter-term interventions.

With so many activities going on at different levels of society coordination among the various actors is key to effectiveness and making sure that funds invested in peace are spent wisely.⁶⁷ Coordination and partnerships (discussed earlier) both depend on positive relationships; this corroborates those writers cited in Chapter 3b, who emphasised the centrality of relationships to peace building and provides an example of means-ends synthesis. If peace building actors do not have constructive relationships between themselves then there is not much hope for the wider community.

Finally, two general comments. Firstly, throughout this, and the previous Chapter, contradictions and inconsistencies between writers surfaced, this appears to reinforce the uniqueness of each conflict and hence, the solutions that best address them. There is near unanimous agreement that there are no blue prints for peace building. The best use of the literature and research findings is to stimulate actors, principally practitioners, to ask questions

⁶² Ibid p 13.

⁶³ Lederach et al, 'Reflective Peacebuilding: A Planning, Monitoring And learning Toolkit' p 2.

⁶⁴ C. Alger contribution to plenary session 'Celebrating The Founders of Peace Research' IPRA Conference, Leuven Belgium, 15 -19/07/2008.

⁶⁵ School of Advanced International Studies, John Hopkins University, 'The Conflict Management Toolkit'

⁶⁶ 'The fact that the duration of the project was restricted to six months forced a situation where by wells were being dug, and constructed during the rainy season...' when the water table was highest and so they ran dry in the dry season, 'the six-month project means that there is a risk of striving for quantity rather than quality'. WVSL 'Bonthe District Emergency Health Programme Phase II Sierra Leone, Final Report' February 2000, no page numbers.

⁶⁷ Doyle and Sambanis, 'Building Peace: Challenges and Strategies After Civil War'.

about their own contexts rather than applying other peoples' ideas directly: 'should we explore this?' 'Might this work here?' or 'are we making the same mistakes?' Secondly, much of the literature deals with putting back in place the pre-conflict status quo; rebuilding, reconstruction, redevelopment, repatriation, re-integration, and reconciliation, for example but internal actors, particularly, know very well that pre-conflict conditions often did not serve them well. Thus, the aim of peace building must surely be 'fit for purpose' systems, structures and relationships rather than simply re-doing the past. It is understood that internal actors at all levels of their society determine what is 'fit for purpose'. Peace building, 'in its essence, is an extraordinary opportunity, the challenge of being engaged in nurturing complex and positive social change'⁶⁸ not more of the same.

⁶⁸ Lederach et al, *'Reflective Peacebuilding: A Planning, Monitoring And learning Toolkit'* p 4.

5 SIERRA LEONE

This Chapter first presents a short general background about Sierra Leone and then outlines the beginnings of the civil war from 1991.¹ Next, to set the scene for the grassroots perspectives that are the subject of this study, an 'historical' perspective of peace building in Sierra Leone (up until 2006) is narrated. This version of events draws more attention to the externally driven peace building activities (and actors) of this study's hypothesis, than to local culture and priorities. 'Historical' is not rigidly chronological since peace building in Sierra Leone was a hotchpotch of activities undertaken by different actors at different times (or simultaneously) not 'a series of discrete steps taken one step at a time' (Chapter 3b). Indeed, peace building (understood to be 'comprehensive' and 'encompassing' not just 'post accord reconstruction', Chapter 3a) began before hostilities ended and continued for years in parallel with episodes of resurgent violence. Thus, this Chapter narrates peace building in two phases, the war and peace years from 1996 – 2002 (believing that the 1996 elections were a major step in Sierra Leonean peace building) and the official peace from 2002 onwards. Finally, the Chapter ends with brief comments (which aim to give context to this study) about the literature generated by the war and peace building in Sierra Leone.

(a) General Background

The Republic of Sierra Leone is situated on the West African coast bordered by Guinea and Liberia (Chapter 2b includes a map of Sierra Leone).

Language patterns suggest that the coastal Sherbro, Temne and Limba have lived here for thousands of years, with subsequent sporadic immigration from inland by Mande-speaking peoples, including the Vai, Loko and Mende. Social organisation took the form of independent kingdoms or Chiefdoms governed by Chiefs and councils. In addition to conducting initiation ceremonies, 'secret' societies, such as the male Poro, also exercised political power.

From the 15th Century, Europeans traded along the coast near the present-day capital of Freetown. During the 18th century, this coast was a centre of transatlantic slave trade. In 1787, Africans freed from slavery arrived from the UK to establish a settlement on the Sierra Leone Peninsula under the control of the Sierra Leone Company, which used force to keep indigenous Temnes at bay. These former slaves had their origins all over Africa, 'exiled' from their own cultures and traditions by slavery the Krios, as they became known, built an identity originating in their experience of (and often their education in) Britain and the Americas. This meant that the majority were Christian.

In 1808, Freetown became a British Crown Colony and in 1896, a British Protectorate was proclaimed over the Hinterland (to offset French influence in Guinea). This effectively created two nations in the same land. 'People in the Colony enjoyed vastly superior social,

¹ It is necessarily only a brief overview; the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report has a 36 page chapter on the 'Historical Antecedents of the Conflict' and 377 pages on 'The Military and Political History of the Conflict' such detail is outside the scope of this study. Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Sierra Leone, *'Witness to The Truth'* (Ghana: GPL Press, 2004) Volume 2.

political and economic development and access to vital resources such as education'.² Even as late as 1974, 'only 10 per cent of the children in the Provinces receive any formal education'.³ The Protectorate was ruled 'indirectly' through the Chiefs since the British were reluctant to incur the cost of setting up a new administration.

During early colonial rule, indigenous people revolted several times (unsuccessfully) against British and Krio domination. For example, in 1898 Bai Bureh, the warrior Chief of Kasseh, led a guerrilla campaign against the British authorities trying to collect a deeply unpopular 'hut tax'. The Mendes in the south and east followed suit under the coordination of the Poro; 'the Mendes attacked every vestige of alien rule, murdering not only Europeans but also Africans dressed in European clothes'.⁴ Later, in the 1950s, there were also periodic uprisings 'against various oppressors' including Northern Chiefs (again following the imposition of taxes). In 1955, 'Marcus Grant... led his group of urban unemployed and working class into rioting against official corruption and poor labouring conditions'.⁵

Independence, on 27th April 1961, fused the Crown Colony and Protectorate, 'papering over' cracks between the Freetown elite and indigenous population. The first Prime Minister, Sir Milton Margai, was leader of the Sierra Leone Peoples' Party (SLPP), a conservative party dominated by Mendes from the South and East. After Sir Milton died in 1964, his half-brother, Sir Albert Margai, controversially took over as Prime Minister until 1967. Corruption and mismanagement of resources characterised the first six years of independence.

The opposition, All People's Congress (APC), won most seats in the 1967 elections but the SLPP leadership refused to acknowledge the results. The Head of the Army tried to intervene, which provoked junior soldiers to stage a coup. They later transferred power to the APC and President Siaka Stevens. Stevens established a corrupt patrimonial government dominated by Temnes and Limbas from the North. Throughout the 1970s, he became increasingly authoritarian and declared a one party state in 1978. 'Under the APC, central government sustained itself through corruption, nepotism and plundering of state assets';⁶ the latter included Sierra Leone's minerals such as rutile, bauxite, gold and principally, diamonds. Stevens' philosophy was encapsulated in his favourite proverb 'a cow eats where it is tethered'.⁷

In 1985, Stevens finally handed over to his Army Chief, Major-General Joseph Saidu Momoh, who inherited a divided APC Party, weak army, and serious economic crisis.⁸ Between 1985 -1992, official diamond exports had declined as a percentage of total exports

² Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Sierra Leone, *'Witness to The Truth'* p 5.

³ Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *'Living in Sierra Leone'* (London: Overseas Development Administration, 1974) p 5.

⁴ L. Denzer and M. Crowder, 'Bai Bureh And The Sierra Leone Hut Tax War Of 1898' in R.I. Rotberg and A. Mazrui (eds.) *Protest And Power In Black Africa* (USA: Oxford University Press, 1970) p. 170. The war ended in November 1898, Bai Bureh was captured and the hut tax remained.

⁵ Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Sierra Leone, *'Witness to The Truth'* Volume 3A p 17.

⁶ Ibid Volume 2 p 6.

⁷ S. Kpundeh, *'Politics And Corruption In Africa, A Case Study Of Sierra Leone'* (USA: University Press of America, 1995) p 4.

⁸ A. Adebajo, *'Building Peace in West Africa: Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau'* (USA: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002) p 81.

from 31 per cent to 21 per cent; the percentage of all gems mined that were smuggled is estimated to have reached over 50 per cent.⁹ From 1980-1987, state spending on health and education declined by 60 per cent. The patrimonial system of government persisted, 'Siaka Steven's clique was made up of members of the Kambia District Descendants Association and Momoh had his own men from the Ekutay group'.¹⁰ However, in 1991, Momoh succumbed to pressure for a return to a multi party constitution but the civil war was beginning in the east and in April 1992, there was another military coup.

Successive governments failed to utilize Sierra Leone's rich natural resources for the benefit of its citizens. The Sierra Leonean bourgeoisie held on to the colonial production structures while maintaining a subservient role to dominant Lebanese capital, 'all members of the political elite belonged to the same failing system... in reality the two parties shared a brand of politics that was all about power and the benefits it conferred'.¹¹ Sierra Leoneans tell a creation 'story', which encapsulates the despair of many,

At the time of creation, God created a tiny country rich with mineral wealth, an abundance of offshore fish, relatively fertile land and plenty of rainfall. People from neighbouring countries became furious and demanded equal treatment. God, however, cautioned them that they should first wait and see what kind of government would rule over Sierra Leone.¹²

Table 3 summarises basic facts about Sierra Leone.

Table 3 **Sierra Leone: Geography and Demographics**

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Land area | 27,699 square miles (71,740 square kilometres) |
| Resources | Diamonds, bauxite, gold, and rutile. Arable land, marine fishery, and rubber. |
| Population (2004 Census) | 4,976,871 |
| Percentage of population < 15 years | 42.8 % |
| Ethnic groups | About 16 - each with a language including: Mende 30 % (mainly in the south and east) Temne 30 % (mainly in the north) Limba 9.5 % Krio 8 % |
| Religion | Muslim 60 % Christianity 30 % African Traditional Religion 10 % |
| Political | Political capital is Freetown. 13 Districts and 4 Regions. Regional headquarters towns are Freetown (W), Bo (S), Kenema (E) and Makeni (N). 12 District and 5 Town Councils 149 Chiefdoms |

Roughly, two-thirds of the population are subsistence farmers, which some supplement by fishing. The tropical climate, with a rainy season from April to October, allows the cultivation of rice (both upland and swamp), groundnuts and smaller quantities of maize, cassava and sweet potatoes. The traditional diet includes palm oil; for cooking, 95 per cent of people depend on fuel wood. In the East, illegal alluvial diamond mining has become the

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Kpundeh, 'Politics And Corruption In Africa, A Case Study Of Sierra Leone' p 66.

¹¹ Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Sierra Leone, 'Witness to The Truth' Volume 2 p 6.

¹² Personal communication. Kenema 2002, 2004 and 2006.

way of life for the uneducated young. 70 per cent of the population live below the national poverty line¹³ and 50 per cent (including adults) are under nourished.¹⁴ Inequalities similar to those from the era of the Colony and Protectorate still persist; in Kenema and Kailahun Districts 90 per cent live in poverty, in Western Rural 15 per cent and in Freetown two per cent. 'Only Western Area meets WHO [World Health Organisation] staffing ratios of one doctor per 12,000 population; Kailahun has one per 191,340'.¹⁵

Between 1950 and 1972, Sierra Leone had one of the fastest growing economies in West Africa with an average annual growth rate of 7 per cent.¹⁶ By the 1990s, growth was negative and, since that time, Sierra Leone has consistently been around the bottom of UNDP's Human Development Index. Mineral exports, particularly diamonds, have long been Sierra Leone's main foreign exchange earner. Channelling these through the formal sector has been a major challenge to all Governments. Sierra Leone relies on significant amounts of external assistance, particularly from the UK and European Union.

Outside Freetown, the basic unit of local government has long been the 149 traditional Chiefdoms, each headed by a Paramount Chief. For ease of administration, Chiefdoms are divided into Sections (either geographically or ethnically), each with a Section Chief. Village headmen (and now women) are the lowest level of Chiefdom authority. Chiefs are elected¹⁷ for life¹⁸ and are considered custodians of custom and tradition. They adjudicate customary law including local citizenship (which has precedence over State citizenship) and land tenure (chiefdom land has always been inalienable except for Government control of mining rights). Chiefdoms have their own police (separate from the state police), court messengers and bailiffs. During colonialism, the British exercised indirect rule through the Chiefs, later, post-independence politicians frequently relied on the Chiefs to mobilise electoral support.¹⁹ Communities greatly respected the office of Chief but the excesses of individual office holders (such as levying of illegal taxes or license fees and forced labour) naturally bred dissent such as the 1955/6 uprising against Northern Chiefs (mentioned earlier). A recent UNDP report, cited by Fanthorpe, showed that people still had mixed feelings,

¹³ Defined by adult food consumption of 2,700 calories per day (Le 1,033 per day at May 2004 prices) plus another Le 1,078 per day for non-food items. Government of Sierra Leone, PowerPoint Presentation to 9th DEPAC Meeting in Freetown, 16-17/09/2004.

¹⁴ UNDP, 'Human Development Report 2006'.

¹⁵ UNDP, 'Sierra Leone Human Development Report 2007' accessed on 12/09/2008 via http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/nationalreports/africa/sierraleone/sierraleone_nhdr_20071.pdf

¹⁶ A. B. Zack-Williams, 'Sierra Leone: Crisis and Despair' *Review of African Political Economy*, 49 (1990) p 23.

¹⁷ Although Paramount Chiefs and other Chiefdom officials are elected, candidates can only come from recognised 'ruling' families.

¹⁸ Rarely used mechanisms exist for the removal of non-performing or degenerate Paramount Chiefs but the resulting damage to Chieftaincy cohesion can last for generations. For example, the removal of Joe Quee Nyagua, Lower Bambara Chiefdom, in the late 1940s still echoes in Chiefdom politics today. Personal experience, Panguma (Lower Bambara Chiefdom headquarters) from 1987.

¹⁹ When the late Paramount Chief Momoh Borbor Jimmy Jajua died, a local politician's first reaction was that his death was a blow given the looming elections since Chief Jajua, like his father before him, was guaranteed to deliver the Chiefdom for the SLPP. Personal Communication, Segbwema, April 2006.

The cry for reform in aspects of the institution of chieftaincy was overwhelming... tempered by the desire to see that the institution regained its former glory and respect and that Chiefs are empowered to play their roles as vehicles of development and progress in their Chiefdoms.²⁰

Chiefdom life is intertwined and heavily influenced by the 'Secret' Societies, mentioned earlier. The major Societies include the Humui that regulates sexual conduct and is led by women through hereditary office; Bondo, exclusively for women (called Sande, in some areas) and the Poro described as the 'male' Secret Society but to which women can be initiated in certain circumstances. For example, women with specific hereditary connections, female Paramount Chiefs, barren women and the *Mabole* or matron to young initiates (the only female Poro office holder, held in high regard). There are other Societies with a geographic or 'technical' focus such as the Odelay and Ojeh in Western area (imported by liberated Yoruba slaves) and the Njaye concerned with healing and agricultural fertility.

The main functions of the Bondo and Poro are to socialise individuals to their gender roles, supervise political and (to a lesser extent these days) economic affairs and to 'manage' the spirit world, which is corporally manifest in masks, and other special artefacts (historically called 'fetishes').

Everybody knows Societies exist; indeed, during initiation and other ceremonies, they advertise themselves with loud drumming (sometimes all night), chanting and parades through the villages. The notion of secrecy stems from the fact that Society matters and rituals are not discussed with or witnessed by non-initiates. Therefore, ceremonies are conducted in isolated areas outside settlements, the 'Society Bush'. Non-initiates cooperate with Societies by avoiding the Society Bush and staying indoors during certain ceremonies²¹ otherwise the consequences are dire, a man who intrudes on Bondo initiation will suffer elephantiasis of the testicles, for example.

The flexibility of interpretation associated with oral traditions mentioned in Chapter 3b applies to Societies, the Poro has no centralised organisation or headquarters, 'Poro should be considered a diversity of associations that differentially share some ritual practices'.²² Yet, the Poro has always been able to mobilise the masses, 'Poro law surmounted the local administration of the Chiefs... Its symbols... were understood and obeyed all over the country',²³ again the Hut Tax War and the 1950s uprising against Northern Chiefs are examples (above). Conversely, Poro could also rally support for Chiefs (who may also be

²⁰ R. Fanthorpe 'Sierra Leone: The Politics Of Moral Economy' in S. Collinson (ed), *Power Livelihoods And Conflict: Case Studies In Political Economy Analysis For Humanitarian Actors* (London: ODI, 2003) p 59.

²¹ If the Poro was 'out', I have been asked to hide on the vehicle floor passing through the area and hustled into undergrowth when walking at times certain processions were due. The concern was being seen (and causing offence; formally, violating the Society meant death), friends never seemed bothered about what I might see. Once, a group of men with whom I was sitting, fell to discussing the funeral arrangements for a prominent Poro member and the initiation of his (adult) son (required to qualify him to attend the funeral ceremonies). I went to leave but was signalled to stay. Later, I learned that Society rules were not broken, nobody *told me* anything, they were talking among themselves, I just happened to hear. Not a very secret Secret Society.

²² Fanthorpe, 'Sierra Leone: The Influence Of The Secret Societies, With Special Reference To Female Genital Mutilation' p 5.

²³ K. Little, 'The Mende of Sierra Leone, A West African People In Transition' (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951 revised 1967) p 183.

Society leaders). Later, with the emergence of party politics, Societies developed a role in political mobilisation (expecting reciprocation),

Men and women winning seats in Parliament... are expected to remain loyal to their home communities and direct state resources towards those communities. The Secret Societies remain a fundamental, albeit unspoken, factor in these informal pacts. Few politicians that were not initiated in the localities they wish to represent can expect to win elections and once in office they are expected to provide job opportunities for fellow initiates ("sons/daughter of the soil").²⁴

Similarly, politicians and leading Chiefdom officials must patronise initiation rites, physically or financially. Again, reciprocation may underpin such largesse, 'for example, Patricia Kabbah, the late wife of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, sponsored the circumcision of 1,500 young girls during the presidential election campaign of 2002'.²⁵ It remains the prerogative of Paramount Chiefs to authorise all initiation rites in their Chiefdoms, 'senior Chiefs and politicians who neglect their responsibilities as patrons of the Societies or overstep their authority in the ritual sphere may find local youths turned against them.'²⁶

Some writers (Ekeh, Laval and Fanthorpe) have suggested two parallel political realities in Sierra Leone, that which relates to present-day governance/citizenship and the 'primordial' politics of Secret Societies, ethnicity and ancestral communities.²⁷ Often, when the former fails to provide social stability, the 'primordial' prospers.

(b) The Civil War: Beginnings from 1991²⁸

There were many intertwined causes of the civil war but it is accepted that overall bad governance (manifested by corruption and mismanagement of the economy), neglect of the rural areas (rooted in colonial structures described above) and youth alienation were major contributors. In addition, the legacy of intra Chiefdom and other local disputes (some dating back to the Hut Tax Wars) played a role in certain localities.²⁹ Unlike the characterisation of many African conflicts, 'the Sierra Leone war was not caused or driven by ethnic rivalry',³⁰ 'the conflict was not about ideology, tribal or regional differences'.³¹ However, 'the link between the conflict and ethnicity lies in the way in which certain factions turned ethnicity into an instrument of prejudice and violence'.³² As well as internal factors, the Liberian civil wars (1989-1996 and 1999-2003) affected Sierra Leone. The leader of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), Charles Taylor allegedly supported the formation of the RUF, led by former Sierra Leone Army (SLA) corporal, Foday Sankoh. Taylor met Sankoh while undertaking guerrilla training in Libya during the 1980s. Apart from an interest in diamonds, Taylor wanted Sierra Leone to 'taste the bitterness of war' because the

²⁴ Fanthorpe, 'Sierra Leone: The Influence Of The Secret Societies, With Special Reference To Female Genital Mutilation' p 7.

²⁵ Ibid p 22.

²⁶ Ibid p10.

²⁷ Ibid p 7.

²⁸ See Appendix C for a tabulated chronology of the civil war (1991 – 2002).

²⁹ Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Sierra Leone, 'Witness to The Truth' Volume 3A p 28.

³⁰ Y. Bangura, 'Understanding The Political And Cultural Dynamics Of The Sierra Leone War: A Critique Of Paul Richards's Fighting For The Rain Forest' *African Development*, 23, 3/4 (1997) p 121.

³¹ Baker and May, 'Reconstructing Sierra Leone' p 39.

³² Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Sierra Leone, 'Witness to The Truth' Volume 2, Chapter 1 p 11.

Government had provided the base from which the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) had bombed Liberia during its peace enforcement/keeping mission. (Later, the SCSL indicted Taylor for his role in arming and funding the RUF).

During March 1991, RUF rebels, swelled by nearly three times as many NPFL 'special forces', crossed from Liberia and attacked Sierra Leone border villages in Kailahun District. Their declared intent was to overthrow the corrupt and tyrannical APC government. They met little resistance and quickly took over most of Eastern Province, including the diamond fields of Kono and Tongo. 'The RUF came to control a diamond trade worth an estimated US \$ 250 million per year... The economic fruit to be derived from the conflict reduced incentives for the factions to reach a negotiated settlement to the war'.³³

In April 1992, young military officers, led by Captain Valentine Strasser, staged a coup d'état. Their reasons were the deteriorating economy, corrupt public officials and frustration with the Government's inability to supply front line SLA troops with rations and munitions.³⁴ President Momoh fled into exile and the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) took over. Strasser's team performed no better than Stevens or Momoh. Their 'anti-corruption posture was fitful, contradictory and short-lived',³⁵ they were soon 'nakedly accepting bribes, heavily involved in mining and at the same time, misusing defence funds ... [and implicated in] the illegal sale of diamonds, money-laundering and frequent shopping sprees abroad'.³⁶ 'Civilians could no longer distinguish between soldiers and rebels. The term "sobels" refer[ed] to soldiers who had become and were behaving exactly like rebels... The "sobelisation" of the national army'³⁷ led to the emergence of the Kamajor militia. The Kamajors were originally an indigenous Mende hunting society, which evolved into a militia with 'special powers' to enhance their battle capacity. In the absence of functioning state security, they assumed responsibility for defending civilians against both rebels and sabel-elements of the SLA.

Despite a massive army recruitment drive, the NPRC could not contain the RUF, which by 1995 had a presence in every Provincial District and were advancing on Freetown. The calibre of army recruits, poorly educated youth, indeed children, from the margins of society (ironically the same constituency from among which the RUF also recruited) may have contributed. An estimated 10,000 child soldiers 'joined' all factions during the war. They were beaten and terrorised into killing colleagues who attempted escape, fed a constant diet of Rambo and Kungfu videos, drugs and 'introduced to various superstitious practices all of

³³ Adebajo, 'Building Peace in West Africa: Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau' p 82.

³⁴ Kpundeh, 'Politics And Corruption In Africa, A Case Study Of Sierra Leone' p 37.

³⁵ J. Kandeh, 'What Does The Militariat Do When It Rules? Military Regimes: The Gambia, Sierra Leone and Liberia' *Review of African Political Economy*, 69 (1996), p 393.

³⁶ S. Musa cited in A. Abraham 'State Complicity As A Factor in Perpetuating The Sierra Leone Civil War' in I. Abdullah (ed), *Between Democracy And Terror The Sierra Leone Civil War* (Senegal: CODESRIA, 2004) p 106.

³⁷ C. Ukeje 'Sierra Leone: The Long Descent Into Civil War' in Sesay (ed), *Civil Wars, Child Soldiers And Post Conflict Peace Building In West Africa* p 121.

which were designed to reinforce their desires to kill and their [perceived] invincibility'.³⁸ Beah and Bergner both provide graphic accounts of the lives of child combatants.³⁹

By May 1995, fighting had reached just 15 miles from the centre of Freetown and Nigerian troops (already in Sierra Leone as part of ECOMOG) were poised to help defend the city. In addition, the NPRC hired mercenaries from the private security firm Executive Outcomes to boost their military capacity; within a month the RUF were driven back to border areas. However, 'the mercenaries probably helped in prolonging the war because of their juicy monthly pay of US \$ 1.5 million.'⁴⁰

The avowed intent of the NPRC was to return the country to civilian rule in its fourth year 'but not before ending the RUF insurrection and restoring state capacities'⁴¹ thus, 'peace before elections' was the priority. However, when peace remained elusive suspicion grew that the NPRC was using the war as an excuse to stay in power. At the first National Consultative Conference (Bintumani I) which brought politicians, civil society, the military and diaspora together to discuss the democratic transition, delegates overwhelmingly favoured 'elections before peace'. 'The participants characterised democratic stability as a precondition for a negotiated end to the war'.⁴²

Plans to replace the 1991 Constitution were abandoned in favour of speed. Under it, Presidential candidates had to be at least 40 years old, which excluded Strasser (then 32 years). Speculation that Strasser (and even his Defence Minister, Julius Maada Bio) harboured ambitions to contest the presidency (unconstitutionally) led to tensions within the NPRC and Strasser's eventual overthrow in a coup led by Bio.

Presidential and parliamentary elections went ahead on 26th and 27th February 1996 (the first for 28 years) with a presidential run off on 15th March. The RUF did not participate, rhetorically adhering to the 'peace before elections' stance. Instead, they mounted 'Operation Stop Elections', amputating potential voters' hands and arms to physically prevent them from voting. Victims were told to ask President Kabbah for a new limb or to tell him that the elections lacked legitimacy without the RUF. Thus, polling was impossible in the 20 per cent of the country occupied by rebel forces; across the rest of the country turn out varied from 25 to 41 per cent. The Carter Centre reported that the elections were 'clouded by accusations of fraud' but the wider international community hailed them as 'fair', enough. Alhaji Dr Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, of the SLPP, was elected President with just less than 60 per cent of the vote.

To start peace building by holding elections in the middle of a war when many state institutions (including the SLA and police force) were dysfunctional would be anathema to structuralist peace builders such as Dobbins (Chapter 3b). It happened partly because the

³⁸ Gbla, 'Conflict And Postwar Trauma Among Child Soldiers In Liberia And Sierra Leone' in Sesay (ed), *Civil Wars, Child Soldiers And Post Conflict Peace Building In West Africa* p 177.

³⁹ I. Beah, 'A Long Way Gone' (UK: Fourth Estate, 2007) and D. Bergner, 'Soldiers of Light' (UK: Allen Lane, 2004).

⁴⁰ Y. Bangura cited in Ukeje 'Sierra Leone: The Long Descent Into Civil War' in Sesay (ed), *Civil Wars, Child Soldiers And Post Conflict Peace Building In West Africa* p 122.

⁴¹ J. Kandeh 'In Search Of Legitimacy: The 1996 Elections' in I. Abdullah (ed), *Between Democracy And Terror The Sierra Leone Civil War* p 126.

⁴² Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Sierra Leone, 'Witness to The Truth' Volume 2 Chapter 3 p 223.

Interim National Electoral Commission was 98 per cent donor funded and so the NPRC could not manipulate it with threats of withholding funds. The donors' agenda prevailed; 'backing from the international community emboldened the Commission in resisting NPRC efforts to delay the elections'.⁴³ This indicates flexibility in the structuralist peace building agenda not hitherto apparent; in certain circumstances, democratisation can be a higher priority than security.

The international community's position paralleled that of Sierra Leonean civil society. Kandeh suggested that the resurgence of civil society was a major factor in forcing the military to return Sierra Leone to civilian rule. In particular, one NGO, Women for a Morally Engaged Nation (WOMEN) 'vigorously campaigned for elections to be held on schedule, even daring renegade soldiers bent on derailing the elections to shoot at its members'.⁴⁴ At Bintumani I, it was trade unionists, students, religious leaders, refugees from Guinea and members of petty traders associations, women's organisations, and NGOs who pressed for 'elections before peace' suspecting that the NPRC was reluctant to cede power (or even to end the war).

Thus, the example of Sierra Leone supported both Kuhne, 'external actors generally dominate peace building' and Gawerc, 'civilian action or protest can be the decisive factor in efforts for peace' (Chapter 4) and by extension that partnership (as posited by Annan) rather than parallelism is the best route to peace. This also resonated with the view in Chapter 3a that seeking 'integration and interconnection' during peace building might be more productive than linear or vertical approaches.

The pragmatic choice of a flawed democratic transition with the possibility of subsequent peace building ('elections before peace') over more war was only the 'lesser of two evils', as proved by the years of war and peace that followed.

(c) War and Peace Years (1996 – 2002)

The new President inherited a dire situation: by March 1996, inflation was 38.8 per cent, 75 per cent of eligible children were out of school, 70 per cent of schools and 84 per cent of clinics destroyed and all mines 'thoroughly looted and vandalised'.⁴⁵

I [President Kabbah] was anxious to fulfil my election promise to end the war... the population was war weary and yearning for peace... the loyalty of the military or of what remained of it could not be guaranteed to prosecute the war against the rebels successfully... The only option was to embark on negotiations with the rebels.⁴⁶

⁴³ Kandeh 'In Search Of Legitimacy: The 1996 Elections' in I. Abdullah (ed), *Between Democracy And Terror The Sierra Leone Civil War* p 127.

⁴⁴ Kandeh, 'What Does The Militariat Do When It Rules? Military Regimes: The Gambia, Sierra Leone and Liberia' p 399.

⁴⁵ L. Gberie, 'The 25 May Coup D'état In Sierra Leone: A Lumpen Revolt' in I. Abdullah (ed), *Between Democracy And Terror The Sierra Leone Civil War* p 147.

⁴⁶ Statement by His Excellency The President, Alhaji Dr Ahmad Tejan Kabbah made before the TRC on 05/08/2003 para 15 a.

In fact, the Government (supported by other actors) embarked on three tracks towards peace, military, political and social reconstruction. Thus, this section examines these three facets of peace building separately but in reality they were interconnected and overlapped.

The military track involved co-opting the Civil Defence Forces (CDF) into the state security apparatus. The CDF comprised several ethno-regional vigilante groups (such as the Tamaboros, Donsos, and Gbethis) but at its core was approximately 37,000⁴⁷ Kamajors (above). Instead of collaborating with the SLA, the Kamajors pitted themselves against it in order to be the main protector of civilian lives and property. Since soldiers in the SLA were mainly of Northern descent, this introduced the ethnic dimension to the conflict mentioned at the beginning of this section.

The political track resulted in the Abidjan Peace Accord in November 1996. This required an immediate cessation of hostilities, DDR, withdrawal of all mercenaries, an amnesty for the rebels and the establishment of a TRC and Commission for the Consolidation of the Peace. The latter was to oversee implementation of the Peace Accord itself. However, the RUF did not respect the cease-fire and atrocities continued in the countryside. It has been suggested that the RUF was not committed to any peace process but rather to self-enrichment by plundering the country's diamond mines.⁴⁸ In his statement to the TRC President Kabbah suggested that Abidjan failed because there was no political provision for the RUF (power sharing arrangement), no funds available for DDR and no timeframe for its implementation.⁴⁹

Social reconstruction was the remit of the new Ministry of Rehabilitation, Resettlement and Recovery, in close coordination with United Nations agencies, international NGOs and donors. A donors' conference in September 1996 pledged US \$ 231.2 million for reconstruction. As well as emergency needs, the Government planned to focus on agriculture, education (reducing illiteracy by 40 per cent), health with a clinic in every Chiefdom and other infrastructure. Economic ambitions included controlling inflation, creating employment through private sector development and inward investment, reducing rice imports by 50 per cent over five years and increasing cash crop production by 40 per cent over four years. Economic reconstruction started well: GDP grew by 5.6 per cent in 1996 (against minus 10 per cent in 1995), inflation fell by 25 per cent and external reserves nearly doubled (albeit, from very low baselines).

However, on May 25 1997, the main prison in Freetown was attacked and 600 convicts (including hardened criminals) released to attack State House. President Kabbah and his Government escaped to Guinea and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) formed with Major General Johnny Paul Koroma at the helm. Koroma suspended the constitution, banned demonstrations, abolished political parties, shut down all the country's

⁴⁷ Gberie, 'The 25 May Coup D'état In Sierra Leone: A Lumpen Revolt' in I. Abdullah (ed), *Between Democracy And Terror The Sierra Leone Civil War* p 151.

⁴⁸ Ukeje 'Sierra Leone: The Long Descent Into Civil War' in Sesay (ed), *Civil Wars, Child Soldiers And Post Conflict Peace Building In West Africa* p 127.

⁴⁹ Statement by His Excellency The President, Alhaji Dr Ahmad Tejan Kabbah made before the TRC on 05/08/2003 para 22.

private radio stations and invited the RUF to join the government. Their leader, Foday Sankoh (then in prison in Nigeria) became the AFRC Vice Chairperson.

Junta supporters targeted civilians with a campaign of rape and pillage nicknamed 'Operation Pay Yourself', the junta's 'agenda... did not rise above the criminal expropriation of public resources and private property'.⁵⁰ The Supreme Court (as well as other public buildings) was torched and members of the judiciary fled, as the criminals they had previously convicted, were now free to extract revenge. Law and order was effectively suspended, nine months of 'unlimited terror'⁵¹ followed.

'The coup was condemned universally both at home and abroad'.⁵² The Kamajors promised a military response but ordinary people brought 'government' to a standstill as civil servants, teachers and other workers withdrew their services and refused to work in spite of entreaties by the AFRC and threats of deprivation. Even private and informal sector operators scaled down or closed their businesses in the unprecedented campaign of civil disobedience.⁵³ From this civil disobedience, the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (a coalition of pressure groups and civil society organisations) emerged in Freetown. Civil society demonstrations around the country were ruthlessly suppressed by the junta, which fired teargas and live bullets at unarmed civilians (killing at least three student demonstrators in Freetown on 18th August 1997).⁵⁴

Internationally, the United Nations imposed sanctions against the AFRC (Resolution 1132, banning the import of weapons, military materials, fuel and international travel by junta members), the Commonwealth suspended Sierra Leone and the European Union stopped development aid. Five members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) devised a six-month plan (the Conakry Peace Plan, October 1997) with the AFRC for a ceasefire, return to civilian rule, immunity for the AFRC, the release of Sankoh (still in detention in Nigeria), demobilisation of all combatants, humanitarian assistance and repatriation of refugees. However, a month later the AFRC was fighting the Kamajors and had allegedly shot at ECOMOG jets. Humanitarian assistance and repatriation were stymied by insecurity; supplies of drugs, vaccines and food could not be brought across the border from Guinea; malnutrition and measles increased.

When it was clear that the AFRC had not negotiated in good faith, ECOMOG 'amassed about 10,000 fresh troops from Nigeria'⁵⁵ and by February 1998, had expelled the rebels from Freetown. President Kabbah returned to office on 10th March 1998. However, rebel forces still controlled most of the North while the CDF recaptured the South and East. AFRC and RUF elements mounted 'Operation No Living Thing' and terrorised civilians throughout 1998.

⁵⁰ J. Kandeh 'Unmaking The Second Republic: Democracy On Trial' in I. Abdullah (ed), *Between Democracy And Terror The Sierra Leone Civil War* p 126.

⁵¹ Gberie, 'The 25 May Coup D'état In Sierra Leone: A Lumpen Revolt' in I. Abdullah (ed), *Between Democracy And Terror The Sierra Leone Civil War* p 150.

⁵² Ibid p 153.

⁵³ Ukeje 'Sierra Leone: The Long Descent Into Civil War' in Sesay (ed), *Civil Wars, Child Soldiers And Post Conflict Peace Building In West Africa* p 123.

⁵⁴ Gberie, 'The 25 May Coup D'état In Sierra Leone: A Lumpen Revolt' in I. Abdullah (ed), *Between Democracy And Terror The Sierra Leone Civil War* p 157.

⁵⁵ Ibid p 163.

After President Kabbah's return, 2,000 alleged AFRC collaborators were arrested. Of those, 24 soldiers were executed following court-martial. The RUF vowed revenge. Sankoh, extradited from Nigeria, was tried for treason (without legal representation because no lawyer would accept the task) and sentenced to hang but appealed. During the night of 6th January 1999 'rebels' comprising both the AFRC and RUF elements, entered the city, intent on wreaking havoc. For more than ten days, they burned, looted and killed (leaving over 5,000 dead and most of the eastern suburbs destroyed) before ECOMOG again drove them out.

The fragile Government, dependent on ECOMOG for its safety in Freetown, was forced to negotiate with the RUF and remnants of Koroma's junta. A ceasefire was arranged for May 1999. After weeks of difficult talks (under intense external pressure) between the Government, RUF leadership and civil society representatives, the Lomé Peace Agreement was signed in July 1999. It incorporated aspects of the Abidjan Accord but attempted to address its weaknesses. Within a stipulated timeframe there was to be a ceasefire, an international peacekeeping force to oversee DDR, a power-sharing government with the RUF (including Foday Sankoh as chairperson of the Commission for the Management of Strategic Mineral Resources with Vice Presidential status), and an amnesty for all combatants who had committed war crimes. In addition, the international community committed funding for activities and institutions established under the Agreement such as the TRC, Human Rights Commission and Commission for the Consolidation of Peace. The amnesty and power-sharing provisions caused shock at home and among the international human rights fraternity but were defended as the only way to achieve peace. The Lomé Agreement was built on the shaky (given the RUF's record) assumption that the RUF actually wanted peace, 'it was hoped that by merely signing an agreement, the RUF would *ipso facto*, behave like a civilised movement.'⁵⁶

Thus, the first contingent of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) arrived towards the end of 1999. The Security Council voted in February 2000, to increase the force to 11,000 (and subsequently to 13,000). 800 British troops later deployed independently of the United Nations to evacuate foreigners but also gave logistical support and training to forces opposing the RUF. As mentioned earlier, the Lomé Agreement was 'imposed' through heavy external pressure;⁵⁷ some claim that it was 'drafted' by a United States Department team'.⁵⁸ Certainly, it received strong endorsement internationally. Lack of commitment led the RUF to violate the Agreement and abuse the United Nations (both verbally and physically). Thus, UNAMSIL, designed, equipped and deployed as a peacekeeping force quickly found there was no peace to keep and ended up fighting the RUF, which in May 2000, took 500 UNAMSIL troops hostage.

⁵⁶ A. Abraham, 'The Elusive Quest For Peace: From Abidjan To Lomé' in I. Abdullah (ed), *Between Democracy And Terror The Sierra Leone Civil War* p 213.

⁵⁷ A. Kargbo, 'The Long Road to Peace: 1991 – 1997' in A. Ayissi and R. Poulton (eds), *Bound To Cooperate Conflict, Peace and People in Sierra Leone* (Geneva: UNIDIR, 2006) p 47.

⁵⁸ O. Gordon, 'Civil Society Against The State: The Independent Press And The AFRC-RUF Junta' in I. Abdullah (ed), *Between Democracy And Terror The Sierra Leone Civil War* p 181.

The behaviour of the RUF and Sankoh caused public outrage and led to civil society protests. On one occasion, elderly women collectively raised their skirts, bent over and bared themselves to Sankoh and his henchmen. This was the strongest curse available to them and the last thing any Sierra Leonean woman would normally do.⁵⁹ On May 8th 2000, Sankoh's guards shot dead 21 civilians demonstrating outside his house. This led to Sankoh's eventual arrest, the expulsion of the RUF from the government and contributed to President Kabbah's request to the United Nations to create a war crimes court.

Further cease-fire agreements negotiated in Abuja in November 2000 and 2001 bolstered the shaky peace. Once UNAMSIL fully deployed (at the time, the largest ever United Nations peacekeeping mission) DDR finally got underway (in May 2001) accompanied by a massive humanitarian and reconstruction programme, led by the United Nations agencies. On 18th January 2002, all parties issued a Declaration of The End of The War.

By that time an estimated 70,000 had died, 500,000 Sierra Leoneans were refugees in neighbouring countries, 100,000s internally displaced and 300 towns and villages with 340,000 homes were destroyed. More than 215,000 women and girls had experienced sexual violence.⁶⁰

All sides had perpetrated gross human rights violations against civilians. Human Rights Watch (HRW) has documented testimony⁶¹ of physical mutilation (amputations by machete of one or both hands, arms, feet, legs, ears and buttocks and one or more fingers), torture and murder. I nursed people (who escaped to Liberia) with lower limb amputations performed using power saws and heard several eyewitness accounts of people being flayed alive (by the Kamajors).⁶² Rape became a weapon of war and HRW received unconfirmed reports of sexual mutilation such of cutting off breasts and genitalia. Credible as, before the war, this was an aspect of ritual killings.⁶³ These attacks on civilians occurred in almost every region of the country; the majority of victims were men aged 16 - 45 years.

In Freetown, former captives of the Junta/RUF told of being cut on the forehead and a 'white powder' put in the wound that was then covered with a sticking plaster. One elderly taxi driver said that after this procedure he felt that he could fly or 'do anything that his captors told him to do' and that when he looked at the sea it had turned purple. ⁶⁴ The white powder might have been anything from marijuana to cocaine or diamorphine (heroin). Thousands were traumatised by the killings, rape and mutilation they experienced, witnessed or perpetrated, often under coercion.

The years of parallel war and peace building in Sierra Leone suggested that the structuralist peace builders (mentioned above) were right; democratisation without at least a

⁵⁹ D. Muzurana and K. Carlson, 'From Combat to Community: Women and Girls of Sierra Leone', *Women Waging Peace* p 4 accessed on 10/08/2007 via www.womenwagingpeace.net

⁶⁰ Baker and May, 'Reconstructing Sierra Leone' p 36.

⁶¹ Human Rights Watch, *We'll Kill You If You Cry: Sexual Violence in the Sierra Leone Conflict*, 2003, accessed on 06/03/2004 via www.hrw.org

⁶² Personal experience, Foya Hospital, Lofa County, Liberia, 1998.

⁶³ Alhaji Takowa's murder of his niece to secure a powerful position in Lower Bambara Chiefdom. Recorded in S. Cutter, 'Don't Forget Africa', unpublished compilation of letters from Panguma, Lower Bambara Chiefdom, 1987 to 1991.

⁶⁴ Personal communication, Freetown, April 2002.

modicum of security is extremely fraught. This may explain an apparent u-turn by the international (and regional) community (and the Government under external pressure). In 1996, democratisation was a greater priority than security; however, the power sharing arrangements of Lomé appeared to relegate democracy in favour of security. The 1998 restoration Government had been 'freely and fairly' elected (in 1996); thus it was inherently undemocratic to invite the RUF (which did not even contest in 1996) to join it. The (mistaken) assumption was that if the RUF was given 'at the negotiating table all the things it could not capture on the battlefield'⁶⁵ it would stop fighting.

Another inconsistency in the international community's approach to democracy emerged during this phase; the pressure it exerted on President Kabbah's elected Government represented a means-ends disconnect. Towards the end of this period, Dr Bright (Minister of Youth and Sports, 2002-2007) commented,

We should be talking about the overwhelming power of the international community... With hardly any control... over the country's main resource base, the diamond-rich Kono District, the Government... has been left with hardly any other alternative but to permanently resort to the generosity of donors... It looks as though Government is slowly losing control and being dwarfed by the almighty international community.⁶⁶

Maybe Dobbins' contention that international actors 'came in, imposed...organised' and 'installed' in Sierra Leone and Liberia (Chapter 3b) was near to the truth. A Government rescued from military takeover risked takeover by the very actors that rescued it. It is questionable whether democracy can be nurtured by undemocratic means. Certainly, at that time, democracy in Sierra Leone seemed more process than content. Multiparty elections had taken place but subsequent cabinets recycled politicians 'discredited by their complicity in past dictatorships',⁶⁷ journalists were arrested on flimsy grounds,⁶⁸ 'as late as March 1997, the Kabbah Government was tear-gassing college students'⁶⁹ (protesting ex-President Momoh's pension award) and the law was amended to ensure that AFRC 'collaborators' were convicted. This, even though the judiciary was decimated and there were insufficient funds to give 2,000 people a fair trial.

Another 'external' 'local' paradox was that while donors funded 'citizenship' awareness as a tool to improve government accountability,⁷⁰ 'external influence' itself risked drowning out civil society voices. Poignant given 'the role of civil society in ending the NPRC dictatorship and resisting the AFRC sequel [was] unprecedented in the annals of military rule in

⁶⁵ Abraham, 'The Elusive Quest For Peace: From Abidjan To Lomé' in I. Abdullah (ed), *Between Democracy And Terror The Sierra Leone Civil War* p 214.

⁶⁶ D. Bright, speech at the Conflict, Development, and Peace Network Conference, London, 18 – 20/06/2001 accessed on 17/10/2008 via www.c-r.org/resources/occasional-papers/sierra-leone-conflict-world.php

⁶⁷ Kandeh 'Unmaking The Second Republic: Democracy On Trial' in I. Abdullah (ed), *Between Democracy And Terror The Sierra Leone Civil War* p 165.

⁶⁸ For example, Sorie Fofana of Vision on 27/03/1998 for accusing the National Security Advisor of making arbitrary arrests.

⁶⁹ Kandeh 'Unmaking The Second Republic: Democracy On Trial' in I. Abdullah (ed), *Between Democracy And Terror The Sierra Leone Civil War* p 179.

⁷⁰ For example, as part of their 'Three Sisters Project' across the borders of Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia, GTZ animates Ward Development Committees to extract better information from their leaders.

independent Africa'.⁷¹ The assertion in Chapter 4 that governments create (or not) the space in which civil society operates was contradicted by Sierra Leone's civil society, which came to the fore when there was no true government, no space, only an anarchic vacuum. Confirmation of Annan's assertion that 'there are few limits to what civil society can achieve'.⁷²

Dr Bright identified another incongruity in the international community's stance. On the one hand, they mounted the largest peace keeping mission in the world ⁷³ while on the other; participated in a multimillion-dollar arms trade. None of the weapons decommissioned during DDR were made in Sierra Leone (or elsewhere in Africa).

I would like to propose a whole debate... between the reactive measure of addressing impunity by spending one million dollars to try a single human rights violator in Sierra Leone [ref Special Court], and the preventative measure of addressing the ethics of small arms trade by using similar resources to challenge their production and trafficking.⁷⁴

It has been suggested that President Kabbah's 'lack of a firm and decisive'⁷⁵ leadership-style contributed to the long period of insecurity that followed the 1996 elections. At the very least, it seemed naive to propose that the Abidjan Accord failed because of insufficient concessions to the RUF (without reference to Sankoh's obduracy) and then to concede so much to the RUF at Lomé after it had been involved in a coup d'état and continued atrocities. Other gestures of 'reconciliation' such as returning APC assets confiscated by the NPRC, ex-President Momoh's pension, immunity for NPRC leaders and the failure to see through high profile corruption cases (for example, Abass Bundu) suggested that reconciliation was not viewed as a two way process but rather as a matter of unilateral appeasement. To resist the pressure of both external actors (with the power of money) and internal 'sharks'⁷⁶ would probably require an authoritarian approach (and strong state security apparatus) at odds with Sierra Leone's hard won democracy. At a CEDSA meeting, Dr Dumbuya (former Foreign Minister) made several comments (which were not contradicted) related to this dilemma,

How do you get a charismatic leader, the likes of Jerry Rawlings or Yahya Jammeh now that military intervention is ruled out? Dictators clear the decks... Even internal Government memos speak of the need for an "enlighten dictatorship ...democracy takes too long".⁷⁷

⁷¹ Kandeh 'Unmaking The Second Republic: Democracy On Trial' in I. Abdullah (ed), *Between Democracy And Terror The Sierra Leone Civil War* p 179.

⁷² K. Annan, 'Secretary General Calls Partnership of NGOs, Private Sector, International Organisations and Governments', United Nations Press Release SG/SM/6973 accessed on 26/10/2008 via <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/1999/19990429.SGSM6973.html>

⁷³ UNAMSIL total estimated expenditure: US \$ 2.8 billion accessed on 19/10/2008 via www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unamsil/facts.html

⁷⁴ Bright, speech at the Conflict, Development, and Peace Network Conference.

⁷⁵ Kandeh 'Unmaking The Second Republic: Democracy On Trial' in I. Abdullah (ed), *Between Democracy And Terror The Sierra Leone Civil War* p 170.

⁷⁶ 'He [President Kabbah] is a nice man but surrounded by sharks' comment from the floor during R. Dumbuya's presentation to CEDSA 'Conceptual Framework For Durable Peace And Sustainable Development In Sierra Leone', Freetown 04/02/2005.

⁷⁷ Dumbuya's presentation to CEDSA 'Conceptual Framework For Durable Peace And Sustainable Development In Sierra Leone'.

(d) Official Peace (2002 – 2006)

After President Kabbah declared the war officially over (symbolically, at a ceremony to destroy decommissioned weapons, January 2002) peace building continued along essentially similar tracks to earlier years, namely military, political and social reconstruction. These tracks were interconnected; for example the military (UNAMSIL) supported the political track (elections) and social reconstruction (building places of worship and sensitising people on reintegration and reconciliation). The three pillars of the Government's poverty reduction strategy drafted in 2001 (good governance, peace and security; pro-poor sustainable economic growth for food security and job creation and human development) essentially paralleled these three peace building tracks. (The final version of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, PRSP, was finished in early 2005). To present clearly the complex and overlapping process of peace building during these years, this section considers the three tracks separately although this was not the reality on the ground.

Military Track (2002 – 2006)

Military engagement with peace building had two components, the continued deployment of UNAMSIL and (re)building the state security sector. After the slow start to disarmament and the debacle with the RUF in 2000, the United Nations increased UNAMSIL's capacity (in terms of equipment and personnel) so, by early 2002, it was deployed countrywide and disarmament and demobilisation was well advanced. When the Government finally declared DDR over (in February 2004), US\$ 36.5 million of mostly World Bank funds had been spent, 42,330 weapons decommissioned, 75,490 ex-combatants demobilised and 55,000 had received reintegration benefits (formal education, skills training or small business support).⁷⁸ The latter in collaboration with other United Nations agencies (such as UNICEF), the Government's National Committee for DDR, and NGOs. However, UNAMSIL itself admitted, 'the success in disarming and demobilising combatants was not equally matched with efforts to reintegrate and find them decent jobs... The presence of former fighters roaming the streets will continue to be one of the Government's major challenges'.⁷⁹ Other weaknesses of DDR included the short duration of skills training, inadequate provision for women and foreign fighters, insufficient attention to 'receiving' communities' fears and prejudices and weak coordination between DDR and other recovery and reintegration programmes.⁸⁰

The relative security afforded by UNAMSIL's nationwide presence allowed the conduct of peaceful elections in May 2002 (in stark contrast to 1996). During the election process, Radio UNAMSIL backed-up the National Electoral Commission's (NEC) voter education campaign and UNAMSIL troops provided security and logistics (particularly transport) to the Sierra Leone Police, NEC and election observers. In 2004, UNAMSIL provided similar support to

⁷⁸ UNAMSIL 'Fact Sheet 1: Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration'. Statistics are inconsistent even between United Nations agencies; for example, the United Nations DDR Resource Centre give the number of decommissioned weapons as 30,000 accessed on 26/10/2008 via www.unddr.org/countryprogrammes.php?c=60

⁷⁹ UNAMSIL 'Fact Sheet 1: Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration'.

⁸⁰ UN Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (peace initiative), 'Country Programme: Sierra Leone' p 10 accessed on 26/10/2008 via www.unddr.org/countryprogrammes.php?c=60

the local government elections. High levels of illiteracy and problems of inaccessibility meant Radio UNAMSIL continued an important education and information function; as well as the elections, it covered (at different times) reintegration issues, the TRC, SCSL and human rights topics. It also provided the local media with a professional and technical standard for which to aim.

As well as its role in DDR and democratisation, UNAMSIL (together with a Commonwealth police team) helped recruit and train more than 3,500 local police officers bringing the national police force to its pre-war strength of 9,500. 'United Nations police officers also gave specialist training ... in areas such as criminal investigation, intelligence services, traffic management, community policing, airport security and cross-borders crimes'.⁸¹ However, public confidence in the police (and other security forces) did not increase.⁸² UNAMSIL's infrastructure (re)construction included police stations and barracks, judicial buildings, schools and clinics. Certain building projects (such as community Barriers, mosques, churches and nursery schools) were unilateral charitable initiatives of particular UNAMSIL battalions. In addition, UNAMSIL 'facilitated the regulation of much of the diamond mining industry in a relatively short time'⁸³ and trained trainers of human rights monitors and advocates. It must be noted that HRW has documented cases of human rights abuse by UNAMSIL itself including rape, homosexual assault and killing unarmed civilians (during overzealous crowd control).⁸⁴

UNAMSIL's mandate ended in December of 2005, to celebrate 'the end of the successful United Nations mission in West Africa'⁸⁵ UNAMSIL somewhat bizarrely hosted an International Music Festival. To lessen the impact of UNAMSIL's departure, the United Nations established the civilian United Nations Integrated Office for Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) which from January 2006 was tasked to 'cement UNAMSIL's gains ... help the Government strengthen human rights, realise the Millennium Development Goals, improve transparency and hold free and fair elections in 2007... [And] together with other United Nations missions... provide security for the SCSL'.⁸⁶ Ambitious, since UNIOSIL's initial mandate was just one year.

This section now moves on to the second component of military engagement with peace building, the (re)building the state security sector. Given the manner in which insecurity and an inadequate state security apparatus stalled peace building from 1996 to

⁸¹ UNAMSIL 'Fact Sheet 3: Human Rights and Rule of Law' accessed on 22/10/2008 via http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unamsil/factsheet3_HRRL.pdf

⁸² O. Gbla, 'Security Sector Reform Under International Tutelage In Sierra Leone' *International Peacekeeping* 13, 1 March 2006, p 89 and ICG 'Sierra Leone After Elections: Politics As Usual' Africa Report no 49 (Brussels: ICG, July 2002) p 19.

⁸³ T. Neethling, 'Pursuing Sustainable Peace Through Post Conflict Peacebuilding: The Case Of Sierra Leone' *African Security Review*, 16, 3 (2007) p 89.

⁸⁴ Human Rights Watch 'World Report 2003: Africa: Sierra Leone' p 3 accessed on 27/10/2008 via <http://www.hrw.org/wr2k3/africa10.html>. Not unique to UNAMSIL, a student in my class on gender based sexual violence gave an emotional account of her young sister being raped by ECOMOG troops. It happened on the veranda of the family home while relatives were forced to watch and other soldiers took photographs. There was no redress. Identity withheld, Kenema, 27/10/2005.

⁸⁵ Neethling, 'Pursuing Sustainable Peace Through Post Conflict Peacebuilding: The Case Of Sierra Leone' p 82.

⁸⁶ UNAMSIL 'UNAMSIL: A Success Story in Peacekeeping' accessed on 22/10/2008 via www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unamsil/Overview.pdf

2002, it was unsurprising that security sector reform (SSR) became a high priority for both the Government and its donors. Transforming the police (mentioned above) was one aspect of SSR, others 'included attempts at restructuring the armed forces... parliamentary oversight, justice sector reform and the implementation of intelligence and national policy coordination'.⁸⁷

Various UK Government departments were directly involved in all aspects of SSR. The UK Home Office supported UNAMSIL/Commonwealth police reforms by seconding a British officer as Inspector General of Police together with other personnel and by assigning funds. The Ministry of Defence fielded personnel to lead the International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT), which (re)trained⁸⁸ 'over 14,000 Sierra Leonean soldiers, some 3,000 of whom were former rebels of government militia members'.⁸⁹ Emphases were on the army's role in a democratic society (including human rights), professionalism and restoration of public confidence. Efforts also addressed soldiers' material and logistics needs including pay, accommodation and transport. DFID's wide range of activities under SSR were rooted in a broad view of what SSR entails,

The starting point for security sector reform may be to address problems outside the security sector, relating to... administrative capacity and political governance. For instance, public expenditure management reform provides an opportunity to subject military spending to fiscal discipline, and for strategic thinking about the military's appropriate share of the national budget.⁹⁰

DFID even linked the PRSP process to SSR by suggesting it as a forum for debating the relative priority of defence spending,

PRSPs allow for a wide-ranging public discussion of spending priorities. This offers an opportunity to bring the security sector into the debate, and for an assessment of how competing demands on public resources from the security, social and economic sectors should be reconciled.⁹¹

Thus, as part of its wide-ranging approach DFID funded the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), National Electoral Commission, human rights⁹² and civil society groups, the Sierra Leone Ministry of Defence (to develop a national defence policy and reform strategy), supported efforts to enhance parliamentary oversight of the security sector, trained Justices of the Peace and other court officials and renovated court buildings.

UNAMSIL officially handed over responsibility for national security in September 2004; at that time, the UK Government, cited by Gbla 'considered Sierra Leone its most successful conflict prevention programme to date'.⁹³ On the crude measure (also used by DFID

⁸⁷ Gbla, 'Security Sector Reform Under International Tutelage In Sierra Leone' p 82.

⁸⁸ Bergner provides detailed firsthand accounts of such training activities in Bergner, '*Soldiers of Light*'.

⁸⁹ Human Rights Watch '*World Report 2003: Africa: Sierra Leone*' p 5.

⁹⁰ DFID, '*Understanding and Supporting Security Sector Reform*' (UK: DFID, 2006) p 15.

⁹¹ Ibid p 12.

⁹² Human rights NGOs proliferated, 33 belonged to the National Forum for Human Rights 'however, most of these lacked funding, expertise and institutional support... these groups did little monitoring of human rights abuses. Most...focused on... education of the public, promoting reconciliation and preparing for the TRC'. Human Rights Watch '*World Report 2003: Africa: Sierra Leone*' p 3.

⁹³ Gbla, 'Security Sector Reform Under International Tutelage In Sierra Leone' p 85.

evaluators⁹⁴) that violence had not recurred in Sierra Leone, Gbla suggested that army and police reform was a success but might not be sustained after donor funding stopped⁹⁵ because the Government lacked resources. However, Gbla continued that parallel security mechanisms (parliamentary and civil society oversight and the judiciary) still lacked capacity.⁹⁶ In Chapter 4, desegregation of influences on effectiveness was discussed; the relative influences of SLA and police reform and the presence of UNAMSIL in preventing a resurgence of violence in Sierra Leone provide an example of the difficulty.

Sustainability was a concern, for different reasons, of the 2004 evaluation of the UK's SSR work in Sierra Leone,

Sustainability also implies local ownership/engagement and in this area the ACPP [Africa Conflict Prevention Pool]⁹⁷ does not seem to have fully delivered... the Strategy may not be fully engaging with the Sierra Leone Government and civil society. The Evaluation recommends ... a review of its programming in Sierra Leone from the point of view of sustainability and 'local ownership'.⁹⁸

Although the evaluators acknowledged this may have stemmed from 'the country's semi-paralysis after years of violence and mismanagement' they also commented that 'UK stakeholders have not been altogether effective, or have found it difficult, to encourage the transition to local ownership and sustainability... a fundamental problem... was a lack of confidence and trust between the two parties on occasions'.⁹⁹ Tense relationships between IMATT and SLA officers were particularly mentioned (Bergner also relates anecdotes of British soldiers voicing neo-colonial, almost racist attitudes to Sierra Leoneans).¹⁰⁰ According to the evaluators, this led to questions about the appropriateness of western-style military reform and of a western-style army.¹⁰¹ Further, there were tensions between the British and United Nations police training teams over which policing models to apply.¹⁰² This resonated with Baker's research that showed any western policing models in Africa were generally ineffective.¹⁰³ Appropriate or not, the 'almighty international community' (described by Dr Bright earlier) 'called the tune', it was paying (see Chapter 4).

⁹⁴ J. Ginifer, 'Evaluation Of The Conflict Prevention Pools Country/Regional Case Study 3 Sierra Leone' (UK: DFID, 2004) p 13, contradicting the preface (p iv) which said that it was 'far too early in the day to assess impact'.

⁹⁵ The UK committed £17 million to the Sierra Leone Police for 2005 – 2010 (having given over £20 million from 2000 to 2005). B. Baker, 'Where Do People Turn To For Policing In Sierra Leone' *Journal of African Contemporary Studies* 23, 3 (Sept 2005) p 376.

⁹⁶ Gbla, 'Security Sector Reform Under International Tutelage In Sierra Leone' p 91.

⁹⁷ The UK's joint Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Ministry of Defence and DFID funding and coordination mechanism for its violent conflict prevention and reduction programmes in sub-Saharan Africa.

⁹⁸ Ginifer, 'Evaluation Of The Conflict Prevention Pools Country/Regional Case Study 3 Sierra Leone' paras S7 and S15.

⁹⁹ Ibid para 25.

¹⁰⁰ For example, Bergner, 'Soldiers of Light' pp 144 – 145.

¹⁰¹ Ginifer, 'Evaluation Of The Conflict Prevention Pools Country/Regional Case Study 3 Sierra Leone' para 41.

¹⁰² Ibid p 20.

¹⁰³ Baker, 'Where Do People Turn To For Policing In Sierra Leone' p 371.

Political Track (2002 – 2006)

Next, the political track of peace building is considered; although, as DFID pointed out above, this track is inseparable from security, and indeed from social reconstruction. UNAMSIL'S role in the 2002 elections was mentioned above. 11 political parties contested; President Kabbah was re-elected with just over 70 per cent of the vote and Ernest Koroma (APC) came second with slightly over 22 per cent. The SLPP gained 83 parliamentary seats and the APC 27 seats. The RUF Party polled 1.7 per cent in the presidential elections and did not gain a single parliamentary seat,¹⁰⁴ indicating how unpopular power sharing under Lomé must have been. Turnout was 81 per cent. Local and international observers declared the process satisfactory.

President Kabbah gained over 99 per cent of the votes cast in Bonthe and Kailahun Districts (the predominately Mende South and East) and Ernest Koroma averaged 60 per cent of votes in the northern (predominately Temne) Districts of Bombali, Port Loko and Tonkolili.¹⁰⁵ These results suggested that, even if 'ethnic rivalry'¹⁰⁶ did not cause the war (see above); it existed in Sierra Leone to an extent.

To tackle the huge socioeconomic and psychological needs of the populace, the re-elected Government needed proficient means to plan and implement programmes such as resettlement, reintegration, humanitarian assistance and economic and human development. Thus, together with SSR, governance and state reform (backed materially and technically by donors) paralleled programme delivery.

To address governance and state reform, the Government set up a plethora of new Commissions in addition to those still existing under Lomé.¹⁰⁷ These included the Commission for War-Affected Children to help fulfil the Lomé requirement to tackle gender and children's issues, the Environment Commission to minimise damage to the environment of 'economic activity, especially that of large-scale and alluvial diamond mining'¹⁰⁸ and the Public Service Commission (supported by DFID) to reform the civil service. Tasks for the latter included making recruitment and promotions fair and transparent, weeding out costly 'ghost' employees and reviewing civil service pay and conditions in the hope that adequately paid personnel would be less corrupt. There was little progress on the latter, 'public sector reform, institutional reform, has been going on for decades; new salary structures, grading systems, personnel management, regulations, and recruitment procedures and yet civil servants are

¹⁰⁴ ICG 'Sierra Leone After Elections: Politics As Usual' p 1.

¹⁰⁵ A. John, 'From War To Peace: Elections, Civil Society and Governance in Post-Conflict Sierra Leone' *African Journal of International Affairs* 10, 1and2, 2007 p 46.

¹⁰⁶ Bangura, 'Understanding The Political And Cultural Dynamics Of The Sierra Leone War: A Critique Of Paul Richards's Fighting For The Rain Forest' p 121.

¹⁰⁷ The NEC, Human Rights Commission, Consolidation of Peace, Management of Strategic Resources Commission, National Reconstruction and Development Commission, National Commission for Social Action (which replaced Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation in 20010 and the TRC.

¹⁰⁸ John, 'From War To Peace: Elections, Civil Society and Governance in Post-Conflict Sierra Leone' p 53.

still on pathetic wages'.¹⁰⁹ Limitations on civil service reform generally, included, 'financial constraints on improving salaries and the political problems... [of] patronage'.¹¹⁰

Although many considered corruption the biggest challenge to proficient government¹¹¹ and President Kabbah alluded to it in his inaugural address (May 2002), corruption allegations dogged several Ministers (the Ministers of Agriculture, H. Will, Transport and Communication, M. Pujeh and Fisheries and Marine Resources, O. Adams).¹¹² Donor pressure improved accountability in some areas, for example the European Union worked with the Ministry of Finance on public financial management so funds were more difficult to divert. As mentioned above DFID funded the ACC (established by Parliamentary Act in 2000), and provided 'advisers' including a Deputy Commissioner. However, the ACC experienced political interference¹¹³ and was compromised by the weak justice system.

In 2005, the Government launched a National Anti-corruption Strategy, which included survey results about attitudes to corruption; these suggested that it was widespread and necessary to access certain services. 'The survey found that only five per cent of essential drugs supposedly transferred from the Central Medical Stores to field level could be accounted for at Primary Health Units. There was also evidence of considerable diversion of educational supplies'.¹¹⁴ The Strategy, with 232 actions points mostly for the Government,¹¹⁵ was ambitious for any government even with the will and resources, yet alone for one with barely two years left in power. However, 'in 2006 the World Bank felt able to report some progress in reducing the opportunities for corruption'¹¹⁶ and DFID reported a huge rise in the proportion of essential drugs accounted for at clinic level, from five per cent to 75 per cent.¹¹⁷

As far back as 1998, President Kabbah included decentralisation (through the restoration of Chieftaincies and District Councils) in his governance agenda. DFID embraced the former fearing 'a post-war governance vacuum in rural areas'¹¹⁸ and hence supported a controversial¹¹⁹ programme to return Paramount Chiefs to their Chieftaincies. In June 2002, there were elections in vacant chieftaincies but local government elections were not held until May 2004 (the first for 32 years). These established 12 District and five Town Councils. Broadly, Councils were responsible for services and the Chiefs (with other elders) for matters of customary law; from these they generated funds in the form of fines and taxes. However,

¹⁰⁹ Dumbuya's presentation to CEDSA 'Conceptual Framework For Durable Peace And Sustainable Development In Sierra Leone'.

¹¹⁰ B. Thomson, 'Sierra Leone: Reform Or Relapse? Conflict And Governance Reform' (UK: Chatham House, 2007) p 27.

¹¹¹ ICG 'Sierra Leone After Elections: Politics As Usual' p 15, J. Kandeh, 'Sierra Leone's Post-Conflict Elections Of 2002' *Journal of Modern African Studies* 41, 2, (2003) p 190 and John, 'From War To Peace: Elections, Civil Society and Governance in Post-Conflict Sierra Leone' p 50.

¹¹² John, 'From War To Peace: Elections, Civil Society and Governance in Post-Conflict Sierra Leone' p 50.

¹¹³ ICG 'Sierra Leone After Elections: Politics As Usual' pp 16 – 17.

¹¹⁴ Thomson, 'Sierra Leone: Reform Or Relapse? Conflict And Governance Reform' p 18.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid p 20.

¹¹⁷ Ibid p 20.

¹¹⁸ Fanthorpe 'Sierra Leone: The Politics Of Moral Economy' in S. Collinson (ed), *Power Livelihoods And Conflict: Case Studies In Political Economy Analysis For Humanitarian Actors* p 59.

¹¹⁹ The Chieftaincy system is respected for the stability it gives but people objected to abuse by individual Chiefs so were hoping for a more accountable system, not a return to the past (see General Background in this Chapter).

‘the lack of clarity on roles [for Councils and Chiefs], and on collection and spending of taxes and market dues... are a source of tension.’¹²⁰ The World Bank supported the new Councils with direct funding (bypassing the Government) to start small-scale services; disbursement of funds from central Government was slow.

As well as tackling governance from within, donors continued to support capacity building of external agents to call governments to account. For example, training Members of Parliament, supporting media development (DFID financed radio transmitters and trained journalists) and funding a range of civil society groups, notably the Campaign For Good Governance (CGG).

Maintaining a sound macro-economic framework was also in President Kabbah’s 1998 governance agenda. In 2005, the World Bank ‘found that Sierra Leone ranked very well on public financial management, relative to other low-income countries’.¹²¹ A Finance Ministry team of expatriate Sierra Leoneans (paid by the European Union and World Bank) and, for seven years until late 2002, an expatriate Accountant General, may have contributed to this. However, Public Service Tracking Surveys (funded by DFID and the World Bank) questioned the effectiveness of Government spending on public services.

Donor support for improved fiscal management was, to an extent, self-interest. In 2006, nearly half (43 per cent) of the national budget came from external donors or from funds freed up from debt relief, a total of US\$ 361.3 million. The four largest individual donors were DFID, the European Union, the World Bank and the African Development Bank; United Nations agencies (mostly funded by national governments) collectively were Sierra Leone’s third largest donor (US\$ 51.08 million, in 2006). Despite commitments under the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness to recipient ownership and respect for their priorities, external funding still came laden with conditions. In 2006/7, 183 benchmarks and targets were imposed on the Sierra Leone Government under the PRSP framework and bilateral funding agreements.

Donors and their implementing partners (usually NGOs) did not show the same accountability to the Government that they required of it. ‘Social and economic projects in the country are paid for by aid finance ... channelled through private, non-governmental or even official donor agencies operating quite independently from the government’.¹²² Indeed, the Sierra Leone Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (SLANGO) suggested that the Government could only estimate NGO contributions by ‘extracting the Sierra Leone component from the global’ figures in their annual reports or on their websites.¹²³ ‘There are so many policies in Sierra Leone, that are not envisioned locally, that are externally driven by donors and development partners’.¹²⁴ This contradicted Fanthorpe’s earlier finding

¹²⁰ UNDP, ‘Sierra Leone Human Development Report 2007’ p xvi.

¹²¹ Thomson, ‘Sierra Leone: Reform Or Relapse? Conflict And Governance Reform’ p 34.

¹²² EURODAD with Campaign for Good Governance, ‘Old Habits Die Hard: Aid And Accountability In Sierra Leone’ p 7.

¹²³ Interview with Aisha Josiah, National Coordinator the Sierra Leone Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (SLANGO) 30/06/2006, Freetown.

¹²⁴ EURODAD with Campaign for Good Governance, ‘Old Habits Die Hard: Aid And Accountability In Sierra Leone’ p 15.

that 'a striking feature of current aid agency interventions... is their intense and self-conscious effort to achieve efficiency, accountability and equity'.¹²⁵ However, Fanthorpe did not clarify to whom agencies were trying to be accountable.

To reduce its high level of external funding, the Government had to increase its own revenue. With a population of less than five million, the majority of whom were unemployed, the domestic market would never drive growth so exports were a major focus. Indeed, customs duties accounted for almost 50 per cent of Government income¹²⁶ (mainly from diamonds). UNAMSIL's contribution to diamond industry regulation was mentioned above. Although formal diamond exports increased after the war (US\$ 1.2 million in 1999, 42 million in 2002 and 142 million in 2005), the Peace Diamond Alliance suggested that total exports in 2005 were nearer US\$ 400 million and 90 per cent of mining was still unlicensed.¹²⁷ In the years 2001 - 2004, the Government's Mining Community Development Fund returned an estimated US\$ 840,000 of diamond export taxes to the diamond producing areas.

Improved security after 2002 meant other export industries gradually resumed, such as bauxite and rutile mining in the south and small-scale cocoa production and sawmills in the east. However, the degree to which these industries benefited poor Sierra Leoneans is questionable since they were in foreign hands and regulation was weak; 'transparency is critical... everyone needs to know what the laws are... and be reassured that they are being respected'.¹²⁸

Generally, private sector investment with the potential to create employment, faced 'fundamental constraints' such as 'the very poor state of infrastructure (notably roads and power)'¹²⁹ and poor quality telecommunications. However, in 2006, the Government reported that 70 per cent of rural feeder roads and 'about' 320 bridges were rehabilitated with European Union and World Bank support and 'several highway projects are ongoing'.¹³⁰ Donors' priorities were possibly a factor that slowed infrastructure renewal, 'what does Freetown need most? Power. Who is offering any help with this? Instead, we hear about "civil society capacity building" that means endless workshops instead of money being spent on material help'.¹³¹

¹²⁵ Fanthorpe 'Sierra Leone: The Politics Of Moral Economy' in S. Collinson (ed), *Power Livelihoods And Conflict: Case Studies In Political Economy Analysis For Humanitarian Actors* p 60.

¹²⁶ P. English et al, 'Sierra Leone Adding Value Through Trade For Poverty Reduction A Diagnostic Trade Integration Study' p v accessed on 07/05/2008 via http://www.integratedframework.org/files/english/Sierra_Leone_DTIS.pdf

¹²⁷ Thomson, 'Sierra Leone: Reform Or Relapse? Conflict And Governance Reform' p 15.

¹²⁸ English et al, 'Sierra Leone Adding Value Through Trade For Poverty Reduction A Diagnostic Trade Integration Study' p ix.

¹²⁹ Ibid p 4.

¹³⁰ Government of Sierra Leone, 'Progress Report On The Implementation Of The Programme Of Action For The Least Developed Countries For The Decade 2001 - 2010' p 7.

¹³¹ Dumbuya's presentation to CEDSA 'Conceptual Framework For Durable Peace And Sustainable Development In Sierra Leone'. Late-in-the-day (January 2008) DFID recognised that 'energy is vital for doing business and for growth' and 'announced a five year £20 million energy programme, £5 million of which has helped fund the completion of the Bumbuna hydroelectric scheme that will provide electricity to Freetown'. DFID 'Sierra Leone Fact Sheet' June 2008 p 2 accessed 18/06/2008 via <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/sierra-leone-factsheet.pdf>

Social Reconstruction (2002 – 2006)

The final peace building track of this period to be considered, social reconstruction, was inextricably linked to the first two tracks, military (security) and political (governance). They formed a cycle; military and political peace building provided the operating context for social reconstruction but social reconstruction potentially strengthened security and good governance. 'Promoting mass welfare and curbing official corruption are... critical to the consolidation of peace and democracy'.¹³² Social reconstruction had two components, physical and psychosocial.

Immediately security improved, the first step towards social reconstruction was physical, returning 10,000s of displaced (internally and externally)¹³³ Sierra Leoneans to their home areas. The office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees led this operation, in collaboration with Government agencies,¹³⁴ UNAMSIL, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and up to 80 international and 220 local NGOs.¹³⁵ Return and resettlement was supported with humanitarian relief such as food, shelter materials, blankets, cooking utensils and other non-food items and basic health and education services.

Rehabilitation rose in importance during 2003,¹³⁶ this resulted in the rebuilding of an estimated 20,000 homes,¹³⁷ over 150 schools and more than 75 health centres.¹³⁸ Although 'support for family shelter from the NGO community or from the Government through NaCSA [the National Commission for Social Action]' catered for less than 20 per cent of returnees.¹³⁹ The figure for health centres did not correlate with President Kabbah's farewell statement to Parliament, 'working with international development partners and local agencies... the government rehabilitated existing buildings and constructed new health facilities to ensure that every chiefdom [of which there are 149] has at least one health centre'.¹⁴⁰ Political rhetoric aside, this highlighted the problem of collecting data from so many actors in different sectors (working more or less closely with the Government, see above). As Fanthorpe pointed out,

Delivery is organised through a labyrinthine network of Sierra Leone government ministries, commissions and committees, multilateral and bilateral funding, coordination and monitoring agencies, international NGOs, local NGOs, community-based organisations (CBOs) and private businesses. A large project may tap into several funding streams and bring together many NGOs and private businesses as implementing partners. Some of these agencies may sub-contract to an even wider range of NGOs, CBOs and local contractors.¹⁴¹

¹³² Kandeh, 'Sierra Leone's Post-Conflict Elections Of 2002' p 190.

¹³³ Accessed on 27/02/2008 via <http://www.crimesofwar.org/onnews/news-sierra3.html>

¹³⁴ The National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation, (later replaced by the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA)).

¹³⁵ Interview with Aisha Josiah, National Coordinator the Sierra Leone Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (SLANGO) 30/06/2006, Freetown.

¹³⁶ Baker and May, 'Reconstructing Sierra Leone' p 37.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ EURODAC with Campaign for Good Governance, 'Old Habits Die Hard: Aid And Accountability In Sierra Leone' p 11.

¹³⁹ UNDP, 'Sierra Leone Human Development Report 2007' p 35.

¹⁴⁰ Address by His Excellency The President, Alhaji Dr Ahmad Tejan Kabbah On The Occasion Of The Special Session Of The Second Parliament Of The Second Republic Of Sierra Leone 19/06/2007.

¹⁴¹ Fanthorpe 'Sierra Leone: The Politics Of Moral Economy' in S. Collinson (ed), *Power Livelihoods And Conflict: Case Studies In Political Economy Analysis For Humanitarian Actors* p 55.

The Development Assistance Coordination Office (within the Vice President's Office) was responsible for aid coordination and the NGO Unit within the Ministry of Development and Economic Planning was supposed to 'monitor, supervise, coordinate, and evaluate NGO activities'¹⁴² but resources were scarce. In 2005, when the Cabinet directed this Ministry to conduct an impact assessment of NGOs, it failed to secure funding (from international NGOs) or tenders from organisations/firms to do the work (possibly symptomatic that NGOs were not open to Government scrutiny). To grasp the coordination challenge, it must be noted that not all NGOs were even engaged in peace building, in any immediate sense. For example, at least three were working with chimpanzees (including Humane Society International funded by the United States Agency for International Development). The UK's Royal Society for the Protection of Birds was 'entering a new partnership with the government of Sierra Leone... to establish the Gola forest as a National Park'¹⁴³ and the Environmental Forum for Action Sierra Leone was campaigning on climate change. Others appeared socially destructive rather than reconstructive, such as All As One, which helped 'families who wish to adopt orphaned children from African Countries... healthy children as well as children with medical disabilities; children from infancy [infancy?] to the age of 16, family groups of two or more children.'¹⁴⁴ In the context of social destruction, it should be noted that in the early days of peace building 'agency workers from international and local NGOs ... were reportedly the most frequent sex exploiters of children, often using the very humanitarian aid and services intended to benefit the refugee population as a tool of exploitation'.¹⁴⁵

A move from post conflict emergency 'to a poverty reduction based development framework'¹⁴⁶ began with implementation of the Sierra Leone PRSP in early 2005. A variety of actors ranging from multimillion-dollar budget holders such as GTZ to community based organisations (CBOs) and village-based drama groups engaged in 'a wide range of political, developmental, humanitarian and human rights programmes'. Their aims were mostly in line with the United Nations (although not always with the same precedence) explicitly, 'sustainable development, the eradication of poverty and inequalities, transparent and accountable governance, the promotion of democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence' (Chapter 3a). PLAN International and World Vision had such large-scale operations that it was alleged the Government viewed them as competitors;¹⁴⁷ by contrast, some actors had programmes of very limited scope, for example the Canadian-based Right To Play that focused on training football coaches countrywide.

¹⁴² www.daco-sl.org.

¹⁴³ <http://www.rspb.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/projects/sierraleone/gola.asp>

¹⁴⁴ SLANGO 'Update To NGO Encyclopaedia' (Freetown: SLANGO, May 2006) no page numbers.

¹⁴⁵ UNHCR and Save the Children-UK, 'Sexual Violence and Exploitation: The Experience of Refugee Children In Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone' (UK: UNHCR/SCF February 2002) p 4.

¹⁴⁶ Government of Sierra Leone, 'Progress Report On The Implementation Of The Programme Of Action For The Least Developed Countries For The Decade 2001 – 2010' p 1.

¹⁴⁷ The SLANGO National Coordinator reported that the Government thought that PLAN International was actively trying to outdo them over the number of schools that each was (re)constructing and that World Vision was a rival. Interview with Aisha Josiah, 30/06/2006, Freetown.

Knowing whether citizens' physical well-being (the foundation of social reconstruction) was improved (or not) by the sum of these activities depended on which reports were read. The Government's January 2006 assessment was mixed. 'The water and sanitation situation remains unsatisfactory... [With] 45 per cent national coverage for water',¹⁴⁸ huge variations between localities and only 15 per cent of the population with access to sanitation. UNICEF's data (cited by DFID) collaborated this.¹⁴⁹ Despite the lack of water and sanitation, basic health was said to have improved 'according to data from the Ministry of Health and Sanitation, Under-Five Mortality Rates have reduced from a high of 284/1000 live births in 1999 to a current level of 265... About 40 per cent of under-five children are malnourished'.¹⁵⁰ UNICEF and WHO did not substantiate the claim of improved child health, UNICEF: UFRM 286 (2005), WHO: UFRM 283 (2006). In fact, child health appeared worse than nearly two decades earlier, UFRM in 1989 was 261.¹⁵¹

If accurate, the figure for malnourished children was shocking¹⁵² but the Government appeared upbeat about food security,¹⁵³

Considerable improvement has been made in the agricultural sector... This is expected to help [in] not only in achieving Government's goal of food security but also [in] encouraging crop diversification for both domestic consumption and export. Agricultural Business Units (ABUs) have been established within the rural areas. The ABUs comprise more than 130,000 farmers.¹⁵⁴

However, only a year before the Government was more negative,

Food insecurity remains worrying, with limited access to food, poor quality food intake, and low production. Although food production has been increasing, major constraints remain. Production technology is subsistence-level; poor rural infrastructure hinders access to markets... Malnutrition in young children is high: more than 40 per cent of children under age five are too short for their age.¹⁵⁵

Government deemed education a success,

The education budget has increased by 500 per cent between 1999 and 2005. Primary school enrolment rate has increased substantially from just over half a million in 2002/2001 to over one million in 2005/2006 school year. This has put the country on track in achieving the MDG [Millennium Development Goal] of universal primary education.¹⁵⁶

¹⁴⁸ Government of Sierra Leone, *'Progress Report On The Implementation Of The Programme Of Action For The Least Developed Countries For The Decade 2001 – 2010'* p 6.

¹⁴⁹ DFID *'Sierra Leone Fact Sheet'* June 2008 p 1.

¹⁵⁰ Government of Sierra Leone, *'Progress Report On The Implementation Of The Programme Of Action For The Least Developed Countries For The Decade 2001 – 2010'* p 5.

¹⁵¹ UNDP, *'Human Development Report 1991'* p 119 – 192.

¹⁵² For comparison note that overall under fives malnutrition rate in the acute emergency of Darfur averaged 16.1 per cent (although individual locations reached 27 per cent). Personal experience, Darfur, Spring 2007.

¹⁵³ Food security is not the only factor contributing to malnutrition but it is significant. Other factors include disease, water and sanitation, immunisation, maternal education and cultural beliefs and practices.

¹⁵⁴ Government of Sierra Leone, *'Progress Report On The Implementation Of The Programme Of Action For The Least Developed Countries For The Decade 2001 – 2010'* p 8.

¹⁵⁵ Government of Sierra Leone, *'Millennium Development Goals: Report For Sierra Leone 2005'* p vii accessed on 12/09/2008 via http://www.undg.org/archive_docs/6530-Sierra_Leone_MDG_Report.pdf.

¹⁵⁶ Government of Sierra Leone, *'Progress Report On The Implementation Of The Programme Of Action For The Least Developed Countries For The Decade 2001 – 2010'* p 5.

Agencies and Government presented the outcomes of their programmes with statistics and reports although the Government admitted that 'the statistical capacities of line ministries... need to be strengthened... Databases are weak or non-existent'.¹⁵⁷ In addition, the cultural norm of telling people what (you think) they want to hear (Chapter 2a) could permeate ministries; would reports of progress, or of a dire situation, be more likely to maintain aid flows? Even 'experts' were muddled, UNDP was an example. In the Sierra Leone Human Development Report 2007, life expectancy was given as 48.4 years in 2005 with a footnote pointing out 'the 2006 Global Human Development Report gives a life expectancy figure of 41 years'¹⁵⁸ (and no explanation of the discrepancy). 48.4 years would be a dramatic rise from 41 years in 2004 on the report's previous page.

Bald figures gave little information about the process of aid delivery, quality or the realities of everyday life. For example, school enrolment data did not indicate how many children were actually going to school (since many drop out after enrolment) or how many teachers were actually teaching. UNICEF (cited DFID) reported that 69 per cent of eligible children were in primary education (2005) which made universal primary education by 2015 appear a greater challenge than the Government suggested.¹⁵⁹ Further, 'gender equity in education remains a serious problem... girls are only 42 per cent of primary pupils. But the gap is progressively higher in later stages: only 19 per cent of university students are female'.¹⁶⁰ (Another report stated that 33 per cent of 'tertiary' students were female).¹⁶¹ Whether the country has 75 or 149 clinics is immaterial to people's lives if those clinics are inaccessible, too expensive, have no drugs and are 'run by inadequate, poorly motivated and poorly trained personnel',¹⁶² not to mention their rudeness and demands for 'gifts'. Such stress on statistics risks undermining the idea of human security (Chapter 4) which should focus on the reality of individuals' lives, their needs, fears and dignity not only numbers.

As mentioned earlier, physical well being (improving or not) was only the foundation of social reconstruction; the psychosocial component, specifically societal relationships, is considered next. To support the reconstruction of relationships, Sierra Leone (uniquely in Africa) adopted a two-pronged approach to transitional justice; namely the TRC and SCSL. Article XXVI of the Lomé Agreement provided for the establishment of the TRC,

To address impunity, break the cycle of violence, provide a forum for both the victims and perpetrators of human rights violations to tell their story, get a clear picture of the past in order to facilitate genuine healing and reconciliation...This Commission shall, among other things, recommend measures to be taken for the rehabilitation of victims of human rights violations.¹⁶³

It had no powers to grant amnesty, prosecute or punish.

Although established by Act of the Sierra Leonean Parliament in February 2000, the TRC was not inaugurated until July 2002. The Rt Revd Dr Joseph Humper, Bishop of the United

¹⁵⁷ Government of Sierra Leone, *'Millennium Development Goals: Report For Sierra Leone 2005'* p x.

¹⁵⁸ UNDP, *'Sierra Leone Human Development Report 2007'* p 7.

¹⁵⁹ DFID *'Sierra Leone Fact Sheet'* June 2008 pp 2 – 3.

¹⁶⁰ Government of Sierra Leone, *'Millennium Development Goals: Report For Sierra Leone 2005'* p viii.

¹⁶¹ UNDP, *'Sierra Leone Human Development Report 2007'* p xiv.

¹⁶² Ibid p 35.

¹⁶³ Accessed on 12/09/2008 via <http://www.sierra-leone.org/lomeaccord.html>

Methodist Church of Sierra Leone, chaired seven Commissioners, four Sierra Leonean and three international. Initial progress was slow; statement takers (who collected testimony from approximately 9000 volunteers, regardless of their role in the war) were not deployed until December 2002 and public and confidential hearings did not begin until April 2003. Sensitising the public about the TRC through information workshops, radio and drama depended heavily on NGOs and community groups.

The slow start stemmed from management and staffing difficulties (including allegations of political manipulation of recruitment), shortage of funds and an uneasy relationship with the SCSL. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) provided technical assistance and raised funds for the TRC. However, relationships with national personnel were tense and it struggled to secure sufficient funds (less than half the funds originally pledged were forthcoming, around US\$ five million). Only two of the seven Commissioners had previous experience of truth commissions but OHCHR did not provide additional educational opportunities for them.¹⁶⁴ Bishop Humper was a staunch SLPP supporter, which fuelled a widespread belief that the Government blocked the appointment of Bishop Biguzzi as TRC chairperson in Bishop Humper's favour. There were concerns that the TRC would share information with the SCSL; ex-combatants particularly were afraid that any testimony they gave to the TRC could lead to indictment by the SCSL, although the SCSL had its own methods for collecting evidence and, anyway, information assembled by the TRC was unlikely to be admissible in court. Public education on this and other aspects of the TRC's work 'was widely viewed as deficient'.¹⁶⁵ Other deficiencies included the fact that 'many Sierra Leoneans were unable to tell their stories to the TRC' because 'not enough statement-takers were employed and public hearings took place at District Headquarters level'¹⁶⁶ (up to 450 people testified at public hearings, one third were 'perpetrators'). In addition, counselling services were inadequate, '90 per cent of those who testified... wanted a second or third opportunity to see a councillor'.¹⁶⁷

President Kabbah (who testified to the final closing hearing in August 2003 and declined to apologise for any State abuses during the war¹⁶⁸) received the TRC Report in October 2004. However, copies for nationwide distribution did not arrive (from printing in Ghana) until August 2005 by which time the Government had already published a White paper regarding the Report. Parliament first debated it in November 2005.

The TRC never claimed that the Report was 'the complete or exhaustive historical record of the conflict' but rather 'an essential story of the armed conflict... At times, this story accords with popular views of the conflict. At other times... [It] departs from popular history

¹⁶⁴ ICG, *'Sierra Leone's Truth And Reconciliation Commission: A Fresh Start'* (Brussels: ICG, December 2002) p 7.

¹⁶⁵ The Sierra Leone Working Group on the TRC, *'Searching For Truth And Reconciliation in Sierra Leone'* (Freetown: February 2006) p 7.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid p 8.

¹⁶⁸ International Centre For Transitional Justice, *'The Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Reviewing The First Year'* (New York: ICTJ, January 2004) p 5 accessed on 5/11/2005 via www.ictj.org/images/content/1/0/100.pdf

and debunks certain myths and untruths about the conflict.’¹⁶⁹ ‘Popular history’, and indeed one person’s ‘myths’ or ‘untruths’ could be another person’s reality or ‘truth’ thus TRCs generally risk becoming ‘arenas for contested truths rather than sites of redemption’.¹⁷⁰

The TRC’s recommendations were concerned with,

The Protection of Human Rights, Establishing the Rule of Law, the Security Services, Promoting Good Governance, Fighting Corruption, Youth, Women, Children, External Actors, Mineral Resources, The Commission and the Special Court, Reparations, Reconciliation, National Vision for Sierra Leone, Archiving, Dissemination of The Commission’s Report, and the Follow-Up Committee.¹⁷¹
(*Capitalisation as in the SCSL document*)

Of particular interest to war victims was the provision for reparations; the Report suggested NaCSA be responsible for administering the Special Fund for War Victims (Article XXIX of the Lomé Agreement reiterated by the TRC) although NaCSA’s record was poor (the Amputees Association claimed that it only received a tenth of funds channelled through NaCSA).¹⁷² The Human Rights Commission established by Act in 2004 (Commissioners were appointed in December 2006) subsumed the functions of the Follow-up Committee proposed in the TRC Report. By the end of 2006, implementation of the TRC recommendations had not begun (the Government was under no legal obligation to do so). Despite this, some believe that the process was still worthwhile, ‘it ensured that problems were not buried’¹⁷³ and formally put reconciliation on the national agenda. Although this background Chapter mostly informs the externally driven peace building activities of this study’s hypothesis, the TRC offered a rare glimpse of local culture and priorities.

Strong views were also expressed about the failure to use traditional reconciliation mechanisms appropriately ... such mechanisms were allegedly customised to fit the time available... western models of reconciliation... such as handshakes or hugs... had little relevance to the Sierra Leonean context.¹⁷⁴

Indeed Shaw suggested that truth telling itself ‘was at odds with widespread local techniques of healing and reintegration, which are based on social forgetting’,¹⁷⁵ a ‘forgive and forget’ approach.¹⁷⁶ Moreover, according to Shaw, these local techniques had developed over four centuries of violent migrations, slave trade, commercial trade and colonialism, ‘people had a long historical experience of reintegrating combatants, reworking relationships, and rebuilding moral communities.’¹⁷⁷ Social forgetting, usually initiated by a reintegration ritual where negative identities (perpetrator, combatant) were expunged, was a community pact to live within a network of reformed relationships based on identities that were more positive.

¹⁶⁹ SCSL, ‘Overview Of The Sierra Leone Truth And Reconciliation Report’ (Freetown: SCSL, October 2004) p 3 accessed on 05/11/2005 via <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/EVIU-65WK45?OpenDocument>

¹⁷⁰ R. Shaw, ‘Rethinking Truth And Reconciliation Commissions Lessons From Sierra Leone’ (Washington DC: USIP, February 2005) p 3 accessed on 05/11/2005 via <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr130.pdf>

¹⁷¹ SCSL, ‘Overview Of The Sierra Leone Truth And Reconciliation Report’ p 12.

¹⁷² The Sierra Leone Working Group on the TRC, ‘Searching For Truth And Reconciliation in Sierra Leone’ p 12.

¹⁷³ Ibid p 13.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid p 8.

¹⁷⁵ R. Shaw, ‘Rethinking Truth And Reconciliation Commissions Lessons From Sierra Leone’ p 3.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid p 4.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid p 9.

Past identities, and the deeds associated with them, were never again mentioned in public.¹⁷⁸

Kelsall proposed that truth itself was less relevant to reconciliation in Sierra Leone than ritual. His basis was the public TRC hearing at Magburaka, Tonkolili District where he heard little 'beyond detached, factual statements on the part of victims and half-truths, evasions, and outright lies on the part of perpetrators'.¹⁷⁹ However, on the final day a reconciliation ceremony during which perpetrators publicly apologised, prostrated themselves before community and religious leaders and were embraced by their victims had impact on all concerned,

There were smiles on faces and a palpable feeling of release... I glanced back into the hall. Tactical [who was accused of shooting and burning a testifier's son] was stacking and tidying away chairs like a diligent schoolboy, relief written all over his face.¹⁸⁰

Kelsall suggested that the days of dry testimony were not concerned with truth but were ritual aimed at pressuring perpetrators to show remorse during the final ceremony. Commissioners constantly reminded perpetrators of the forthcoming ceremony and that they were expected to show genuine remorse.¹⁸¹ A reduced role for truth in reconciliation in Sierra Leone resonated with the idea that the significance/weight given to each element of reconciliation varies with context (Chapter 3a).

After Foday Sankoh and the RUF were expelled from Government in May 2000, President Kabbah wrote to the United Nations Secretary General requesting help to establish a court to try those who 'bare the greatest responsibility' for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the civil war (after 30th November 1996). Security Council Resolution 1315 established the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL). After lengthy negotiations, the Government and United Nations signed an agreement establishing the legal framework for the Freetown based Court (16 January 2002). Under the agreement, the SCSL used international law and both international and Sierra Leonean judges, prosecutors and staff. The United Nations Secretary General appointed five judges and the Government of Sierra Leone, three. The Chief Prosecutor, David Crane, was an American citizen; ironic that 'while the United States is fighting a rearguard action to limit the jurisdiction of the ICC over American citizens'¹⁸² it provided staff and the bulk of the funds for a war crimes court in Sierra Leone. The SCSL could not impose the death penalty or demand the surrender of indictees from other States. The first indictments were issued in March 2003 and trials began in 2004.

Indictees included Foday Sankoh, Charles Taylor, the notorious RUF field commander Sam "Mosquito" Bockarie, Johnny Paul Koroma (leader of the AFRC) and Samuel Hinga Norman (Minister of Interior and former head of the CDF/Kamajors). Sam Bockarie was killed in Liberia shortly after indictment and Foday Sankoh and Sam Hinga Norman both died in

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ T. Kelsall, 'Truth, Lies and Ritual: Preliminary Reflections on The TRC in Sierra Leone' *Human Rights Quarterly* 27 (2005) p 380.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid p 386.

¹⁸² P. Penfold, 'Will Justice Help Peace In Sierra Leone' *The Guardian*, 20/10/2002.

custody.¹⁸³ Charles Taylor was arrested in Nigeria, transferred to the Court and made an initial appearance on 3 April 2006 (in premises of the ICC at The Hague because a Freetown trial aroused security concerns). Sam Hinga Norman's indictment was the most controversial; fear of a Kamajor reaction led to special security measures, the location of his detention was secret and his initial court appearance was in camera.¹⁸⁴ Many, including the former British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, Peter Penfold, saw him as a war hero not a war criminal, 'Sam Hinga Norman is regarded as one of the heroes of the war and played a key role in helping the peace... It's tragic that this person who has done so much for his country and his people spent his final four years in prison'.¹⁸⁵

Three AFRC indictees were convicted, lost their appeals and were sentenced to 45-50 years imprisonment (in European jails) and two CDF indictees were initially sentenced to between six and eight years imprisonment but on appeal, their acquittal on some charges was overturned and their sentences increased to 15-20 years. The prosecution case against three RUF indictees concluded in August 2006.¹⁸⁶

The issue of ownership was mentioned in the context of the TRC, whose truth, whose myths? The same issue applied to justice in the setting of the SCSL, who defined those that bore the 'greatest responsibility'. 'The Prosecutor has chosen to interpret it to mean the masterminds of the war, or those who *ultimately* bear the greatest responsibility'¹⁸⁷ but many framed responsibility in terms of implementation not planning, the likes of 'C. O. Cut Hands'¹⁸⁸ and 'Captain Blood'¹⁸⁹ were just as responsible. Of course, victims could not 'expect that every individual they perceive to be responsible will face the Special Court'¹⁹⁰ but the numbers prosecuted were small and indicting equal numbers from each faction when the RUF was believed to have committed the worst atrocities did not seem 'just'. In addition, the decision to limit prosecutions to crimes committed after 1996 reinforced Freetown rural injustices; the war experiences of the rural areas (from 1991) seemed less significant than those of Freetown, where the war arrived in 1997 (after the AFRC coup).

More broadly, indicting Taylor and removing him to The Hague denied Liberians their own opportunity for justice. Further, it appeared unjust (inequitable) to spend millions of dollars on the SCSL¹⁹¹ when Sierra Leone's parlous national justice system denied day-to-day redress to citizens,

¹⁸³ Foday Sankoh on 29th July 2003 and Sam Hinga Norman on 22nd February 2007.

¹⁸⁴ ICG 'The Special Court For Sierra Leone: Promises And pitfalls Of A New Model' (Brussels: ICG, August 2003) p 6.

¹⁸⁵ Peter Penfold speaking to Reuters, accessed on 11/11/2008 via www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSL08706709

¹⁸⁶ Proceedings ended in June 2008 and judgements are due in November 2008. Accessed on 11/11/2008 via www.sc-sl.org/index.html

¹⁸⁷ ICG 'The Special Court For Sierra Leone: Promises And pitfalls Of A New Model' p 10.

¹⁸⁸ Bergner, 'Soldiers of Light' p 16.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid p 30.

¹⁹⁰ ICG 'The Special Court For Sierra Leone: Promises And pitfalls Of A New Model' p 10.

¹⁹¹ SCSL's annual budget 2002-2005 was US \$ 25 million.

The paucity of court personnel, court records and legal reference materials, plus the inadequacy of the evidence provided by the SLP [Sierra Leone Police] contribute to the serious problems of lengthy delays of cases and imprisonment of suspects without formal charge... few can afford lawyers. Many defendants go entirely without representation and... are seriously disadvantaged... People claim to have lost confidence in the magistrate's court due to its corrupt ways of administering justice.¹⁹²

No one can deliver a verdict on the SCSL while it is still sitting but opinions to date have been mixed, 'whether most Sierra Leoneans perceive the Special Court as mainly international or domestic is still open to debate'.¹⁹³ 'The Special Court does not seem to have succeeded in increasing people's confidence in the justice system, despite the fact that it moved speedily... there is hostility to it in parts of Sierra Leone.'¹⁹⁴

In summary, there was significant effort put into the social reconstruction track of peace building between 2002 and 2006. Even if data was imprecise (see above); 10,000s refugees and displaced people clearly returned home, houses, schools, clinics and roads were (re)constructed, very basic services, subsistence farming and other livelihoods resumed and transitional justice got underway. Results were hard to discern; definitely more children were going to school than in past decades but Sierra Leone continued around the bottom of the Human Development Index, life expectancy was less than 50 years and more women died in pregnancy and childbirth than in any other country of the world.¹⁹⁵ Implementation of the TRC's recommendations, particularly those related to reparations, was still far off and the SCSL had not concluded its work.

However, as noted at the beginning of this section, social reconstruction was inextricably linked to the other peace building tracks (military and political). The issue of drugs reaching clinics provided an example; DFID associated governance, corruption, poverty and development (Chapter 4) but in this case tackling corruption potentially improved health. Thus, peace building between 2002 and 2006 was best viewed as a whole, supporting those writers who described peace building as 'comprehensive' and 'encompassing' (Chapter 3a). In a speech on 12 October 2006, Sierra Leone's then Vice-President, Solomon Berewa listed a number of achievements,

The authority of the state had been restored throughout the country, combatants had been disarmed, one million displaced persons had been resettled, public and social institutions had been re-established, government infrastructure had been rehabilitated and rebuilt, basic services had been provided and businesses had been encouraged to return. Also... [the economic] growth rate was over seven per cent.¹⁹⁶

Even so, Berewa said that peace and stability, threatened by poverty, illiteracy and particularly youth unemployment, 'could still unravel'. Berewa warned that 'unless the

¹⁹² Baker, 'Where Do People Turn To For Policing In Sierra Leone' p 375.

¹⁹³ International Centre For Transitional Justice, *'The Special Court For Sierra Leone: The First Eighteen Months'* (New York: ICTJ, March 2004) p 9.

¹⁹⁴ Ginifer, *'Evaluation Of The Conflict Prevention Pools Country/Regional Case Study 3 Sierra Leone'* para 31.

¹⁹⁵ UNDP, *'Human Development Report 2006'* and AbouZahr and Wardlaw *'Maternal Mortality Estimates in 2000: Estimates Developed by WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA'*.

¹⁹⁶ Neethling, *'Pursuing Sustainable Peace Through Post Conflict Peacebuilding: The Case Of Sierra Leone'* p 91.

growing number of young people could be given hope, they would either become fodder for ruthless politicians, or resort to crime and other anti-social activities'¹⁹⁷ worrying given that 60 per cent of the population was below 35 years and mostly unemployed. The Ministry of Youth and Sports itself painted an even more alarming picture,

The single most important threat to security in post-war Sierra Leone is youth unemployment. Due to rebel war, frustrated youths are prone to violence more than ever. Example: Schools sports competitions involving violent clashes, death and destruction of public and private property.... some unemployed youths mounting roadblocks and burning tyres. City life? A nightmare of idleness, misery and hopelessness and unfulfilled dreams. ¹⁹⁸

Others, ¹⁹⁹ including the TRC, agreed that,

The condition of the youth in Sierra Leone continues to be problematic. A significant number of young people have expressed frustration and concern that the circumstances that resulted in the war have not been meaningfully addressed. A failure to address these shortcomings will have serious repercussions for Sierra Leone.²⁰⁰

The unemployability of some youth was related to failings in DDR, discussed earlier. However, for many youth 'the circumstances that resulted in the war' were not just related to jobs but included being disregarded and disparaged by the elite,²⁰¹ exploited in the diamond mines and used as forced labour by the Chiefs. Labelling youth as latent criminals or Party thugs was an example of the former; 'so often demonised as bearing a large part of the blame for Sierra Leone's woes, and feared as "the idle unemployed", they [young people] in practice, are committed to playing a role in security and development'.²⁰² Possibly, scaremongering about the youth was a political ploy to deflect attention from other causes of the war, which were also unresolved, 'the war can only really be over when we begin to address some of the root causes. These causes include corruption and mismanagement of the economy, neglect of rural areas and lack of opportunities for young people.'²⁰³ Essentially, the whole Sierra Leone peace building experience supported Wallensteen's contention that institution building should come before elections (Chapter 3a).

Realistically, peace building in Sierra Leone will not achieve concrete results for many years since, generally, it 'is likely to be a concerted process for ten or fifteen years' (Chapter 3a) or in Sierra Leone's specific case, 'reconstruction will take a minimum of ten years and

¹⁹⁷ United Nations, 'Great Strides Made in Sierra Leone's Emergence From Conflict' United Nations General Assembly PBC/6 accessed on 25/10/2008 via <http://www.un.org/news/press/docs/2006/pbc6.doc.htm>

¹⁹⁸ Ministry of Youth and Sport PowerPoint presentation to the Development Partnership Committee, Freetown 13/01/2005.

¹⁹⁹ Neethling, 'Pursuing Sustainable Peace Through Post Conflict Peacebuilding: The Case Of Sierra Leone' p 93, Ginifer, 'Evaluation Of The Conflict Prevention Pools Country/Regional Case Study 3 Sierra Leone' para 87.

²⁰⁰ Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Sierra Leone, 'Witness to The Truth' Vol 2, Chapter 2 p 95.

²⁰¹ For a description of the 'big man' phenomenon see M. Jackson, 'In Sierra Leone' (USA: Duke University Press, 2004) p 41- 48.

²⁰² Baker, 'Where Do People Turn To For Policing In Sierra Leone' p 385.

²⁰³ Abu Brima of Network Movement for Justice and Development cited in Baker and May, 'Reconstructing Sierra Leone' p 38.

could require as many as fifty'.²⁰⁴ Whether the people's patience lasts that long is the critical question.

Turning from results to process, issues that emerged between 1996 – 2002 persisted after the 'official' peace was declared. The 'overwhelming power of the international community' identified by Dr Bright was still manifested in both peace building priorities and implementation. For example, international actors clearly pushed the governance and anti-corruption agenda; the International Crisis Group (ICG) gave a glimpse of astonishing neo-colonial views in this context,

The international community possesses a number of carrots (aid, training programs, infrastructure investment) and sticks (withdrawal of aid) to use in encouraging the government to reform. There will be "hard days and tough fights" ahead between the international community, in particular the British, and the government of Sierra Leone in completing various aspects of the peace process. London should continue to take a tough approach to governmental reform.²⁰⁵

Apparently, forgetting that the Sierra Leonean Government was in Freetown (not London) and had an overwhelming mandate from its own citizens.

Three more examples of the paramount international agenda follow. First, the World Bank's decision to fund District Councils directly bypassing central Government, this was potentially destabilising and contradicted the idea of state building by giving precedence to local government. The argument that it was done for speed was weak given that there had been no District Councils for over 30 years. Second, 'the reality is that both these institutions [the TRC and SCSL] have more to do with meeting the donor agenda than the calls of the general public'.²⁰⁶ This may be partly why the TRC did not employ traditional reconciliation mechanisms appropriately. Maybe the whole TRC approach (largely based on the South African model) was inappropriate given Shaw's view that Sierra Leoneans were not used to truth telling and Kelsall's contention that truth (in the sense of corroborated fact) is not vital to reconciliation in Sierra Leone. Third, NGOs frequently ignored the Government ('so many policies... are externally driven by donors and development partners') which reduced the Government's own capacity to be accountable for what was happening in the country and led it to feel challenged, as mentioned earlier. This, despite the fact that Sierra Leone and all her major donors endorsed the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (above). However, NGOs' lack of transparency was not new or a specifically Sierra Leonean problem,

We do not really know what the western NGOs amidst us are doing in Africa. ... The foreign NGOs are a secret lot. NGOs from the North should be made more transparent for us to know exactly what their motivations are in Africa.²⁰⁷

Regarding implementation, several external actors held powerful national positions. This trend started when the Nigerian Brig.-Gen. Maxwell Khobe became Chief of Defence Staff (at the behest of President Kabbah); in this position, Khobe was 'theoretically answerable to

²⁰⁴ S. Ellis, 'How To Rebuild Africa' *Foreign Affairs* 84, 5 (September/October 2005) p 143.

²⁰⁵ ICG 'Sierra Leone After Elections: Politics As Usual' p 20.

²⁰⁶ Baker and May, 'Reconstructing Sierra Leone' p 50.

²⁰⁷ Y. Tandon, 'Foreign NGOs, Uses And Abuses: An African Perspective' *Global Space* (April/June 1991) p 69.

both to the Nigerian and Sierra Leonean governments'.²⁰⁸ Later, the Accountant General, Deputy ACC Commissioner, Inspector General of Police, three TRC commissioners, five SCSL judges and the SCSL Chief Prosecutor were external actors. In addition, external actors were deployed at lower ranks in the civil service, military and police in training and capacity building roles. 'The proportion of Sierra Leoneans in leading positions on the TRC and SCSL certainly reinforced the impression that peace and reconciliation in Sierra Leone was mostly an international affair.'²⁰⁹ Relationships between external and internal actors were sometimes tense; unsurprising in the case of IMATT, since soldiers are not recruited for their cultural sensitivity and interpersonal skills but 'one TRC official went so far as to state that OHCHR has "terrorised" the local staff through abrasive and dictatorial behaviour.'²¹⁰ Tensions seemed rooted in the 'overwhelming power' of the purse, 'the national commissioners recognised grudgingly that they had to yield to international advice... because OHCHR holds the purse strings and that is "just how it works"'.²¹¹

It has to be asked whether 'ordinary' Sierra Leoneans were bothered about the dominance of the international community, maybe it was a concern of elites and western liberals. Bergner quoted several people who pragmatically welcomed it, such as Foday (a driver), 'look at we – no light, no proper education, everything finished... When we ask independence we can't do it... End of the day, we cry back for Britain to take back the country'²¹² and Lamin (a bilateral amputee), 'so I, for one want the British to come rule us once more again'.²¹³ These comments echoed those I heard even before the war.²¹⁴ They suggested that Sierra Leoneans might have accepted Ellis's idea of 'a new form of international engagement in Africa: namely, trusteeships for certain failed states'.²¹⁵ However, this idea was in tension with his later comment that,

One of the few hopeful developments to come out of Africa's many dysfunctional states is the way power vacuums have been spontaneously filled by new structures with deep roots in Africa's history... UN [United Nations] administrators tend to ignore such networks and often spend an entire tour of duty patiently rebuilding formal new governments without noticing the alternate structures already in existence right under their noses... certain deep-rooted local structures are not going to disappear, it makes sense to think about how they can play a role.²¹⁶

Another process issue that emerged during the war and peace years that was still present after 2002 was the paradox of building the capacity of civil society to pressure the government for accountability to its citizens while effectively making the Government more accountable to the international community/donors. Conditionality was mentioned earlier.

²⁰⁸ Gbla, 'Security Sector Reform Under International Tutelage In Sierra Leone' p 83.

²⁰⁹ GTZ, 'Sierra Leone' (Kenema: GTZ, 2005) p 2. (General briefing paper for new expatriate personnel).

²¹⁰ ICG, 'Sierra Leone's Truth And Reconciliation Commission: A Fresh Start' p 8.

²¹¹ Ibid p 6.

²¹² Bergner, 'Soldiers of Light' p 3.

²¹³ Ibid p 93.

²¹⁴ Even pre-war, on my first foray to Panguma market, finger wagging market women surrounded me, demanding, 'why did you leave us'. I explained that I was new, thinking that they were confusing me with an Irish Sister returned from leave. 'No, you British, you left us, we did not want independence, you abandoned your child'. I was stunned, this did not mirror Africa's heroic struggle for independence as taught in my school. Panguma was a steep learning curve. Personal experience, autumn 1987.

²¹⁵ Ellis, 'How To Rebuild Africa' p 147.

²¹⁶ Ibid p 148.

The CGG (funded by DFID) demonstrated the desired capacity and independence by participating in a study that not only challenged the Government but international donors and NGOs, 'to make aid more effective for responding to the basic rights of poor people'.²¹⁷

Poor people and the impact of peace building on their lives was the concern that initiated this study. The literature that first emerged from post war Sierra Leone, did not give an insight into the realities of 'ordinary' Sierra Leoneans (who by any measure were poor) relative to the huge peace building effort that was underway. Beah, Bergner and to a lesser extent Forna and Jackson provided glimpses,²¹⁸ but a child combatant, a confidante of President Kabbah and many of Bergner's larger-than-life characters were hardly 'ordinary' and they were set mainly against the war (and preceding decades) rather than the peace.

After 2002, literature on Sierra Leone was either descriptive (concerned with the war and its causes) or evaluative (looking at progress towards peace). An example of the proliferation of assessments and reports comes from the '*Evaluation Of The Conflict Prevention Pools Country/Regional Case Study 3 Sierra Leone*' for DFID (cited earlier). It referenced another 24 reports on Sierra Leone by DFID alone (plus five other DFID reports on Africa generally), not to mention a dozen assessments of Sierra Leone by United Nations agencies and other Governments and seven contributions from ICG.²¹⁹ The weakness of statistical data in relation to processes, quality or realities on the ground was mentioned earlier.

Another issue was whose realities did this plethora of reports present. Still using the same evaluation as an example; of the 64 'people consulted'²²⁰ for it, only four were Sierra Leonean civil society representatives (the CGG Coordinator for one), the rest were senior British and Sierra Leonean government and military personnel, United Nations and international NGO officials and key actors like ACC and TRC Commissioners and the SCSL Prosecutor (David Crane). Not one Chief or religious leader was consulted; never mind a fisherman, rural farmer or youthful alluvial diamond miner. Yet, Crane's reductionist views about the causes of the war, 'to put it very simply, there are many side issues but the cause of this conflict is diamonds'²²¹ had previously undermined his authority to present a Sierra Leonean reality,

Oversimplifying the root causes of the civil war risks undermining the credibility of the Prosecution in the eyes of many Sierra Leoneans. A number of Sierra Leone and international NGOs and journalists based in Freetown have privately expressed great frustration at Crane's statements.²²²

²¹⁷ EURODAD with Campaign for Good Governance, '*Old Habits Die Hard: Aid And Accountability In Sierra Leone*' p 4.

²¹⁸ A. Forna, '*Ancestor Stones*' (UK: Bloomsbury, 2006) and Jackson, '*In Sierra Leone*'.

²¹⁹ Ginifer, '*Evaluation Of The Conflict Prevention Pools Country/Regional Case Study 3 Sierra Leone*' pp 34 – 36.

²²⁰ Ibid p 37.

²²¹ ICG '*The Special Court For Sierra Leone: Promises And pitfalls Of A New Model*' p 14.

²²² Ibid.

DFID's briefing document on SSR in general, lays great emphasis on security being 'a strong concern of the poor... vital for poor people'²²³ yet an evaluation of their work did not included 'poor' voices (again contradicting the human security agenda). The same gap was apparent in the work of Sierra Leonean researchers; Gbla's paper on SSR does not cite grassroots opinions (unless local newspapers fall in to this category). Similarly, the TRC Working Group, which stressed 'it is particularly important that Sierra Leonean voices are heard' only interviewed two villagers among more than 30 informants (including David Crane again and seven other external actors), the majority were senior NGO personnel.²²⁴ It is pertinent that Baker's research on policing in Sierra Leone, which unusually consulted Chiefs, market traders, youth and women,²²⁵ found a different security reality to the SSR 'experts.'

As mentioned in Chapter 3a, the Africans 'synthesising mind set' creates a worldview of interconnections and integration, which extends to the concept of peace. Thus, local reality is immediately undermined by a sectoral approach to peace building; such as security, governance or transitional justice (Sarpong pointed out that justice is inseparable from peace and Onah, that peace is order and harmony between the individual, the community, and the universe). Thus, when this study was conceived in 2003 it aimed to fill, albeit to a small extent, two gaps (at that time) in the literature about peace building in Sierra Leone namely, the absence of both grassroots perspectives and of a holistic view of peace building. In line with the human security approach, attention was given to individuals' 'experiential and subjective realities', 'perspectives and needs' (Chapter 3b) related to life as a whole (rather than to statistics or particular peace building tracks or sectors). The following chapters present what 'ordinary' people had to say.

²²³ DFID, *'Understanding and Supporting Security Sector Reform'* p 7. It is not explained why security is not vital, or of concern, to the rich whose businesses are looted/burnt and are no longer able to provide employment, export or pay taxes.

²²⁴ The Sierra Leone Working Group on the TRC, *'Searching For Truth And Reconciliation in Sierra Leone'* p 2.

²²⁵ Baker, 'Where Do People Turn To For Policing In Sierra Leone' pp 387 – 390.

6 PEACE BUILDING: NEED

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 are based on grassroots perspectives of peace building collected in Sierra Leone between November 2004 and July 2006. Participants in this study shared their 'experiential and subjective realities' of the war, its aftermath and also their hopes for the future. In line with Tutu's synthesising mindset (Chapter 3a), they did not tease-out peace building, humanitarian assistance or development from all that everyday life threw at them. Thus, these Chapters are situated within a broad understanding of peace building such as that offered by the United Nations (Chapter 3a). The perspectives presented relate to externally driven peace building activities and shed light on local culture and priorities, thus any convergence or divergence between the 'external' and the 'local' becomes apparent. It should be noted that perspectives did not usually differentiate between external or internal activities. Essentially any actor or activity from outside the immediate locality was 'external' (see Chapter 4 for comments regarding externality and internality).

Before presenting perspectives directly relevant to this study's hypothesis, this Chapter begins by demonstrating the heterogeneity of the perspectives and presents views on the causes of the war. This is for two reasons, to provide background to later views and to caution against overarching conclusions. Next, the first of three crosscutting themes, need, are discussed. Chapters 7 and 8 cover the other themes of governance and societal relationships. For each theme, relevant perspectives are narrated and convergence or divergence between 'external' and 'local' are highlighted. Throughout, the focus groups are referred to only by the name of the community that they represent; other community members or groups are specifically identified.

(a) Heterogeneity and Causes of the War

In earlier Chapters, it was emphasised that every conflict has 'uniquely human dimensions' that set it apart from all other conflicts and that those affected have 'experiential and subjective realities' which shape their 'perspectives and needs' (Chapter 3b). This was clear from the beginning, when producing the conflict trees proved highly contentious, 'there was so much argument'.¹ It quickly transpired that there is no common grassroots' perspective, opinions were varied and contradictory between and within groups depending on beliefs about the causes of the war, experiences of it and needs generated by it. Thus, those that believed youth unemployment and marginalisation caused the war, 'lack of education was one of the root causes of the war. Those who lack education do not know...how to respond to political issues as a result they resort to violence',² wanted peace to bring increased educational and employment opportunities for young people,

I want to be self-reliant; I want to pursue further education, so that I do not beg for my living. No matter ones position or status, if you are not well educated you will surely have a problem. So, I personally wish to experience more academic advancement.³

¹ Verbal communication from researchers, Kenema, 22/01/2005.

² Firestone, 7 May 2005.

³ Firestone, 12 February 2005.

Similarly, those displaced during the war because their houses were burnt, 'they [RUF] also gathered people, put them inside the houses and burnt them including children... Yes, we saw all this ourselves... Since we did not have houses to sleep, we had to build "bafas" (little huts made of thatch)',⁴ wanted peace to bring reconstruction of houses, 'those of us whose houses were burnt and destroyed should be helped to rebuild our houses so that we can have where to sleep. This will make us happy to do anything...'⁵

It soon became apparent that, at the grassroots, it is unrealistic to view the war as an integrated whole, it is more of a fragmented jigsaw of micro conflicts since every social unit (family, village, community) has its 'own history, culture, personages, values and tensions'.⁶ This was demonstrated in two main ways. Firstly, there was no consensus about when the war began and ended. The executive summary of the TRC report begins 'on 23 March 1991, armed conflict broke out in Sierra Leone ... when forces crossed the border from Liberia into the town of Bomaru'.⁷ Easterners contest this, they think the war started earlier and Bomaru was not the first target.⁸ The Freetown focus groups were the only ones to agree that the war began in 1991; Tongo recorded 1992, Mile 91, 1994 and Benducha and Mafokie, 1995. The latter three dates correlate with the first attacks on those communities; the Freetown groups were so far geographically and chronologically from the beginning of the war that they did not have a 'reality' to contradict the official version. Secondly, some communities viewed the war through the lens of local grudges such as tribal, land or marriage disputes. 'Land dispute was brought into the war again. Peoples' houses were burnt because they had dispute over lands',⁹ 'if you fell in love¹⁰ with the wife of an SLA or a Kamajor, you were sure to be killed'¹¹ and

Some men that may have nursed grudge for women because of denial by these women to sleep with them saw the war as an opportunity to revenge. They will damage the women and foetus because they hate both. We saw so many pregnant women dead with their womb slit open.¹²

When RPP wrote that conflicts 'often have both domestic and international dimensions' (Chapter 4) they may not have foreseen just how intimately domestic such dimensions could be.

Such heterogeneity of perspectives cautions against drawing overarching conclusions about peace building in Sierra Leone but suggests that any issue about which there was unanimity, within and between focus groups, must be particularly significant. The root causes of the war provide an example. Chapter 3a highlighted that peace building should transform the structures that underpin conflict (structural violence); therefore, it is relevant to note in

⁴ Mafokie, 22 May 2005.

⁵ Mafokie, 22 May 2005.

⁶ Anderson, 'Do No Harm How Aid Can Support Peace – Or War' p 2.

⁷ Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Sierra Leone, 'Witness to The Truth' Volume 2 p 3.

⁸ Personal communications and experience, in 1991 reports of cross border incursions were circulating before my holiday in The Gambia in early March.

⁹ Mile 91, 26 February 2005.

¹⁰ To 'love' with someone means to have sexual intercourse; thus, the implication is a sexual relationship.

¹¹ Benducha, 17 April 2005.

¹² Tongo, 2 April 2005.

detail perspectives on the origins of the war before moving on to peace building itself. This will also inform later perspectives that causes of the war persist.

Figure 4

Section of Regent's Conflict Tree

Perspectives were unanimous on three root causes of the war; poverty, hatred and tribalism, Figure 4 shows Regent's conflict tree as an example.¹³ Groups nuanced their responses, for example, by coupling poverty with 'hardship',¹⁴ 'hard times'¹⁵ and 'struggle for survival ... hunger and lack of money'.¹⁶ Hatred went with 'bad heart'¹⁷ and 'lack of love for one another'.¹⁸ Firestone coupled tribalism with 'nepotism' and Mile 91 and Regent coupled it with 'jealousy'. Mile 91 further expanded the topic saying 'every tribe wants to be leader (power conscious)'. Firestone mentioned jealousy in the context of unemployment and poor wages and Tongo alluded to it by mentioning 'envy and covetousness' linked to corruption.

Four focus groups (and the researchers) cited corruption as a cause of the war. Benducha did not use the word specifically, but spoke of 'stealing and cheating'. In the context of corruption, 'greed' was mentioned six times and 'selfishness' four times. The other cause of the war given by the majority was poor governance; variously expressed as 'bad governance... lack of transparency and accountability',¹⁹ 'poor leadership... poor rulership',²⁰ 'weakness of leadership',²¹ 'unwanted one party state',²² 'absolute power... abuse of the Constitution'²³ and 'arbitrary arrest and detention, extra-judicial killings'.²⁴ The researchers, the most educated people to draw conflict trees (during their training), were the only ones to raise economic issues beyond poverty, such as mismanagement of the country's resources (particularly diamonds) and 'uneven distribution of the country's wealth'.²⁵

The focus groups' language ('hatred', 'greed', 'selfishness') seemed blunt but the Luawa peace-building workshop produced similar vocabulary suggesting that it is 'normal'. Although concerned with a chronic local conflict, which did not result in the atrocities the war did, Luawa participants suggested root causes of their conflict as (from among a huge list), hatred, mistrust, dishonestly, disrespect, corruption, selfishness/greed, nepotism, monopoly of power and lack of love.²⁶ Probably because the workshop was conducted with a tribally homogenous group, tribalism was not mentioned.

It is unsurprising that poverty and weak governance feature prominently. Sources cited in Chapter 3, from Galtung to the United Nations and German Government together with those commenting about youth unemployment in Sierra Leone (such as Solomon Berewa and the Ministry of Youth and Sport, Chapter 5d) all concur that poverty underpins conflict. DFID links poverty, conflict and poor governance (including corruption) and Wallenstein

¹³ See Appendix D for other examples of conflict trees.

¹⁴ Mafokie, 22 May 2005 and Tongo, 2 April 2005.

¹⁵ Firestone, 12 February 2005.

¹⁶ Mafokie, 22 May 2005.

¹⁷ Tongo, 2 April 2005.

¹⁸ Mafokie, 22 May 2005.

¹⁹ Firestone, 12 February 2005.

²⁰ Mile 91, 27 November 2004.

²¹ Benducha, 17 April 2005.

²² Mile 91, 27 November 2004.

²³ Firestone, 12 February 2005.

²⁴ Tongo, 2 April 2005.

²⁵ Researchers' conflict trees, Freetown, November 2004.

²⁶ Report on '*Rights-based Peace and Reconciliation Sensitisation Workshop, Kailahun, 10 and 11 April 2006*' compiled by F. A. Combey (Kenema, May 2006) p 3.

cites research suggesting that lootable resources increase the likelihood of war,²⁷ echoing the researchers' comments about Sierra Leone's diamonds.

In contrast, writers do not widely accept tribalism as a cause of Sierra Leone's war (Chapter 5b). This maybe because external actors are less sensitive to psychosocial issues than to structural ones since the former depends so much on direct experience. It is also possible that they shy away from tribalism as not 'politically correct'²⁸ or fear accusations of racism and neo-colonialism. This example of tribalism demonstrates the complexity of the lenses through which conflict and responses to it are viewed. It can easily be framed structurally, as a governance/political issue, 'evils such [as] tribalism is still evident. The politicians have always exploited it to get their way to power. It fuelled the war... Tribe plays a great role in getting position in this country',²⁹ 'tribalism and nepotism... is debarring our progress'³⁰ and 'there is favouritism and nepotism preventing the right people from getting opportunities'.³¹ However, practical experience of everyday life sets the issue within relationships rather than structures, 'if you are Temne and go to seek for employment and you happen to meet a Mende person, he may not likely help you because you have indicated on the document (application forms or whatever) that you are Temne'.³² In addition, 'because you do not speak a particular tribe [language], you cannot get access to some offices'³³ and 'if I go to you don't ask me for my surname. Let us just talk Krio and that is all'.³⁴ This example of tribalism suggests that structural and psychosocial divisions in peace building are unrealistic, those that advocate a more integrated approach (Chapter 3b) are closer to grappling with the 'uniquely human dimensions' of a given situation.

To summarise, the first two research activities, drawing times lines and conflict trees, demonstrated the overall heterogeneity of perspectives and 'the war' as a synthesis of local micro conflicts. Perspectives agreed, which was rare, about the structural causes of the war and, in the case of poverty and weak governance, concurred with the received wisdom on root causes of conflict. However, the perspective that tribalism was a cause of the war is not widely held externally. 'Experiential and subjective realities' framed tribalism as both a structural and relational issue supporting the idea that peace building which integrates both structural and psychosocial approaches is more 'realistic', in Sierra Leone, at least. Perspectives on poverty, hatred and tribalism post conflict emerge in later discussions. Next, the first of the three crosscutting issues, need, is discussed.

²⁷ Wallenstein, 'Strategic Peacebuilding: Issues and Actors' p 9.

²⁸ True for Sierra Leonean elites as well as external actors: 'It [tribalism] is very latent. We all know about it but if we talk about it, it will become a reality'. Phone conversation to Sierra Leone, October 2008.

²⁹ Regent, 20 May 2005.

³⁰ Mile 91, 27 November 2004.

³¹ Firestone, 7 May 2005.

³² Mafokie, 10 September 2005.

³³ Mile 91, 27 November 2004.

³⁴ Mafokie, 10 September 2005.

(b) Need

Perspectives on need illuminated two aspects of this study's hypothesis, externally driven peace building activities (through the first hand experience of 'beneficiaries') and local culture and priorities. First, perspectives on three types of need (survival, utilities and services, and livelihoods) are narrated in relation to human psychology and then, perspectives on responses to those needs, both in terms of outcomes and processes. In the second part, underlying issues implied by the perspectives are presented within the context of general peace building theory and praxis. These issues are communications, culture and power. Finally, the extent to which these perspectives inform this study's hypothesis is discussed.

During, and immediately after the war, people needed humanitarian relief and were generally positive about it with food most appreciated, perhaps because the need was so desperate.

'We had to live on cassava and bush yams without even salt, people had to rub cassava on their sweating skin to have the taste of salt. It was a recipe for serious health hazards...Young girls were lured to sex with food motivation',³⁵

'Some died of hunger while running for their lives',³⁶ 'some died of starvation'³⁷ before NGOs came with food'³⁸ but 'the good thing about CARE is that they were the very first people to supply food when we returned'.³⁹ Even though other inputs were small, like watering cans, pots, buckets and blankets,⁴⁰ and knives and hoes,⁴¹ Mafokie commented that they were in abundance⁴² and Regent that they were useful, 'these little things were used to start life all over again ... The coming of NGOS was a big relief.'⁴³ Only Firestone dissented, 'what they brought is insignificant and negligible ... they only gave us 20 leaves of boards and [a] few buckets'.⁴⁴

In the context of relief, only external actors were mentioned, such as the World Food Programme, United Nations agencies, ICRC and a variety of international NGOs. This was often their first contact with externally driven activities. Mafokie commented that in the early days of the relief effort 'we did not know that they were NGOs. It was after they had left that the Headmaster then told us that they were the NGOs'⁴⁵ suggesting minimal interaction between the agencies and their beneficiaries. Others got more information even if interaction was still minimal, 'when they (World Vision) came, they gathered the community

³⁵ Mile 91, 27 November 2004.

³⁶ Firestone, 12 February 2005.

³⁷ A friend, former head nurse at Panguma Hospital, Solomon Amara, lost his wife and daughter through starvation. Before the war, Nancy was obese; I cannot imagine how she could starve to death.

³⁸ Tongo, 2 April 2005.

³⁹ Benducha, 4 November 2005.

⁴⁰ Regent, 20 May 2005.

⁴¹ Benducha, 4 November 2005.

⁴² Mafokie, 10 September 2005.

⁴³ Regent, 20 May 2005.

⁴⁴ Firestone, 7 May 2005.

⁴⁵ Mafokie, 10 September 2005.

people...and told them, that they have come to help us in the area of health. That was their reason for coming'.⁴⁶

'We do not have taps, we have wells. During the war, dead people were dumped into these wells. We cannot use them any more... Now cholera and other diseases from water occur frequently... As a widow with little children, I was hoping that the food crisis will change... food should be in abundance and prices of commodities lowered... Medical facilities should have reached us... The schools should be repaired... By next year, we need a market, schools, hospital, ...maintenance of our houses of God, a radio station and mobile coverage. ⁴⁷

This lady's post-relief priorities were clear, clean drinking water, food, health care and education, everything else could wait until 'next year'. Five focus groups prioritised similar utilities and services after survival needs, this Pastor spoke about rebuilding houses and 'a better school and [a] good road', then 'a church where I can pray to my God'; not only for himself,

Sometimes the youths here go to Bonthe on conventions. Those in Bonthe want to pay us return visits, but we do not have a church where we can host them. With the establishment of a church we will be able to work with others.⁴⁸

In addition to rebuilding houses and schools, Mile 91 prioritised clean water and then 'electricity and power to bring investors.'⁴⁹ Others were more personal, 'I want to... rebuild my house again to lodge my family, with two or three bags of rice for their feeding. Also, to have Le 100,000 as pocket money'⁵⁰ and '[I want] a very good job for me and a good place to sleep' and then 'youths should be provided with vocational and technical training... Education should be paramount to give children [a] bright future. Over and above all, I expect to see a country of patriotic people who love each other'.⁵¹

Only three focus groups 'needed' health care (few, considering that all the groups except Benducha included a nurse). However, all six were concerned about schools and education (including adult literacy and skills training) seeing these as a means of addressing unemployment and youth marginalisation, which most believed were among the root causes of the war. There was, as always, a dissenting voice,

Educated people are stingy, greedy, and unhelpful. They can easily use their pen to ruin the career of others...by ruining the career of others, you might be destroying the lives of many more people. Those who were highly educated... had the opportunity to send their children abroad while the average Sierra Leonean lived in destitution. People became disgruntled particularly young men and decided to resort to the use of arms to turn the table round.⁵²

More typically: 'personally, I am hoping to have job facilities not to be seen as a dropout fighting for diamonds. Premium should be put on education'⁵³ and '[I want] free education

⁴⁶ Benducha, 4 November 2005.

⁴⁷ Tongo, 2 April 2005.

⁴⁸ Benducha, 17 April 2005.

⁴⁹ Mile 91, 27 November 2004.

⁵⁰ Mafokie, 22 May 2005.

⁵¹ Regent, 20 May 2005.

⁵² Mile 91, 26 February 2005.

⁵³ Tongo, 2 April 2005.

up to secondary school level⁵⁴. With free education, I believe everybody will have access to education and this will prevent idleness and will help the country'.⁵⁵ In the same vein, it was the education component of DDR that was most valued, 'the ex-combatants were well trained (by International Rescue Committee and GTZ). Their output in our area as carpenters, masoners, tailors and so on, is very good',⁵⁶ 'some of the ex-combatants can now bake bread, which they sell to the civilians. The idea was fine',⁵⁷ 'the DDR helped our children and husbands with training and college fees. It made them forget the past'⁵⁸ and

Through DDR, ex-combatants engaged in skills training. We need more help ... to provide employment especially for the youths... so that they will not resort to violence again. It was as a result of having nothing useful to do that caused them to join the RUF rebels to destroy the country ... Anybody that is idle can entertain bad thoughts. If you lack money, you can think of bad ways to get it.'⁵⁹

Although some wanted education as a means of securing livelihoods others were more interest in agricultural inputs; unremarkable since in some communities '90 per cent of the people are farmers... It is not everybody that can work in an office, therefore the farmers must be helped with seedlings so that we can work and live on our own',⁶⁰ 'more tools should be given to farmers... By next year, we should be able to feed ourselves as it used to be without imports of rice'⁶¹ and 'we need support in terms of seeds, tools, manure, fertilizers, pesticides to get better yields.'⁶² In contrast to humanitarian relief, internal actors were seen as responsible for meeting this need, 'the Chief and others should advocate for tractors to plough our farming sites so that more yields could be realised... the Government should solicit support overseas to mechanise farming',⁶³ 'we expect Government to bring farming equipment and seedlings to farmers',⁶⁴ and 'we want the Government [to] strengthen the area of agriculture to ensure that by the year 2007 no Sierra Leonean goes to bed on an empty stomach'.⁶⁵ The latter was echoing President Kabbah's 2002 inaugural address, '... no Sierra Leonean should go to bed hungry (by the year 2007)'.⁶⁶ 2007 being when the next elections were due.

Others saw the livelihood potential in natural resources other than land, 'we have lots of minerals but do not have the skills to utilize them. People should be trained from within the country so that we will be able to use our own resources well for the benefit of all',⁶⁷ 'let the Government come and invest in our oil. They said we have a good deposit of oil in our

⁵⁴ Primary education in Sierra Leone is free in the sense of no fees but other costs are a huge burden; uniform, shoes, schoolbags, Saturday classes and 'pamphlets', handouts written and photocopied by teachers to supplement their income; pupils fear that their exam results will suffer if they do not buy for them.

⁵⁵ Mafokie, 22 May 2005.

⁵⁶ Tongo, 2 April 2005.

⁵⁷ Mafokie, 10 September 2005.

⁵⁸ Tongo, 2 April 2005.

⁵⁹ Mile 91, 26 February 2005.

⁶⁰ Mafokie, 10 September 2005.

⁶¹ Tongo, 2 April 2005.

⁶² Regent, 20 May 2005.

⁶³ Mile 91, 27 November 2004.

⁶⁴ Tongo, 2 April 2005.

⁶⁵ Mile 91, 26 February 2005.

⁶⁶ UNDP, 'Sierra Leone Human Development Report 2007' p 39.

⁶⁷ Mafokie, 22 May 2005.

District'⁶⁸ and 'people... go to Rutile [a mining installation] to sell their wares ... it will improve their livelihood.'⁶⁹

'Social well being', rather than purely economics, was the context within which four focus groups discussed livelihoods. Since the State provides few social services, there is no safety net in times of crisis (such as unemployment) except that provided by the extended family. Thus, in the absence of old age pensions; losing the child who could support you in your old age is a practical livelihoods issue as well as an emotional one.

The fighting forces came here and took away our children forcefully... If you had a child and you became old, that child would eventually help you do many things. But if this child was to be taken away from you, [you] would suffer greatly because no one would help you with your work. They went away with my only son and up to this day I've not seen him.⁷⁰

Perspectives included other vulnerable groups resulting from the war and their struggle to secure livelihoods; amputees drew most sympathy, 'really we are sympathising with them, especially those whose two hands were amputated. Some of them were farmers but can farm no more. They are really sorrowful',⁷¹ and 'most of these victims [amputees] were breadwinners of their various families. So, as a result of this, problems have arisen within the families'.⁷² Regent had a lot to say about other vulnerable groups,

Today, most of the women you see are widows. That is why they do not joke with their gardening. Proceeds of which they use to care for the homes. This is seriously affecting the growth of the children... They killed prominent people... their children are now orphans, some even go on to the streets... Helpless women, who, because they desperately needed to survive, easily gave in to foreign soldiers for handouts and food items, ended up giving birth to children. At the end of the war, they [foreign soldiers] travelled back to their home countries leaving behind their children... Today, they form a significant percentage of children on the streets.⁷³

Perspectives often linked need and peace building, either directly or in terms of forgetting the past. 'If they really want reconciliation to be strong, they should build back our houses... If I don't have a house to sleep, I will not feel good.'⁷⁴ S/he explained that lying in a wet bed (because the tarpaulin leaked) was a constant reminder of the war and brooding, instead of sleeping, increased bitterness. 'We believe that when there is food in the house, the children are happy and there will always be peace... Without food, there can be no peace',⁷⁵ 'there is also the PRSP programme which gives hope that one day things will get better...It will help reconciliation because when things improve people will become happy and forget the past'⁷⁶ and 'if we are employed and paid well we will forget about the past'.⁷⁷ Again, amputees elicited special concern, 'what still needs to be done is to give more encouragement to the victims especially the amputees so that they will learn to forget

⁶⁸ Benducha, 17 April 2005. It is not confirmed that there is oil in Bonthe.

⁶⁹ Benducha, 4 November 2005.

⁷⁰ Benducha, 17 April 2005.

⁷¹ Mafokie, 22 May 2005.

⁷² Firestone, 7 May 2005.

⁷³ Regent, 20 May 2005.

⁷⁴ Mafokie, 10 September 2005.

⁷⁵ Mile 91, 26 February 2005.

⁷⁶ Mafokie, 22 May 2005.

⁷⁷ Mafokie, 10 September 2005.

their pains.’⁷⁸ People also understood the peace building agenda behind certain activities, ‘I know of DFID. They came with skills training in which they employed 25 civilians and 25 ex-combatants...This was aimed at promoting reconciliation.’⁷⁹ This shows much greater awareness than in the relief days when Mafokie hardly knew what an NGO was.

These perspectives and priorities were a normal psychological response to need, explained long ago by Maslow with his ‘Hierarchy of Needs’.⁸⁰ Figure 5 shows this hierarchy as a five-tier pyramid with physiological needs at lower levels and growth and psychological needs at higher levels.

Figure 5

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

Higher level needs only come into focus when lower level needs are met. Thus, people wanted food, water and shelter before education, ‘pocket money’ and mobile phone coverage and they could not think about peace and reconciliation while their roof leaked and their children were hungry. According to Maslow, when lower level needs are met, people do not have feelings about them but if unmet, they generate anxiety. Mafokie clearly showed such anxiety. They could not easily be steered towards topics other than shelter, which they mentioned constantly, framing all aspects of peace building in terms of rebuilding their houses (see above). In addition, they exaggerated their needs, anxious to impress, or gain sympathy from, the researchers.⁸¹

Self-actualisation at the top of Maslow’s Hierarchy reflects humankind’s desire to use every gift and ability to achieve all that they are capable of, imagining that this will bring happiness and fulfilment. Logically, ascent of Maslow’s Hierarchy towards self-actualisation

⁷⁸ Mafokie, 22 May 2005.

⁷⁹ Mafokie, 22 May 2005.

⁸⁰ A. Maslow, ‘A Theory of Human Motivation’ *Psychological Review* 50, (1943) pp 370 - 396.

⁸¹ They complained about the clinic not having inpatient services and no transport for patients to go to hospital in Port Loko, 5 km away. In Sierra Leonean terms, this is a very short distance to take patients by hammock, even at night. They also complained that the World Food Programme provided food for schools but not cooking pots. In any Sierra Leonean community (even in hard times), large cooking pots are available to cater for burials or weddings. Some hire pots as a business, others (ruling families) loan them as a social service.

means greater and greater individual or community participation (assuming that, in line with Ubuntu, whole communities can self-actualize rather than just individuals). Thus, water, food and shelter can be handed out and passively received, law and order can be defined and implemented by others but positive relationships require direct engagement. This resonates with Assefa's idea that participation increases as peace building moves toward reconciliation (Chapter 3a). Self actualisation resonates both with positive peace as described in the Hiroshima Peace Declaration, 'peace means creating a climate in which people can live rich and rewarding lives' and with the Yoruba description of inner peace, 'the sum total of all that man may desire; an undisturbed harmonious life' (both Chapter 3a). Thus, Maslow's Hierarchy reflects an ascent from 'no peace' to negative and then positive peace.

It is interesting to note that Firestone did not mention lowest level needs at all; their comments usually revolved round rather lofty definitions of development and reconciliation, maybe because their community is a little nearer self-actualisation. Before the war, the Firestone community was a ghetto, 'reputed to be a haven for dropouts and criminals. Armed robbery, street violence and mugging were all once synonymous with Firestone'.⁸² In 1992, some Firestone young people, inspired by the youthfulness of Strasser's regime,⁸³ decided that 'it was time for young people to take over'⁸⁴ and turn things round; from clean ups of markets and cemeteries initiatives grew into a range of community development activities and a primary school was built, of which the community is very proud,

The Firestone Community School to educate our children we consider it as development... both men and women can now read and write through adult education. Our present bursar in the school was a cookery seller but when we saw her potential though an early school leaver, we gave her the position. She has participated in a lot of workshops and seminars to capacitate her for the job... He [focus group participant] was a drunkard, drug addict and very promiscuous but now he is a changed man. Now we have no ghettos here. [Through] trainings such as adult literacy, now he can write and sign his name, he can even contribute meaningfully to a discussion about community development'.⁸⁵

Firestone community's youth-initiated transformation supports Baker's earlier contention (Chapter 5d) that young people 'are committed to playing a role in ... development'. Although Firestone community is still overcrowded and often without running water and electricity (see photograph below), pulling together ('belongingness') asserted community control and achieved results for themselves ('esteem'). Firestone community was no longer a passive recipient, having needs met, and thus, became more 'self-actualised'.

⁸² L. Fofana, 'Energising Sierra Leone's Youth' BBC Africa Live, Freetown 2003 accessed on 07/08/2008 via <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3153026.stm>

⁸³ Strasser was 26 years old when he staged a coup d'état and assumed the Presidency (see Chapter 5b).

⁸⁴ Fofana, 'Energising Sierra Leone's Youth'.

⁸⁵ Firestone, 12 February 2005.

View of Firestone Community, Eastern Freetown, Sierra Leone



From these perspectives on needs, a picture of local priorities became apparent. In line with normal human psychology, survival needs took precedence; when these were met people wanted utilities and services re-established and to secure their own livelihoods, mainly through support for agriculture, or education to improve their chances of employment. Addressing 'root causes' of the war emerged as a local priority; hence, education was a greater concern than health care. Peace and reconciliation were clearly in people's minds but not prioritised while basic needs were unsatisfied. Next, insight into peace building activities comes from perspectives on the responses to those needs, first, outcomes and then process.

Perspectives were sometimes vague about actors and the genesis of their responses, 'we do not even know how they [NGOs] decide which type of projects they implement in a particular area. This we could not tell.'⁸⁶ UNAMSIL, 'the Catholics', the British Royal Navy and NaCSA were included as NGOs; whereas the former was the United Nations peace keeping force and the latter a ministerial-level Government Commission.⁸⁷ This may be related to widely differing experiences of NGOs, Mile 91 named 19 that had worked in their community at one time or another, eight international and 11 local. Regent recalled 14, eight international and six local, yet Benducha recalled only five, two international and three local including the Methodist Church and the National Farmers' Association. By 2005 there were no NGOs working in Benducha.

As mentioned earlier, once the humanitarian relief effort was underway, survival needs were generally met (by external actors). However, Mile 91 was critical that relief 'even' reached the 'rebels', 'they [ICRC] even provided medications for the rebels... [And used] their planes to provide even food for the rebels', Mile 91 feared another agenda,

⁸⁶ Benducha, 4 November 2005.

⁸⁷ Founded by Act of Parliament in November 2001. See www.nacsa-sl.org.

'We also believe that both the local Red Cross and ICRC were using their vehicles and planes to transport arms and ammunition to the rebels. This is true because rebel-held areas where others could not go, ICRC had the power to go... [They] used to know the various locations of the rebels but failed to warn civilians. We believe that the ICRC was doing this because they claimed to be working for all.'⁸⁸

Other informants suggested that NGOs prolonged the war by similar behaviour, by 'undermining local efforts for peace... communicating behind the scenes, spreading misinformation, talking to the RUF'.⁸⁹ The reasons suggested were that NGOs created employment, both directly and for those 'servicing' NGOs like vehicle repair workshops and through a lucrative market in 'diverted' relief goods. In fact, it was suggested that civilians were the only people interested in peace; fighters had no other means of livelihood, the war maintained politicians in power and others benefited from the trade in arms and diamonds.⁹⁰

Over two years after the end of the war, when the relief phase might be considered over, the lowest level needs of some communities (such as clean drinking water) remained unmet. 'Still no light, no water, no impressive improvement',⁹¹ 'there is no good road, no pipe-borne water, neither electricity' ⁹² and

We need pure water supply because we depend only on local wells, in the dry season the wells get dried up. The Sierra Leone Water Company came ... we were all happy when they started and people joined in. But there has been a standstill in their work because of lack of materials.⁹³

Tongo felt that 'the food crisis remains the same, it is even worse than during the war. It [a 'cup' of rice] was not up to Le 450 during the war.'⁹⁴ The widow quoted earlier as hoping that the 'food crisis' would change was also from Tongo. It is a mining rather than agricultural area so food has to be transported and 'transportation is still a problem because of the petrol [price] and the [bad] road.'⁹⁵

However, construction was the response which least matched local priorities. Although homes had been burnt down in five focus group communities (Firestone related second hand experiences) only Mile 91 and Tongo witnessed any reconstruction of houses; in the latter case funded by overseas remittances not by donors or Government,

[The] publicity that the international media, especially the BBC [British Broadcasting Corporation] gave to our war and our suffering, caused relatives [abroad] to begin to send money for us and today some of us have built houses in big towns...' ⁹⁶

Social infrastructure such as schools, clinics, places of worship, markets and police stations were reconstructed faster than homes. Three focus groups mentioned clinic rehabilitation and four, schools. Since Firestone's school was unscathed only Benducha remained without a

⁸⁸ Mile 91, 26 February 2005.

⁸⁹ Interviews with Directors of local NGOs and CBOs in Freetown, Mile 91 and Kenema, June/July 2006.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Firestone, 12 February 2005.

⁹² Regent, 20 May 2005.

⁹³ Mile 91, 27 November 2004.

⁹⁴ Tongo, 2 April 2005.

⁹⁵ Tongo, 2 April 2005.

⁹⁶ Tongo, 2 April 2005.

school building although 'the teachers are here... They [Methodist Conference of Sierra Leone] came and sensitised us about the construction of our school... They came and asked a lot of questions... we prioritised the construction of a school ... we are only waiting.'⁹⁷ Mafokie had a characteristic experience,

NaCSA promised to build us a health centre, and also rebuild our houses. They have done the assessment and every other thing, but up to date they have not done anything... We were expecting help to rebuild our houses that were burnt down. But up to date we have not received any such help from anybody. As you can see, the houses are covered with tarpaulins and they leak during the rains... Plan International built our school and renovated our Health Centre and the Community Centre. NaCSA is building [a] market. Thank God, after we came back and resettled the primary school has been rebuilt for us ... a church was also built after the war. It was Free Pentecostal Mission that rebuilt the school and established the church at Mafokie.⁹⁸

The Free Pentecostal Mission apparently prioritised the school over water and sanitation, 'they [Free Pentecostal Mission] decided that they would first build a school, then dig up wells and after which, toilets.'⁹⁹ So, four years after the war Mafokie, desperate for new homes and help with farming, has received a new school and church, pens and pencils for the school, skills training (but not for farmers who made up 90 per cent of the community) and radio programmes about reconciliation.

It was already mentioned how lack of shelter (and other basic needs) can hinder peace building (by perpetuating suffering and bitter memories). It also created new enmities, potential threats to peace building, 'everyday people build mighty houses in Freetown while I find it difficult to even afford a thatched house. This was one reason that led to the war. The economy of the country belongs to all of us. I should benefit from it',¹⁰⁰ and 'I can only see mansions being constructed with all our resources, as a country we still remain backward. We are still very selfish.'¹⁰¹ The large-scale construction of luxurious mansions in the hills above Freetown (in the vicinity of the new American Embassy) not only displayed the huge wealth of the 'haves' but the resultant deforestation caused erosion and more frequent flooding of bay-side slum communities so the suffering of the 'have nots' increased.¹⁰²

Of course, school (re)construction helped satisfy those who wanted education to increase their livelihood opportunities but buildings did not guarantee functioning or accessible services. Mafokie and Benducha provided examples. In Mafokie, the Free Pentecostal Mission built the new school, World Food Programme started a school-feeding programme and PLAN International provided textbooks but 'there were children who were ashamed to go to school because they did not have slippers to put on'.¹⁰³ Possibly, the NGOs expected parents to provide their children's shoes as a 'local contribution'. However, the community had provided labour to help with construction, 'all of us in the village hung heads

⁹⁷ Benducha, 4 November 2005.

⁹⁸ Mafokie, 22 May 2005.

⁹⁹ Mafokie, 10 September 2005.

¹⁰⁰ Benducha, 17 April 2005.

¹⁰¹ Regent, 20 May 2005.

¹⁰² Tearfund Conflict Transformation and Disaster Management Workshop, Freetown, 28/02–04/03/2005

¹⁰³ Mafokie, 10 September 2005. 'Slippers' in Sierra Leone are what in the UK are called 'flip-flops' (not a cosy shoe for indoors).

and found young men and young women to help in the work. Some were fetching water while others were digging'.¹⁰⁴ Eventually, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency supplied children's shoes together with uniforms, books and schoolbags. This reinforces the point in Chapter 5d that the number of schools or clinics rebuilt does not reflect the quality of services people receive day-to-day. In Benducha,

The Government put up a structure for this health centre, they just left it like that and we had nobody to assist us. It was World Vision that came to our aid. They gave us medicines and stipends for health workers. It was not the Government that sent them here. They used their own money to help us here.¹⁰⁵

Half the focus groups made a similar point that bad roads reduced the benefits of agricultural inputs because it was impossible to access markets with excess produce.

This leads to consideration of the responses to livelihood needs, particularly in the agricultural sector. Experiences were mixed, 'in the area of agriculture there has been little changes whatsoever',¹⁰⁶ but more positively, 'CCF [Christian Children's Fund] has helped us with agricultural inputs and paid fees for our children. They helped us with vegetable seeds and tools. PUSH assisted us with agricultural implements'¹⁰⁷ and

They [National Association of Farmers] gave us rice and groundnut seedlings to plant and we had to pay after harvest, so it was a kind of seed bank... last year I had a bushel which I planted and I can now boast of about three or four bushels. I have enough food to take me to the next three months.¹⁰⁸

Some inputs had no impact because they were untimely, 'they [NaCSA] brought the seed rice very late in either July or August.¹⁰⁹ As a result of this, the rice did not prove well. Even the fertiliser was also brought very late; it was brought during the time of the harvest'¹¹⁰ and 'the seeds and loan did not come at the right time. We could not pay back our loans because they came at the time when survival was difficult. We ate everything in a bid to feed our families.'¹¹¹ This was unexpected since only local actors, who should have understood the farming cycle, were mentioned as providing farming inputs.

With regard to other livelihoods, skills training provoked mixed perspectives. Producers and consumers in Tongo felt the benefit of skills training,

But with the war, we have been exposed to jobs like soap making, gara dying and weaving. In olden days, our country cloth was expensive but now that our women are making more, it is less expensive. Also, soap is now available in enough quantity and relatively cheap.¹¹²

Similarly Regent, 'we thank God that a lot of vocational institutions sprang up after the war and they help keep young people (who were mostly the perpetrators and the victims) assured of a livelihood upon successful completion of training.'¹¹³ However, skills training did

¹⁰⁴ Mafokie, 10 September 2005.

¹⁰⁵ Benducha, 17 April 2005.

¹⁰⁶ Mile 91, 26 February 2005.

¹⁰⁷ Regent, 20 May 2005.

¹⁰⁸ Benducha, 17 April 2005.

¹⁰⁹ Planting season is around April, depending on how heavily it is raining.

¹¹⁰ Mafokie, 10 September 2005.

¹¹¹ Regent, 20 May 2005.

¹¹² Tongo, 2 April 2005.

¹¹³ Regent, 20 May 2005.

not automatically generate sustainable livelihoods. In Jagor (population about 200) World Vision built (using vast quantities of cement and zinc) a vocational skills training centre which was unused by December 2005. The villagers explained,

World Vision trained 40 women in soap making and 40 in gara tie dying for four months. When they left there were no materials to continue and no market, how much soap can we use? How many new clothes can we buy? It is four hours walk to Tongo from here [the nearest market]. We are farmers, what we want to know is how to increase our yields, we want more to eat.¹¹⁴

At least, the VIP latrine built behind the centre continued to be used. The SLANGO National Coordinator commented that World Vision was known for 'white elephants' mentioning the construction of grain stores which farmers never used.¹¹⁵

Mile 91 gave an example of how skills training that was not part of a holistic package, had less impact. Those taught to drive under DDR did not get driving licenses,

We are trying very hard to obtain driving licenses for youths who have gone through driving training. We are also advocating to Government for vehicles so that these young men could be gainfully employed. This could also help to boost agriculture because vehicles are needed to transport agricultural produce from the farm site to the stores and market centres.¹¹⁶

For other DDR trainees they suggested a workshop to generate employment

The opening of such a centre would take young men off the streets where they spend most of the day in idleness. And this could be dangerous to the peace and stability of the community. This centre can provide job opportunities for young people who have gone through the DDR and other skills training.¹¹⁷

As the comment above suggested, unemployment, particularly among the young, was still a problem, 'the youths are still out there idle and ghetto life is on the increase',¹¹⁸ 'today most of the young people are unemployed',¹¹⁹ and 'there is very high unemployment, which suggests that the unemployed would always look up to and depend on the employed for their livelihood.'¹²⁰

Micro credit and loans (to stimulate livelihoods) generated similar perspectives to skills training, people liked the idea but tangible results were scant, 'government came through the Paramount Chief to give soft loans to do business. It was helpful though meagre [US \$ 40]. It was not productive because we ate the profit ... It has ended because we could not pay back'¹²¹ and

The Government has provided micro-credits. This is one of the good things the Government has done. It is benefiting us because we do trade with these loans ... but many people have refused to pay back. Therefore, those who did not receive the first set of micro-credit loan are unlucky because we are not sure of getting it.¹²²

¹¹⁴ Jagor, December 2005, personal communication.

¹¹⁵ Interview with Aisha Josiah, National Coordinator, The Sierra Leone Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (SLANGO) 30/06/2006, Freetown.

¹¹⁶ Mile 91, 26 February 2005.

¹¹⁷ Mile 91, 26 February 2005.

¹¹⁸ Regent, 3 September 2005.

¹¹⁹ Mafokie, 10 September 2005.

¹²⁰ Firestone, 12 February 2005.

¹²¹ Mile 91, 27 November 2004.

¹²² Benducha, 4 November 2005.

Naturally, informants in paid employment (mainly teachers and nurses) thought their salaries were low and complained that they did not arrive on time. More surprising was Regent's comment about military salaries, which exposed an anxiety about the fragility of the peace often implicit in comments about youth unemployment (above),

The salary level of more especially the men in Arms Forces should have risen. These guys in arms have the potential of taking us back to conflict. Even the other ex-combatants can reverse the peace with few arms they might have kept and with the knowledge they have in using them. To prevent this, these guys should be made a bit comfortable. It is like treating the perpetrators well.¹²³

In outline, these perspectives on the outcomes of responses to need identified several peace building activities (in the broad sense) including humanitarian relief, reconstruction and reestablishment of services and utilities (including education and health care) and livelihoods support. Humanitarian relief converged with local priorities and those who received it were appreciative. Although there were some concerns that the relief 'industry' prolonged the war. Aspects of reconstruction diverged from local priorities by inadequately addressing shelter and sometimes being insufficient to ensure services. Responses to livelihood needs produced mixed perspectives, often depending on whether they were part of a holistic package of activities, while some were positive about farming inputs, skills training and micro-credit, others were not. Unmet low-level needs (such as shelter) and youth unemployment were seen as obstacles to peace building. In addition, figures (rather than perspectives) on NGO presence suggested that responses were geographically uneven. Next, perspectives on the process of responding to need further inform the relationship between local priorities and peace building activities.

Perspectives on process concerned both inter- and intra-project issues, including all stages of the project cycle (assessment, planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation). The previous section on outcomes already inferred certain inter-project processes such as coordination, duplication and 'gaps'. It has to be questioned why NaCSA promised to build a health centre in Mafokie when PLAN International had already renovated one there and people were still without shelter. A possible reason was poor coordination between internal Governmental and external non-governmental actors. However, as mentioned in Chapter 5d, the Government allegedly saw PLAN International as a competitor so NaCSA may have been actively trying to outdo PLAN over the number of clinics each was (re)building.

On the same occasion, the SLANGO Coordinator raised concerns about duplication and waste of precious resources by NGOs, 'despite all the money that has been spent the majority of us are still poor'.¹²⁴ However, the focus groups did not mention duplication. The perspective was that any assistance was welcome, 'which ever small help we get from NGOs for us it is better'¹²⁵ but that it was inadequate 'they [NGOs] should be working for us to make

¹²³ Regent, 3 September 2005.

¹²⁴ Interview with Aisha Josiah, National Coordinator, The Sierra Leone Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (SLANGO) 30/06/2006, Freetown.

¹²⁵ Tongo, 2 April 2005.

our burden light but their operation is like giving a thirsty man just a drop of water.’¹²⁶ Nor was coordination specifically mentioned; only alluded to, positively, in the context of relationships between NGOs and CBOs, ‘the NGO gives strength to the CBO, the CBO in turn gives help to the community people.... So that they can do things on their own’,¹²⁷ ‘United Women’s Farmers Association has 53 groups... They [NGOs] came, assessed what we were engaged in and decided to render some help’,¹²⁸ and ‘NGOs are doing a fine job as most of these NGOs support CBOs to empower the people.’¹²⁹

Naturally, there was more awareness about gaps, ‘rehabilitation, of mosques and houses, came from the NGOs (CARE) but it was not in all areas, only about three sections [of the Chiefdom].¹³⁰ Gaps were attributed to several reasons. For example, lack of will on the part of the Government and NGOs, ‘the Government says things but they cannot and do not want to deliver’¹³¹ and ‘the Government doesn’t seem to care and they [NGOs] don’t just want to do it’.¹³² Another reason was logistical constraints, ‘our main problem is the bad road... it’s 12 mile’s stretch of sandy beach, because of this problem, NGOs do not come here’.¹³³ An additional reason was agencies own agendas, ‘one problem with these NGOs is that they do not usually ask us to know what help they should first render to us. They come with what they have thought of’¹³⁴ and,

They [NGOs] come to us when they want to and with their agenda... those in authority and those who have privilege and resources do not listen to us. They have their own agenda... they hear us, but they want to neglect us.¹³⁵

When World Vision *told* the Benducha community that they were coming to work in health and the Free Pentecostal Mission *decided* to build a school in Mafokie are examples of preset agendas quoted earlier. Whatever the weaknesses of NGOs, the Government was seen as responsible overall, ‘it is the Government because they are the ones to tell the NGOs to bring development in certain areas... We don’t have the power to talk to these NGOs except the Government has the power to talk to these NGOs’¹³⁶

Regarding intra-project process, ‘needs assessment’ seemed to cause more frustration than any other stage of the project cycle. Communities often gave time and resources to welcoming NGOs but did not received feedback, ‘at times they [NGOs] come down to us to enquire about our problems but it stops there. They don’t come back to us to follow-up or bring what we expect’,¹³⁷ and ‘some [NGOs] come and talk only. They go and not come again... They are putting honey in ears but not in our mouths’,¹³⁸ and

¹²⁶ Regent, 3 September 2005.

¹²⁷ Mile 91, 26 February 2005.

¹²⁸ Mile 91, 26 February 2005.

¹²⁹ Mile 91, 27 November 2004.

¹³⁰ Mile 91, 27 November 2004.

¹³¹ Mile 91, 27 November 2004.

¹³² Benducha, 4 November 2005.

¹³³ Benducha, 4 November 2005.

¹³⁴ Mafokie, 10 September 2005.

¹³⁵ Regent, 3 September 2005.

¹³⁶ Mafokie, 10 September 2005.

¹³⁷ Regent, 20 May 2005.

¹³⁸ Tongo, 2 April 2005.

We use our own resources to give them [NGOs] a hearty welcome, give them food, dance for them but after all, they go and never return. One thing that is vivid in our mind is the disappointment. We feel sad recounting the talk shop. We can remember their fake promises.¹³⁹

Communities waited long periods for feedback on needs assessments, 'Peace Child Rescue Mission came two years ago purporting to help us ...they assessed our needs',¹⁴⁰ and 'men were going round collecting Le 1000 each from people, saying that they will bring machines to help plough our farms. This has not materialised up till now. This was four years ago.'¹⁴¹ Unfortunately, such patience sometimes undermined local capacity; they kept waiting for NGOs deliver, instead of getting on with things as best they could,

We tell them about our needs, prioritise them, but to solve them remains a dream. We wait for them in vain doing nothing for ourselves... They are undermining our indigenous efforts to develop. The flamboyant hope they bring to us, weakens our local efforts.¹⁴²

Tongo and Regent gave specific examples,

CORD Sierra Leone has so far not been able to build the school. Their promise lulled us into abandoning our mud structure, now that has collapsed. We have made our contribution in terms of stones and the land but theirs is not forthcoming and now our children don't have a school building¹⁴³

and

Take for instance, those that assisted our children in school. When they left, some children dropped out from school. Their hope for schooling has been aborted. If they had not assured us we could have prepared ourselves to face the challenge of sponsoring our children.¹⁴⁴

Firestone, with more experience of NGOs, was cynical about needs assessment, 'beneficiaries should be vigilant so that no NGO representative uses them for personal benefit... assessing their needs, taking snapshots, making claims and the money sent into his/her personal account.'¹⁴⁵ Tongo felt that NGOs simply made incorrect assessments,

Most NGOs feel we are all right because we live in a mining area. They, therefore, design projects on our behalf but embezzle the money and go away. They come all the time, interview us, it is all protocol, at the end, they eat the money.¹⁴⁶

They also levelled the same criticism at the Government,

They think because we are in a mining area, we do not deserve help. This perception is wrong, some of us cannot imagine when last we saw diamonds, besides, we are also Sierra Leoneans. Even our diamonds, we do not see the proceeds coming back to us... Government should consider our contribution to the development of Sierra Leone through our diamonds.¹⁴⁷

¹³⁹ Tongo, 17 September 2005.

¹⁴⁰ Firestone, 7 May 2005.

¹⁴¹ Benducha, 17 April 2005.

¹⁴² Tongo, 17 September 2005.

¹⁴³ Tongo, 17 September 2005.

¹⁴⁴ Regent, 3 September 2005.

¹⁴⁵ Firestone, 12 February 2005.

¹⁴⁶ Tongo, 17 September 2005.

¹⁴⁷ Tongo, 17 September 2005. In 2001, the Mining Community Development Fund was created to return part of diamond export taxes to mining communities. 'An unprecedented amount of diamond revenue has been returned to diamond-mining communities since the fund was initiated'. R. Maconachie, *'Diamond Mining, Governance Initiatives and Post Conflict Development in Sierra Leone'* Brooks World Poverty Institute, Manchester University, accessed on 11/10/2008 via http://www.bwpi.manchester.ac.uk/resources/Working-Papers/50_machonachie_sierraleone.pdf

In relation to other stages of the project cycle, only Mafokie mentioned design/planning, suggesting that untimely activities resulted from 'poor planning because if they had planned well, they would have known the exact time to bring these things.'¹⁴⁸

Financial management and target beneficiaries were the two main concerns regarding the implementation stage of the project cycle. Tongo already alluded to financial impropriety (above). All the other focus groups, except Benducha (where no NGOs worked), had similar suspicions about NGOs, NaCSA and the Government. Representative perspectives include, 'NGOs want to have a portion of the project amount, a percentage or commission. That is what happened to our market. It is poorly done',¹⁴⁹ 'national and international NGOs ... do not seem to be effective; unfortunately they are all corrupt'¹⁵⁰ and 'at some other times, NGOs ... collect money from us and that is the end of it. This is what one man who claimed to be a NaCSA official did.'¹⁵¹ Tongo youth wanted to help, 'we may be young but some of us are trustworthy, we wish to be put in committees to monitor how such funds are spent.'¹⁵² Firestone typically dissented, 'NGOs have played a very vital role in our community development,'¹⁵³ (probably true in that community's history) and Benducha tried to be fair, 'the Government has a lot of responsibilities. It will not only concentrate on a particular area alone. But we believe that our time will come when Government will concentrate on us.'¹⁵⁴

Disquiet over ICRC's assistance to the RUF was an example of questions about target beneficiaries. Despite the understanding of vulnerable groups mentioned earlier, the possibility that some people might have been ineligible for assistance was not considered 'CARE officials/workers were discriminating some of us. Some got [food], others did not'.¹⁵⁵ The main implementation issue was 'loss' of benefits on the way down to the grassroots,

Whatever supply is meant for the community should be brought to the appropriate community people, they will use it for the right purpose. If it is given to other people, it will not reach the ordinary people at all. For example, NaCSA was given seed rice for us. Not all of us got the seed rice, some people had while others did not. All this is part of corruption.¹⁵⁶

This problem was seen as another obstacle to peace building,

The heads of those NGOs want their own share from project funds, so they deal with people who can compromise with them... Giving to the affluent at the expense of the poor makes us angry. The wealthy and privileged have ready access to NGO personnel. They collect these supplies but they are not the intended beneficiaries. This is not helping the peace process because it breeds hatred and contempt for one another. It creates enmity.¹⁵⁷

¹⁴⁸ Mafokie, 10 September 2005.

¹⁴⁹ Regent, 20 May 2005.

¹⁵⁰ Firestone, 12 February 2005.

¹⁵¹ Tongo, 17 September 2005.

¹⁵² Tongo, 17 September 2005.

¹⁵³ Firestone, 12 February 2005.

¹⁵⁴ Benducha, 4 November 2005.

¹⁵⁵ Benducha, 4 November 2005.

¹⁵⁶ Mafokie, 10 September 2005.

¹⁵⁷ Regent, 3 September 2005.

Perspectives suggested that all actors were weak at monitoring and evaluation, the final stage of the project cycle. 'The Government doesn't seem to care. They give contracts to people without doing any follow up... Responsibility to supervise the construction [of staff quarters]... was given to the parliamentarian. But this parliamentarian does not follow up'¹⁵⁸ and 'Government should ensure that it puts follow-up mechanisms in place to monitor its programmes and implementers.'¹⁵⁹ Concerning NGOs,

Since they [NGOs] do not evaluate, we will evaluate them and send report to them. The beneficiaries of NGO activities should have a monitoring committee to monitor their operations. We should not be seen collaborating with them to embezzle funds meant for projects.¹⁶⁰

Monitoring and evaluation was seen as contributing to reconciliation by addressing unjust distributions (described above),

They usually give large sums of money to build schools and they do not make follow-up. Without follow-up you won't know whether the work is done or not and it is the grassroots people that suffer in the end. By doing so reconciliation will gain strong grounds in this community.'¹⁶¹

Thus, these perspectives on the process of responding to need suggested divergence between local priorities and externally driven peace building activities. This was demonstrated in several ways. The size of response did not address local priorities; there was a perceived need for more assistance. Both governmental and non-governmental agencies were either indifferent to local priorities (did not care) or had their own agendas regardless of local priorities. The latter perspective was reinforced by the inconclusive outcome of needs assessments, which sometimes undermined local initiative. Self-enrichment was suspected to be on the divergent agenda of those involved with externally driven peace building activities, to the obvious detriment of the intended beneficiaries. This was cited as another obstacle to peace building. Effective monitoring and evaluation to ensure that beneficiaries received their due, was thus seen as a tool of peace building. It was felt that all aspects of responding to need should be overseen by the Government. Next, underlying issues implied by the perspectives above are presented within the context of general peace building theory and praxis. These issues are communications, culture and power.

Although not openly discussed, poor communications emerged from these perspectives as partially responsible for divergence between external and local priorities. Several negative perspectives appeared to stem from miscommunication. It is true that ICRC 'work for all' but only in the humanitarian sphere, not to further the other goals or aspirations of those they served. The Red Cross in Sierra Leone put much effort into informing people about their mandate,

¹⁵⁸ Benducha, 17 April 2005.

¹⁵⁹ Mile 91, 27 November 2004.

¹⁶⁰ Firestone, 12 February 2005.

¹⁶¹ Mafokie, 10 September 2005.

Organising workshops, seminars and sensitisation meetings on human rights... the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Geneva Convention and international humanitarian law. Targeted [were] senior police, journalists, local government Councillors, youth groups, schoolchildren and other students, CBOs and women's organisations. During the armed conflict, members of the Civil Defence Forces and the Sierra Leone military were among the target groups.¹⁶²

Explaining the complexities of the Geneva Convention (which shapes ICRC's mandate) to youth groups, students or schoolchildren was an obvious communications challenge. Maybe messages were unclear or feedback on how the messages were received was not elicited.

Similarly, it is true that within project budgets, donors usually allow a percentage for administration or headquarters costs, but this should not have compromised the quality of project implementation. Whether the perspective quoted above resulted from miscommunication or implied that additional budget was misappropriated was unknown.

In addition, the fact that during the relief phase Mafokie did not know what NGOs were and Benducha had no idea how NGOs decided on particular projects pointed to weak communications.

Needs assessments never guarantee assistance; agencies usually explain that they are not promising anything during the process and will 'assess' in different locations before making decisions. Desperate people simply do hear this and 'hope springs eternal'. Typically, agencies rarely inform 'unsuccessful' communities¹⁶³ partly because agency personnel cannot handle communities' disappointment in the context of often genuine, if not prioritised, need. However, the evidence that local initiatives were postponed for years as a result, demonstrated the negative impact of agencies' poor communications and reinforced the Utstein report's point that the quality of communications are as important as more and more participation (Chapter 3b).

Culture and beliefs were other matters not openly expressed but which obviously framed discussions. Divergence between local priorities regarding need and externally driven peace building activities may have been rooted in different beliefs about peace and peace building. The literature suggested that 'the African view is that peace is a state in and of itself and therefore the starting point for peace building is the individual. Peace flows out (or not) from individuals...' (Chapter 3a). Thus, when individual peace (of mind) is disturbed by hunger, a leaking roof or inability to pay school fees, the flow of peace is blocked and 'harmony between the individual, the community, and the universe' (Chapter 3a) will not be achieved. Whereas, the western view is that peace building should 'address the needs of societies sliding into conflict or emerging from it' (Chapter 3a). Thus, if peace building starts with society, public infra structure and services like roads and bridges, health care and

¹⁶² A. K. Foday-Kalone, 'The Contribution of Women's Organisations to Peace Building in Sierra Leone' (unpublished Dissertation for MA in Peace and Reconciliation studies at Coventry University, 2007) p 6.

¹⁶³ Never, in my experience.

education take precedence over individual homes once humanitarian relief has stopped people dying in 'unacceptable' numbers.¹⁶⁴

In addition, even agencies with minimal understanding of Africa, knew that 'community' is the dominant social entity so logically building schools before individual homes would be appropriate (in a stable situation, it might have been). However, activities needed contextualising within Sierra Leone's post conflict reality, which included cultural beliefs about peace. Agencies, particularly those without a specific peace building mandate, may concur with Zartman that there was so much to do, so urgently, that 'there is no order of priority'. Schools or houses first did not matter. However, ignoring grassroots priorities undermined the credibility of all external actors, hence sweeping statements that all NGOs were ineffective, corrupt 'unreliable [and] exploitative'.¹⁶⁵ Worse, peace building was probably slowed by perpetuation of suffering together with associated bitter memories and the creation of new enmities.

IA's conflict-sensitive approaches and PCIA intend a greater convergence in understanding between all actors. 'Through systematic conflict analysis' understanding of the context and the dynamics between the context and activities should avoid negative impacts. However, years after fighting ended and as the peace process inched forward; it is questionable whether conflict analysis provided a sufficiently holistic picture (capturing local beliefs and culture for instance). RPP found little correlation between programme effectiveness and conflict analysis (Chapter 4). Presumably, therefore, information from conflict analysis (conducted by whatever method, Chapter 3b) is either ignored or irrelevant. 'Peace analysis'¹⁶⁶ of some kind might fail to unearth the root causes of past conflict (significant if still present in society). Convergence between externally driven peace building and local culture and priorities is more likely if the people with, and around, whom peace is built, are at the centre of any analysis (rather than just disputants and their constituencies). Since human security, now to the fore, is centred on individuals (Chapter 4), perhaps 'human security analysis' can be developed to trap the 'experiential and subjective realities ... perspectives and needs' associated with both past conflict and present/future peace. Among other things, this type of analysis would elicit the cultural knowledge and resources of the people in a given setting (as advocated by Lederach).¹⁶⁷ Perhaps the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach, promoted by DFID, which is people centred, looks for capacity rather than needs and seeks to understand the links between policy and grassroots daily existence, could be broadened to encompass more fully past conflict and emerging peace. Some form of 'human security analysis' would resonate with the African view that peace building starts

¹⁶⁴ Officially, 'agencies should aim to maintain the CMR [daily crude mortality rate] at below 1/10,000/day'. Note that the CMR for industrialised countries averages 0.25/10,000/day. The Sphere Project, *'Humanitarian Charter And Minimum Standards In Disaster Response'* p 260.

¹⁶⁵ Tongo, 17 September 2005.

¹⁶⁶ Rather than 'conflict mapping' (Fisher et al., *'Working With Conflict, Skills And Strategies For Action'* p 22) I tried peace mapping in Uganda, working with various groups and entities to chart peace connectors and spoilers between them in the hope of conceiving a future, rather than constantly reviewing the past.

¹⁶⁷ Lederach, *'Preparing For Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures'* p 10.

with individuals. 'Conflict analysis' is better suited to the western mindset that the starting point for peace building is conflict.

The perspectives on need collected for this study showed clearly that people from within the setting had great depth of knowledge. Villagers who had never heard of Galtung's positive peace, structural violence or of Lapsley's detoxifying memory¹⁶⁸ knew that poverty was among the causes of the war, that 'without food, there can be no peace', that no shelter, a leaky roof or unfair distribution of resources delayed reconciliation or worse, created new enmity. In line with Wallensteen, they knew that job creation should be part of peace building and that internal political actors (the Government) were the 'ones to watch'. In convergence with actors such as Caritas and the German Government, they knew that peace building and development are linked 'something has been done through peace, reconciliation and development to forget about the past'.¹⁶⁹ Indeed, development, as defined by the UNDP (Chapter 3a) would address many of their needs,

When we talk of development, we mean when we can produce the necessary means by which our membership could maximize their potential to be able to contribute to the socio-economic development of ourselves as individuals, our families and the society. Development means improvement in infrastructure and even the human mind.¹⁷⁰

When grassroots converged with 'external' thought, it was respected but when it diverged it was neglected, yet both were rooted in the same experiences and reality. Somehow, it was only wise to hold views that converged with external actors. This may be partly related to power, which is discussed next.

In addition to the expressed perspectives on need, what was unsaid also illuminated the divergence between peace building activities and local realities and priorities. Nation building, democratisation, even security, beloved of structuralist peace builders were not mentioned as needs. Democracy and crime were stated as facts without any aspiration for change. Similarly, discussions frequently featured 'the Government' as a nebulous entity but there were no suggestions about reforming its structures. Ministries like Education, Youth and Sports or Agriculture and Food Security never featured although youth, education and agriculture dominated perspectives. Disillusionment with politicians is a likely factor; however, civil servants that interact with grassroots communities such as agricultural extension workers were not remarked upon either.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Chapter 6b) proposed that people with pressing material needs cannot be expected to consider 'the big picture' such as nation building. While this proved true for, what was defined in Chapter 3, as structuralist peace building, it was not the case for relationships. For example, a Regent informant wanted the whole population to be patriotic and to 'love each other' (above). This suggested other reasons for the myopic lens applied to structuralist peace building, power asymmetry might be one.

¹⁶⁸ Fr Michael Lapsley, Institute For Healing Of Memories, South Africa.

¹⁶⁹ Mile 91, 26 February 2005.

¹⁷⁰ Firestone, 7 May 2005.

A sense of powerlessness in relation to structures and institutions could be why they were not discussed, an attitude that it was not worth talking about things that simply could not be changed. Mafokie already mentioned not having power to talk to NGOs, Regent felt those in authority and the privileged did not listen to them and Benducha also expressed powerlessness, 'there is no one to sponsor us (champion our cause)... to tell them (development agents) that they should not forget Benducha. I think the reason [for lack of development] is there is no such person to mediate for us.'¹⁷¹ The way communities waited years for feedback from needs assessments without taking matters into their own hands also pointed to a sense of powerless. This may have underpinned some of the communications problems (mentioned above); (perceived) inequality can hinder communication since people do not have the confidence to ask questions.

Of course, there was power asymmetry between those with funds (the United Nations, Governments, donors, NGOs) and the materially poor. However, at a different level those with the greatest knowledge of how to make things work were more powerful. Funds were wasted by those who, apparently, did not know the farming calendar or to dig wells in the dry season. A challenge to peace building is to give the power of knowledge equal status with the power of money; this might be achieved through some form of human security analysis suggested earlier.

In this final section, the extent to which these perspectives inform this study's hypothesis is discussed. When perspectives demonstrated insufficient attention to local culture and priorities during externally driven peace building activities, there was little evidence that this actually reduced impact. In some instances, negative impacts on peace building were not related to local culture and priorities. For example, In line with authors such as Galama and Tongeren, and Fisher, the humanitarian relief effort probably prolonged the war by creating a 'war economy' but insufficient attention to local culture and priorities was not the reason. Indeed, humanitarian relief very much converged with local priorities. The only concern was the relationship between the ICRC and RUF but these suspicions may have been rooted in misunderstanding and unclear communications.

Perspectives suggested that failure to deliver on 'promises' and to give shelter higher priority than other infrastructure (re)construction had a negative impact on peace building by paralysing local initiatives and leaving a space for new enmities to develop and old ones to fester. However, this study was conducted only three to four years into a process, which the literature suggests, will take ten to fifteen years (see Chapter 3a). This raises the question of when impact should be assessed, initial project results can be very good, but are not sustained,

Few funding NGOs will have any knowledge of projects where funding stopped five or ten years ago. They probably will not even know whether the project survives, nor whether there have been any lasting benefits and if so to whom.¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ Benducha, 4 November 2005.

¹⁷² Clark, '*Democratizing Development - The Role of Voluntary Organizations*' p 71

The Jagor skills training centre described above is an example. However, the reverse can also be true, if the weaknesses highlighted (in 2005/2006) by these perspectives are addressed and more homes built over the coming years people will 'forget' the war, the anguish of its aftermath and move on with their lives. The external agencies involved will have left the country long ago. If, however, the only home building is more mansions around Freetown, Sierra Leone faces disaster.

Many cases of divergence between the 'external' and the 'local' demonstrated by these perspectives were probably neutral in terms of long term peace building impact. For example, the size of the response (only a minority thought that anything was better than nothing was), untimely inputs (seeds, fertiliser, and wells), sequencing (school before wells and toilets) and even the fact that some NGOs were undoubtedly following their 'own agendas', 'mandate' in NGO terminology. World Vision's health activities in Benducha were a positive example of the latter. However, these examples raised other issues such as accountability and integrity; untimely inputs wasted resources and disregarding local priorities undermined the rights based agenda, which many agencies espoused. The latter is linked to 'means ends synthesis' discussed in Chapter 3a. To preach human rights but operate in a way that denied communities the right to their own ideas, cultural norms and priorities communicated 'implicit ethical messages'¹⁷³ and was frankly, dishonest.

Chapter 4 discussed evaluating peace building effectiveness. Among the many challenges was 'desegregation', which of the many influences on peace building was more or less responsible for an effective outcome (defined by who?). The same applies to impact. If the impact of an externally driven peace building activity is less than expected (by who?), insufficient attention to local culture and priorities cannot be definitively ascribed as the cause. Indeed, Galtung suggested that only a megalomaniac would do so (Chapter 4). It is more realistic to suggest that greater attention to local culture and priorities might have enhanced (or speeded up) peace building impact. Thus, at this stage, it appears that local culture and priorities give 'added value' to peace building activities rather than dictate overall impact.

These perspectives on need, particularly those related to responses, give a 'progress report' on peace building in Sierra Leone by highlighting what people feel still needs to be done. Despite all the frustrations, perspectives suggested that peace building still has more time, as Benducha said 'we believe that our time will come'. Sierra Leoneans are very patient people.

¹⁷³ CDA, 'Reflecting on Peace Practice Project' p 5.

7 PEACE BUILDING: GOVERNANCE

The previous Chapter on need focused mostly on peace building (in the broadest sense) at community level. This Chapter on governance considers grassroots perspectives of peace building at a different level in society, encompassing what Boutros-Ghali called 'strategic or political' peace (linked to 'democratic practices'). Governance perspectives were broad, incorporating not only National Government but also other 'power holders' who influenced social wellbeing and peace building. As in the last Chapter, externality began just beyond the informants' immediate locality. These governance perspectives are divided into three topics, which are presented separately, reform of structures and institutions, democratisation and economic reconstruction; within each topic perspectives related to the state and National Government are narrated first and then, any perspectives concerning society more generally. Issues of 'convergence' and 'divergence' between local priorities and culture and externally driven peace building activities, which inform this study's hypothesis, are examined as they emerge. The last section of this Chapter discusses links between these perspectives and this study's hypothesis.

(a) Reform of Structures and Institutions

Within this topic, perspectives were limited to SSR reform, corruption and citizenship. When hostilities end, the security sector is an early target for reform and external support in the belief that defence capacity, law and order will further enhance security. In Sierra Leone, the most visible manifestations of this were new police stations, uniforms and Landrovers (part of the SSR programme, Chapter 5d), 'I understand that this organisation renovated the police station. I don't agree that this is a help to us.'¹ Somewhat ominously Regent continued,

Our security depends on ourselves. The security forces are increasing in number but not in strength and quality. Gunshots can still be heard at night (very late). It seems, some people (ex-combatants) held on to their guns to wreak havoc on people and rid them of their possessions. The occurrence of arm[ed] robbery will scare investors, NGOs and other aid donors away... Injustice is very rampant. Justice is like a commodity and the poor cannot afford it.²

The latter comment inferred that bribery was necessary to achieve judicial redress³ unsurprising therefore that Firestone 'still expect[ed] improvement on the justice system'.⁴ Regent had previously commented on military salaries highlighting concerns about the military's role in the peace. Crime was an issue for Benducha as well,

Havocs are taking place every day as some people keep disturbing others, molesting them. We still have people in our community who are using RUF and CDF bullying tactics. In our own Chiefdom, there is no court of law... The Court Barrie, that we expected the Government to have re-built, is still non-functional.⁵

¹ Regent, 20 May 2005.

² Regent, 20 May 2005.

³ When my mobile phone was stolen, the investigating police officers asked for money to buy stationery to record my statement. They declined the offer to stop at the market and buy the necessary items. At the police station clipboards, reams of paper and pens were immediately to hand. When the culprit was detained in the police cell, his visitors had to 'pay' the duty officers for access. Personal experience, Kenema, May 2006.

⁴ Firestone, 12 February 2005.

⁵ Benducha, 17 April 2005.

Togo also wanted 'a new Barrie for our Chief... World Vision rebuilt our police station'.⁶ They did not comment on the efficacy of the latter. The priority given to Barries was because, in rural areas, the Chiefs, rather than the state authorities, still effectively controlled law and order. Since before colonial rule, the Chiefs were custodians of legislative, executive and judicial power (Chapter 5a) and although the colonial authorities tried to separate legal and executive power by creating 'native courts' headed by court chairmen (instead of Chiefs),⁷

In practice, most customary law cases are dealt with outside the formal justice sector. Disputes and conflicts are resolved informally, most often by Chiefs. Only in the last resort do disputes go before the Local Court...Despite the illegality of this system, this is where the majority of adjudications of customary law take place due to its familiarity, informality, and relatively lower cost.⁸

Barries are traditionally endowed with 'special properties' during construction so Chiefs cannot hold court in any other venue. Thus, without a Barrie customary judicial process was suspended.

The other perspective on the security sector was from Regent regarding prisons, 'criminals in our prisons have not been used well. I expect the Government to use them to work on state rice farms as it used to happen.'⁹

There were no perspectives about reforming other individual structures or institutions although public services featured as a 'need' in the previous Chapter. For example, various aspects of education, such as school buildings, fees and even teachers' salaries were discussed but the Ministry of Education was not mentioned. A sense of powerlessness in relation to state structures and institutions was suggested as a possible reason. The TRC report made a blunter proposition, 'today the state is an abstract concept to most Sierra Leoneans and central government has made itself largely irrelevant to their daily lives'.¹⁰

The 'criminality' that dominated all governance perspectives was corruption; five focus groups felt that it undermined Government performance, implying that overhaul of the whole apparatus of state was needed rather than reform of specific structures or institutions.

Defining corruption is debated in the literature, whether a moral, legal, public interest or market definition is chosen largely depends on the interests of the writer.¹¹ Some writers use the terms 'petty' and 'grand' corruption to differentiate the activities of humble police officers and clerks from those of kleptocrats. However, these grassroots perspectives defined corruption narrowly in terms of how those with power and authority handled money and resources; misappropriation, embezzlement or smuggling. 'Corruption is a factor. What is allocated to us may not be reaching us',¹² 'corruption has deprived us from what is due to us, what is meant for us is being given to another or eaten by a single person'¹³ and 'we would

⁶ Togo, 17 September 2005.

⁷ Little 'The Mende of Sierra Leone, A West African People in Transition' p 185.

⁸ Amnesty International, 'Sierra Leone: Women Face Human Rights Abuse In The Informal Legal Sector' (AI: 17/05/2006) pp 4 – 5 accessed on 12/08/2007 via www.amnesty.org

⁹ Regent, 20 May 2005.

¹⁰ Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Sierra Leone, 'Witness to The Truth' Vol 3A p 83.

¹¹ R. Williams, 'Political Corruption In Africa' (England: Gower, 1987) p 3.

¹² Regent, 3 September 2005.

¹³ Mile 91, 27 November 2004.

like to see proper management of our natural resources – diamonds, gold, bauxite etc. They should stop smuggling them to other countries... And the Government is responsible.¹⁴ In addition, 'our country is one of the richest in terms of mineral resources. However, bad governance and mismanagement of resources can never enhance development... We are still last in the Human Index Report',¹⁵ and 'the country's currency has gone down drastically because of the war. The agricultural sector has been neglected and the minerals mismanaged'.¹⁶

Corruption was not new to Sierra Leone; Chapter 5a chronicles the anti-corruption riots of 1955, the nepotism and electoral manoeuvring of the Margais and the notoriously corrupt regime (1968-1985) of the late President Siaka Stevens, which hardly differentiated between public and private property. Against this background, four focus groups cited corruption as a cause of the war and the other two others alluded to it. This converges with Kpundeh's research about attitudes to corruption conducted early in the war, (1992). At that time, respondents identified corruption as the second most important problem facing Sierra Leone (after the war itself). 58.3 per cent of respondents agreed with a statement that most Government officials were corrupt and 56.3 per cent of respondents felt that they were under pressure to engage in corruption at work.¹⁷ Corruption, in the form of smuggling diamonds, is documented as fuelling and prolonging the war (Chapter 5b).

All the focus groups believed that corruption was still a problem post-war, 'what worries me now is about this corruption which was one of the causes of the war. This corruption is still on the increase',¹⁸ 'before the war, there was corruption and I was expecting that this would change after the war. Unfortunately, corruption is still going on'¹⁹ and 'one of the things that has not changed is corruption... This is debarring our progress.'²⁰ In addition, Regent talked about nepotism, wealth imbalance and power entrenchment and Tongo mentioned exploitation by politicians. However, other focus groups actually criticised Ministers for not showing favouritism to their own home areas, 'everybody must get a decent standard of living. There is also the Minister of Development. But he is not helping us. This Minister is for development. That is why I mentioned him and he is also a son of this soil'²¹ and

We have our children and brothers who are holding important Government positions. They are the ones that should use their influence and power to bring these changes in the Mile 91 community. We expect individuals like Momodu Koroma a Foreign Affairs Minister, who is born in this place to come and empower us, his people.²²

Despite their expectations of the Development Minister, Tongo did not have much faith in Ministers generally, 'Government may be making endeavours to fulfil its promises, but the

¹⁴ Mafokie, 22 May 2005.

¹⁵ Firestone, 12 February 2005.

¹⁶ Regent, 20 May 2005.

¹⁷ Kpundeh, 'Politics And Corruption In Africa, A Case Study Of Sierra Leone' Appendix 2.

¹⁸ Firestone, 12 February 2005.

¹⁹ Mafokie, 22 May 2005.

²⁰ Mile 91, 27 November 2004.

²¹ Tongo, 2 April 2005.

²² Mile 91, 26 February 2005.

channel through which they send it to us has not been honest and effective (the Ministers). Everything stops at their houses.’²³

As mentioned at the beginning of this Chapter, governance perspectives were broad and extended beyond the state. This was true for corruption; perspectives in Chapter 6b accused NGOs of corruption, embezzlement and extortion and explained how this created enmity, which obstructed peace building. In addition, Firestone suggested that NGOs were subject to corrupt advances from politicians, ‘NGOs should not allow politicians to influence them in the form of recommending their relations and friends for employment. MPs should not be allowed to claim or personalise the activities of NGOs who operate in their areas/wards.’²⁴

It is interesting to note that, apart from minor grumbles about ‘Elders’ mismanaging micro credit schemes,²⁵ Chiefs were not accused of corruption, only politicians, state employees and NGO personnel. Possibly, transactions between Chiefs and their people were seen in a different light, according to Kpundeh ‘Sierra Leoneans know well that a gift to a Paramount Chief has a different meaning from a gift to a civil servant or a cabinet minister’.²⁶ This raised the question of complicity in corruption. Gbla pointed out that although the public label the ‘elite’ as corrupt; everybody who has ever applied for a job or college place has ‘lobbied’ outside the normal application process.²⁷ It can be puzzling why people went along with the ‘petty’ corruption that they complained about so bitterly. For example, schoolteachers who did not work diligently during the week (or who were absent from the classroom) charged for extra classes on Saturdays. People complained among themselves but paid, fearing that otherwise their children’s exam results will be ‘manipulated’ or worse, that teachers might ‘witch’ and make ill the children of ‘uncooperative’ carers. No one ever suggested approaching the Ministry of Education about the problem. This ever present belief in supernatural sanctions²⁸ was divergent from the worldview of many external actors who thought that parents and pupils could have united to boycott Saturday classes and lobbied for teachers to work properly Monday to Friday.

Sierra Leoneans may have defined corruption more narrowly than the literature but all agreed on the need to reduce it. However, opinions diverged on how to go about it. Only half the focus groups supported some kind of legislation, ‘what will stop corruption is that there should be concrete laws. In addition, there should also be thorough supervision’,²⁹ and ‘those caught in embezzlement of state funds should be dealt with severely. It would serve as deterrence to others. We should not condone corruption.’³⁰ Firestone made an extraordinary suggestion given the country’s recent past, ‘we should adopt Shariah Law. The punishment

²³ Tongo, 17 September 2005.

²⁴ Firestone, 12 February 2005.

²⁵ Benducha, 4 November 2005.

²⁶ Kpundeh, ‘*Politics And Corruption In Africa, A Case Study Of Sierra Leone*’ p 52.

²⁷ Osman Gbla, keynote speech at Tearfund’s Conflict Transformation and Disaster Management workshop, Freetown 28/02 – 04/03/2005.

²⁸ ‘Misfortune in Africa is never a “natural” occurrence... Every significant misfortune is caused by a spiritual entity whose malevolence is motivated in some morally understandable way’. Green, ‘Religion and Morality In The African Traditional Setting’ *Journal Of Religion In Africa* p 6.

²⁹ Mafokie, 10 September 2005.

³⁰ Regent, 3 September 2005.

for theft should be amputation. The accounts of corrupt officials must be freezed, their assets seized.'³¹ The Anti-Corruption Commission was not seen as effective, 'minimization of corrupt practices is what I expected. But this has not taken place even with the institution of the ACC.'³² The majority perspective was that poverty reduction would lessen corruption, 'to minimise it [corruption], the standard of living of the people should be improved. The salaries of workers should be restructured and improved',³³ 'I think that if people are employed corruption will reduce. When people have better jobs, then corruption will not be rampant'³⁴ and

Corruption is difficult to end in this country because poverty is too much. Any person that is given something to give others will always take from what is given when he is a poor person. If he is given three million to give others, he will just give them two or three hundred thousand and then keep the balance to himself. This is rampant throughout the country³⁵.

Mafokie and Benducha felt everybody had responsibility towards corruption, 'if we love each other, then all this [corruption] will end because I will be satisfied with the little I have because of sympathy for others',³⁶ and 'we should all join hands together to drive out this corruption. We are always crying "corruption, corruption" but if we could put hands together to drive it away it would go.'³⁷ Logical for those who subscribed to the view that the public are often complicit in corruption.

The perspective that poverty was a cause of corruption diverged from DFID's contention that corruption (bad governance) is a cause of poverty and a 'major obstacle to development' (see Chapter 4). Both may be correct; poverty and bad governance form a vicious circle feeding each other but strategies to break the circle depend on beliefs about the cause. Thus, DFID wanted to tackle bad governance first so gave financial and technical support to the Anti-Corruption Commission, the Auditor General's Office and the Finance Ministry (Chapter 5d) whereas the local priority was to tackle poverty first through job creation and better salaries.

There was no apparent reason why DFID expected Sierra Leone to be different from the rest of Africa, where 'legal and administrative reform has produced disappointing results and corruption has flourished and even increased'.³⁸ Szeftel suggests two reasons for this. Firstly that 'they [donors] seek to impose rules and norms of proper public behaviour developed for and within liberal democracies, in environments where liberal democracy is not established'³⁹. Secondly, local accumulation for many Africans depends on access to public resources via political power, 'winner takes all' politics. Corruption is a means of survival so

³¹ Firestone, 12 February 2005.

³² Firestone, 12 February 2005

³³ Firestone, 12 February 2005.

³⁴ Mafokie, 10 September 2005.

³⁵ Mafokie, 10 September 2005.

³⁶ Mafokie, 22 May 2005.

³⁷ Benducha, 4 November 2005.

³⁸ M. Szeftel, 'Misunderstanding African Politics: Corruption And The Governance Agenda' *Review of African Political Economy*, 25, 76 (June 1998) p 221.

³⁹ M. Szeftel, 'Between Governance And Under-development: Accumulation And Africa's Catastrophic Corruption' *Review of African Political Economy*, 27, 84 (June 2000) p 287.

'anti-corruption measures can threaten livelihoods'.⁴⁰ This resonates with the grassroots perspective that poverty caused corruption and the fact that political interference paralysed the ACC in Sierra Leone. In this light, increased livelihood opportunities and improved infrastructure like roads and power supply to attract inward investment and jobs might contribute more to defeating corruption than reforming structures and institutions (or creating new ones like the ACC).

Benducha's point about everybody joining hands against corruption raised another issue. The externally driven 'citizenship' agenda (favoured as a tool to improve government accountability, Chapter 5d) in a culture where people had for centuries been the subjects of their Chiefs. Indeed, in the previous Chapter it was suggested that the war came about because violence was the only way people knew 'to respond to political issues'. The efforts of civil society groups to sensitise communities about human rights and democracy were appreciated, 'the war had brought major changes like human rights. Now you cannot just bully somebody and go free',⁴¹ '[we] have learned a lot; after the war it seems now difficult to take advantage over others because everybody seems to be aware of his or her rights' and 'this war helped sharpen our knowledge of the difference between wrong and correct. A lot of awareness was created about the rights and responsibilities of citizens...People are not allowing themselves to be looked down upon'.⁴² However, any process of social change is lengthy and the notion of 'responsibilities' seemed slower to take root. There was less appreciation that citizens themselves could be active in transforming society rather than just passive recipients of 'rights'.

With time, sovereignty will return to the people. But there is still a lot more to be done on sensitising people about their rights and responsibilities'. People's perception about democracy is limited to their rights, so they need to know their responsibilities. It has helped people to know when a government is performing or not. People are now very averse to any unconstitutional means of gaining power.⁴³

Never the less, the concept of social responsibility was not alien; several Mende words for 'peace' concerned social cohesion; reciprocity, rights and responsibilities, between community members. Externally driven sensitisation on rights and responsibilities might have had more (or faster) impact if, because of greater understanding of cultural history, there had been more work on broadening the idea of 'community' to encompass 'The Nation' rather than just tribe, village or family. The idea that Ministers should favour their home areas showed that some lacked a vision of 'Nation' but as always perspectives were heterogeneous, 'what we need is love for each other. Because we are Sierra Leoneans and the country belongs to us. All we need to do is to unite and work together in the interest of the country as a whole.'⁴⁴

Perspectives on self-reliance were another symptom of the developing sense of citizens' own role in change 'development depends on us. We cannot sit by and expect

⁴⁰ Ibid p 295.

⁴¹ Mile 91, 27 November 2004.

⁴² Regent, 20 May 2005.

⁴³ Firestone, 7 May 2005.

⁴⁴ Mafokie, 22 May 2005.

progress to happen in our community. We have a role to play. We should not sit down and wait for outsiders to follow them. It takes unity to develop',⁴⁵ 'but they [NGOs] may only come in provided they meet us organised. They should complement us'⁴⁶ and,

If we help ourselves, outsiders will come and support us. You should not sit by and have your village covered with filth or see somebody spoiling a public tap without cautioning him. It will serve as an encouragement to the next man to come on board... We should be our brothers' keeper and not allow public utilities to be misused by others.⁴⁷

People even picked up the vocabulary of civil society campaigners, 'empowerment means to motivate somebody, create a situation wherein somebody becomes self-sufficient so that he will not depend on begging. It is a constant process. They are empowering us to stop begging and become self-sufficient people.'⁴⁸ This desire for greater self-reliance diverged from the view that 'dependency syndrome' was entrenched in Sierra Leone. Of course, during displacement, people were dependent on external assistance and it is human nature to try to maximise any free aid but these perspectives suggested shifting attitudes.

To summarise the perspectives and issues surrounding reform of structures and institutions. Perspectives suggested that security sector reform was not affecting crime or access to state justice at the grassroots and did not address the local priority of new Barriers so Chiefs could resume their traditional (but now, illegal) role in law and order (since other justice mechanisms were not available at grassroots). Perspectives focused more on defeating corruption, a long-term problem that permeates the whole of Sierra Leonean society, rather than on reforming individual structures and institutions. Most perspectives put forward poverty as a cause of corruption whereas DFID believed corruption caused poverty; therefore, there was divergence about how to tackle corruption, externally driven activities like the ACC versus the local priority of job creation. Despite past disengagement from the state by the general population (and visa a versa), a sense of citizenship appeared to be developing although this diverged from local culture. People were beginning to recognise their own role in tackling corruption and bringing other changes to their communities. This increased citizenship capacity might partly address Lederach's 'gap of interdependence' (Chapter 4) by giving people more confidence to engage with different levels of society including state structures and institutions. Citizenship provided an example of a developing convergence between 'the external' and 'the local' and of positive social change caused by conflict; it is closely linked to democratisation, the next topic covered in this Chapter.

(b) Democratisation

Perspectives linked to democratisation fell into two groups, those concerned with multi party politics and elections (narrated first) and those related to democracy in society more generally, specifically engagement with 'power holders' (mentioned earlier). It must be noted that this study was conducted before the 2007 elections, which saw an All Peoples'

⁴⁵ Mile 91, 26 February 2005.

⁴⁶ Tongo, 2 April 2005.

⁴⁷ Regent, 20 May 2005.

⁴⁸ Mile 91, 26 February 2005.

Congress government take over from the Sierra Leone Peoples' Party (which has been in power since 1996).

In the previous Chapter, 'unwanted one party state'⁴⁹ and 'absolute power... abuse of the Constitution'⁵⁰ were cited among the causes of the war. The war was 'successful' in terms of overturning the one party state, 'had it not been for the way the war was spreading the Government would not have seen reason to undertake democratic reforms. It is a fact that lack of democracy is one of the reasons for the war'⁵¹ and 'the war has made us get multi-party system. What democracy has done to make [me] happy is the removal of guns in the hands of bad people. ... Democracy has brought peace to this country.'⁵² However, the price paid by some was extremely high,

Because we refused to accept them (rebels) and insisted on having a democratically elected government through elections, they became angry and began plucking out people's eyes ... After which, they started chopping off limbs saying that it was because people have hands that is why they wanted to vote against them... In fact, I narrowly escaped from the scene where a woman's hands were being cut off.⁵³

With the establishment of democracy, came 'free speech', 'on radio programmes, we hear various callers or discussants criticising Government officials, ministers and even the President. This is a sign that democracy is growing',⁵⁴ and 'most of the songs now sung by young Sierra Leonean artists are pointers to the disgruntled state of affairs in the country. Government should be sensitive to all this.'⁵⁵ From 2002 onwards, it was striking how even relatively poor people would expend mobile phone credit to put their views on radio phone-ins and debates. Such radio programmes stimulated further animated discussions in village 'poyo' bars.⁵⁶ It was as if people were determined to use their hard-won free speech. Of course, factors such as improved communication networks, as well as democratisation, contributed to this greater political engagement.

Although perspectives were positive about democratisation and the fact that it brought peace, there was more negativity surrounding the outcomes (raising the question whether democracy can sustain peace). 'What we notice is a change in the vehicles, not the drivers. The same corrupt practices are still taking place',⁵⁷ 'the leaders and system have not changed'⁵⁸ and

The same old politicians that had overruled and exploit us are in power today. They were and still are greedy leaders. It happens this way because they are rich people and can convince us with a few cups of rice that we cannot afford.⁵⁹

⁴⁹ Mile 91, 27 November 2004.

⁵⁰ Firestone, 12 February 2005.

⁵¹ Firestone, 12 February 2005.

⁵² Tongo, 2 April 2005.

⁵³ Mile 91, 27 November 2004.

⁵⁴ Firestone, 12 February 2005.

⁵⁵ Mile 91, 26 February 2005.

⁵⁶ 'Poyo' is palm wine, a great lubricant of political debate. Poyo bars in some villages are little more than a crude bench under a tree but they are the focus of much informal social interaction, particularly among men.

⁵⁷ Benducha, 17 April 2005.

⁵⁸ Regent, 20 May 2005.

⁵⁹ Tongo, 2 April 2005.

Apparently, other commodities used to buy votes 'they were using drugs and alcohol to fool us. I am referring to the politicians and governments. We now know that the method was wrong. We do not want them to abuse us again.'⁶⁰ 'Recycling' of politicians may be a symptom of early elections before proper institution building (Chapter 3a).

The majority of perspectives inferred that while 'politics' were good, politicians were not, for three main reasons, corruption (see above), lack of engagement with voters after elections and failure to address the needs described in the previous Chapter. 'The Government should help... our Ministers and Honourables. They come during elections to get our votes after which they disappear',⁶¹ 'blame is on the President and Government because they have not helped us. During the election campaigns, they made several promises. But up till now, we have not seen anything. In fact, things are going [down] the drains'⁶² and

It is us who made them ministers and what they are today. They are servants meant to serve the people. They [parliamentarians] should find out our problems and go to the Government to tell them our problems but because they do not know this we take it as the reason for our backwardness. They do not come to us at all.'⁶³

The latter comment again demonstrated a dawning sense of citizenship (see above); this time, that politicians were actually accountable to the electorate that voted for them. 'It is only through democracy that development can be enhanced... while ensuring political accountability'⁶⁴ and 'the Government [has] responsibility to cater for our welfare. We voted it to power.'⁶⁵ The fact that politicians disengaged from the electorate after elections supported the perspective that 'the same old politicians' were still in power. Those used to the patronage system of Presidents Stevens and Momoh catered only for their own faction and overlooked their wider constituency.

Some perspectives indicated disquiet over adversarial politics, 'we want the political parties to stop this fighting and unite. If they do not unite, it is poor people that will [be] affected greatly. Let them unite and work in the interest of the people and the country'⁶⁶ and 'the supporters of the two parties'⁶⁷ accuse each other of destroying this country. There are bitter arguments in Parliament. ... One is for party A, the other for party B'.⁶⁸ This disquiet may be rooted in divergence between western and traditional African styles of democracy, majority versus consensus rule. However, as Wallenstein pointed out (Chapter 3a), the former is 'the predominant thinking in the world today'; international actors prefer to engage in countries with strong, democratic and transparent governments.⁶⁹

⁶⁰ Regent, 20 May 2005.

⁶¹ Benducha, 17 April 2005.

⁶² Mafokie, 22 May 2005.

⁶³ Benducha, 17 April 2005.

⁶⁴ Firestone, 12 February 2005.

⁶⁵ Mile 91, 27 November 2004.

⁶⁶ Mafokie, 22 May 2005.

⁶⁷ A third party, the People's Movement for Democratic Change was registered on 19 January 2006, under the interim leadership of Charles Margai, nephew of Sierra Leone's first Prime Minister, Sir Milton Margai.

⁶⁸ Regent, 20 May 2005.

⁶⁹ Wallenstein, 'Strategic Peacebuilding: Issues and Actors' p 10.

Despite, or maybe because of, disillusionment with central government, perspectives about decentralisation to District Councils were all positive, 'power should be decentralised. It should trickle down to us... Those in power should be consulting us to know first-hand our suffering and give out our views',⁷⁰ 'now that we have got the local councillors⁷¹, they can work with us to ensure that funds or help coming from NGOs and Government be used to promote develop the Chiefdom'⁷² and 'now the local Council is helping us. You can go to the Council in your area instead of Freetown. I think the decentralisation is a great help.'⁷³ Clearly, Councillors were more accessible and closer to the realities of 'ordinary' people.

Having considered those perspectives that linked democratisation to National Government, this Chapter now moves on to perspectives concerning democratisation in the wider society, expressly participation with other 'power holders'. Perspectives concerning participation at Chiefdom level were mixed.⁷⁴ Generally, Chiefdom authorities allowed greater participation by the youth and women than in the past, 'to some extent, the elders now listen to the young. People now know that continued neglect of the young can be dangerous'⁷⁵ and 'women are now considered in development issues. We are recognised though not in the area of Chieftaincy. Women are not still allowed to become Chiefs.⁷⁶ But now whatever concerns the Chiefdom they call us women.'⁷⁷ However, not all experiences were positive,

When I quarrel with my husband, the Elders should be in place to tell the truth but here women are perpetually wrong. This is disgusting. This encourages impunity. Let the right be given where it is due no matter the sex. Women, we can accept being wrong in public but at home, we should be treated equally. Government should give us the same job opportunity with the men.⁷⁸

Paramount Chiefs were deliberately killed during the war or died prematurely, thus many were younger than in previous generations and so naturally inclined towards the youth. Some 'pikin Paramount Chiefs'⁷⁹ lacked experience; this was inferred in comments about Chiefs' weak lobbying, 'the Chief and others should advocate for tractors',⁸⁰ 'we have a Chief who governs us. He needs to solicit help from outside to benefit the community'⁸¹ and 'it is these people [Chiefs] who should explain to Government the needs of the people. Sometimes it takes three or four months without Chiefdom meetings... This is hindering the development of the Chiefdom'.⁸²

⁷⁰ Regent, 20 May 2005.

⁷¹ The first Local Government elections since 1972 were held on 22 May 2004, electing 456 councillors to 19 local councils.

⁷² Mile 91, 26 February 2005.

⁷³ Tongo, 2 April 2005.

⁷⁴ Note that Paramount Chiefs and other Chiefdom officials are elected, but candidates can only come from recognised 'ruling' families.

⁷⁵ Regent, 20 May 2005.

⁷⁶ Comment only refers to the specific Chiefdom. There are about a dozen female Paramount Chiefs in Sierra Leone and many more Town Chiefs and Speakers.

⁷⁷ Mile 91, 27 November 2004.

⁷⁸ Tongo, 17 September 2005.

⁷⁹ Pikin is Krio for 'child'.

⁸⁰ Mile 91, 26 February 2005.

⁸¹ Mafokie, 10 September 2005.

⁸² Benducha, 17 April 2005.

In addition to the Government and Chieftaincies, the other 'power holders' that generated perspectives on participation were NGOs. The previous Chapter discussed the view that NGOs had their own agendas not shaped by local priorities. Consequently, people wanted direct participation with NGOs and were uneasy when NGOs only dealt with 'big men' (Chapter 5d). The latter were not trusted to present grassroots problems and priorities, 'NGOs should come directly to us, no intermediary knows our problem. The problem, we the masses face may not be a problem for the Headman. He cannot represent us well. He is not poor'⁸³ and

They at times come down to us to enquire about our problems but it stops these. Implementation takes place right up there. They don't come back to us to follow-up or bring what we expect. They stay up to those in authority.'⁸⁴

Further, there was concern about 'backroom deals',

NGOs come to us for information but in times of implementation, they stop at the big guns, no more coming down. The heads of NGOs want their own share from project funds, so deal with people who can compromise with them.⁸⁵

However, one dissenting voice thought NGOs had improved their approach,

In the past, when NGOs visit a particular community, they would only call few elders and these elders would then take unilateral decisions. But now NGOs involve community people themselves to decide what to do so that the actual people benefit. The NGOs do not consult individuals but groups to ensure that the right people are targeted.⁸⁶

Since the early 1980s when participatory approaches came into vogue,⁸⁷ 'most [NGOs] at least attempt to develop participatory processes';⁸⁸ certainly NGOs cited in Chapter 3b such as Caritas and IA espoused participation in their publications. The divergence between NGOs and communities was over what was meant by participation. Perspectives portrayed participation as more than an inquisition during 'needs assessment', collecting sand to make cement blocks for the NGO's chosen construction project or even being asked what they would like to contribute towards the NGO's chosen project.⁸⁹ The expectation was a role in project selection and design ('we should be very pleased if NGOs would come, request a meeting with us, so that we plan together'⁹⁰) and, increasingly, monitoring and evaluation (see the previous Chapter) as well as implementation.

There was also divergence about how to 'do' participation, 'most NGOs come abruptly. They return in that manner. Their unceremonial exit is painful'⁹¹ and 'we don't go for them [NGOs], they come and meet us with four-wheel vehicles, they drive straight to the Chiefs, discuss whatever'.⁹² This diverged from the local culture of protracted greetings and introductions and misinterpreted the Chiefs' role of rule by consensus rather than by

⁸³ Regent, 3 September 2005.

⁸⁴ Regent, 20 May 2005.

⁸⁵ Regent, 3 September 2005.

⁸⁶ Mile 91, 26 February 2005.

⁸⁷ Chambers, *Rural Development, Putting The Last First*.

⁸⁸ Dicklitch, *The Elusive Promise Of NGOs In Africa: Lessons From Uganda* p 160.

⁸⁹ Interview with Medical Co-coordinator, Medical Emergency Relief International, 22/03/2004, Kenema.

⁹⁰ Tongo, 17 September 2005.

⁹¹ Regent, 3 September 2005.

⁹² Tongo, 17 September 2005.

representation. The literature regarding synthesising means and ends, presented in Chapter 3a, is relevant here. If an NGO claimed to build peace (or at least to avoid harming peace) then their activities were likely to have more impact if they adopted peace building 'means'; the 'means' being defined by local culture. Thus, following African peace building means, the ideal would be for the Chief to preside over a meeting between community and NGO representatives during which everyone had a chance to speak and discussion would continue until a consensus decision was reached (see Chapter 3b). Thus, participation should aim for consensus rather than majority decisions. A potential problem was that NGO personnel were far more time-bound than their clients were. This African way of peace building resonates with the 'more people' approach identified by RPP (Chapter 3b), rather than 'key people', since it aims to 'engage large numbers of people' in peace building.

Insufficient attention to another cultural dimension also risked reducing the impact of peace building activities. The omnipresence of God and the ancestors in any community (Chapter 3a) brought a dimension to participation that was often overlooked in externally driven peace building activities. God was seen as the origin of peace, 'all we need to do is to continue to pray God to give us a peace ... It was through prayer that the war came to an end',⁹³ 'we should only pray to God ... Let God grant us peace'⁹⁴ and 'another way is to pray fervently to God so that we will love each other'.⁹⁵ Thus, human effort alone could not achieve peace; God's intervention, through the ancestors, was mandatory. Therefore, during any community occasion, the presence of both needed to be honoured, by Christian and Muslim prayers and the pouring of libation. External actors sometimes objected to the latter mistakenly believing that it was 'ancestor worship' but ancestors act as mediators between the living and God, not as deities in their own right (immortal beings similar to saints). Excluding God and the ancestors from community participation had very practical implications⁹⁶ as well as reducing the impact of peace building.

Now to condense these perspectives and discussions about democratisation as an aspect of governance. Perspectives about a number of issues were upbeat, the war ended the one party state, Government and District Councils were elected, there was freedom for political debate and politicians were accountable through the ballot box to the citizens that elected them. There was an unequivocal statement that democracy brought peace. However, there was disappointment with the output from Government and politicians; maybe the latter were too used to the previous one party patronage system. Although rule by the majority diverged from traditional African democracy of rule by consensus, it is likely to continue because of globalisation. Outside the state sector, perspectives demonstrated a desire for participation; generally, this was happening within the Chieftaincy system since

⁹³ Benducha, 17 April 2005.

⁹⁴ Benducha, 4 November 2005.

⁹⁵ Mafokie, 10 September 2005.

⁹⁶ At a community meeting in Kormende on 19/03/2004, I was told that poor maintenance of a relatively new clinic was because it belonged to World Vision, not the community so the community had no responsibility to look after it. Later, the town Chief (also a woman), explained that at the opening ceremony the clinic had only been handed over to half the community i.e. the living. World Vision as a strongly evangelical Christian organisation had not allowed Muslim prayers or libation to the ancestors.

women and the youth were consulted, but not to the desired extent with NGOs. NGOs and the grassroots diverged about what constituted participation and how to do it. The latter stemmed from insufficient attention to local culture related to greeting, consensus building and to whom community membership extended. Since the literature suggested harmonisation of ends and means, it was possible that the impact of peace building was reduced because peace-building methods (as defined by the context) were not adopted; there was certainly evidence that the sustainability of projects was jeopardised when participation did not extend to the whole community (again, as defined locally).

(c) Economic Reconstruction

As with security sector reform, economic reconstruction is high on the agenda of international structuralist peace builders.⁹⁷ However, this was not the case for participants in this study. As mentioned in Chapter 6a, only the researchers suggested direct economic causes of the war and there was only one perspective on the economic damage caused by the war, 'those people who had money to invest, ran away to seek refuge in other countries, as a result those institutions [and] industries that could have created employment closed down'.⁹⁸ In terms of economic reconstruction, livelihoods (see Chapter 6b) and equitable distribution of wealth to address poverty were the greatest concerns. Both concerns converged with Wallenstein's views that job creation should be part of peace building and that equity is key to successful economic development. 'The basic needs of people should be affordable. More jobs should be created for our young people. The resources of the country should be distributed so that the poor masses would benefit'⁹⁹ and 'we have a lot of resources and if they use these resources well, the country will become like London. I don't have the power to do all this but the Government has the power'.¹⁰⁰

There were relatively few perspectives on broader internal economic issues and none connected to external economic activities. 'We need constant power supply. It is a pre-requisite for development. Industries need power.'¹⁰¹ 'We should use Leones and cents but people are calling for pounds and dollars. The value of our money has come down because of this. Renting a house now is dollar. This means converting the Leones tells on its value'¹⁰² and

Development can only take place when people can pay taxes, and people can only pay taxes when they are gainfully employed, but when that is absent the brunt is suffered by the country and this in turn leaves the Government with no option but to loan from the international community.¹⁰³

⁹⁷ Dobbins suggests that economic development and political reforms are the *most* important instruments for making violent societies peaceful.

⁹⁸ Regent, 20 May 2005.

⁹⁹ Regent, 3 September 2005.

¹⁰⁰ Mafokie, 10 September 2005.

¹⁰¹ Regent, 20 May 2005.

¹⁰² Regent, 20 May 2005.

¹⁰³ Firestone, 12 February 2005.

Of course, those paying taxes expected them to bear fruit, 'I pay my taxes and as a fisherman I do own a valid license... but I'm not seeing any benefit from the money that I pay.'¹⁰⁴

This dearth of perspectives related to economics suggested that the topic was divorced, not just divergent, from grassroots reality. Lack of knowledge may have been a factor; evidenced by the fact only the better-educated researchers suggested economic causes of the war. Another factor may have been the Hierarchy of Needs discussed in the previous Chapter; an unemployed person facing a daily struggle to make ends meet on less than a dollar a day does not think about world markets and the prices of coffee and oil, 'our pockets are empty. We live under one dollar per day. If we happened to get money, we can go a long way to develop ourselves'.¹⁰⁵ Although world markets might have explained the neglected coffee farms that used to provide employment and the high price of dried fish transported to local markets.

In outline, economic perspectives were concerned with poverty reduction through livelihoods opportunities and equitable wealth distribution. Broader economic issues and reconstruction did not feature despite their prominence on the international agenda, whether this was through ignorance of 'big picture economics' or the overwhelming nature of grassroots economic hardship was not clear.

Finally, the last section of this Chapter discusses links between these perspectives and this study's hypothesis. As with the need perspectives in the previous Chapter, these governance perspectives did not provide strong evidence that insufficient attention to local culture and priorities reduced the peace building impact of externally driven peace building activities. Peace building suffered negative impacts unrelated to whether local culture and priorities had been addressed; for example, corruption clearly damaged peace building but not because of insufficient attention to local culture and priorities. It was obstructing progress (positive social change) long before the war and the ensuing peace process; indeed, most actors agreed that it was among the causes of the war. Reducing corruption was a priority for both local and external actors; the only divergence was over how to go about it.

Perspectives on democratisation and citizenship disproved both the TRC's contention that the state is abstract and irrelevant to Sierra Leoneans and the assumption behind this study's hypothesis that divergence from local culture and priorities by externally driven activities would inevitably be detrimental to peace building. The evidence suggested that from divergent starting positions a process of convergence was bringing positive social change (the fruit of peace building). Although rights-based citizenship diverged from the local culture of cooperant community membership (see Chapter 3b), these perspectives showed that people were slowly embracing a different reality, more akin to 'the external'. A huge change for some,

¹⁰⁴ Benducha, 17 April 2005.

¹⁰⁵ Tongo, 17 September 2005.

Some of us born in rural villages have not seen light (electricity), motorcars, white people, but with the war, we saw such things ... we interacted even with others outside our community. Through this, we got boldness and understanding. This is a little help we got from the war.¹⁰⁶

This was probably fuelled by greater access to information about the 'outside world' through mobiles phones, the internet, satellite television and the NGO-isation¹⁰⁷ of Sierra Leone. The adoption of the democratisation and citizenship agendas must partly be a pragmatic response to globalisation.

Never the less, calls for the reconstruction of Chiefs' Barries showed a desire to keep some 'old ways'. This highlighted two issues related to this hypothesis, how to define 'local' *visa vis* externally driven peace building activities (national law or grassroots priorities) and that it is not always appropriate to give attention to 'local' culture and priorities. 'The Local Court Act 1963 prohibited Chiefs from adjudicating customary law including presiding over court cases, imposing fines or imprisoning people.'¹⁰⁸ Thus, to support Chiefs' courts might address grassroots priorities but would break national law, not appropriate for peace builders (usually strong advocates of the rule of law). Therefore, another assumption behind the hypothesis was discredited, that local culture and priorities are the most appropriate in the context of peace building.

Just as local priorities are not always the most appropriate, external actors are not always right either. It is puzzling why DFID persisted in tackling corruption through reform of structures and institutions when research shows that this approach 'has produced disappointing results' in Africa. In this case, the local priority of poverty reduction first might be more appropriate. Certainly, the German Government places greatest emphasis on building capacity to secure livelihoods, 'to strengthen people to improve on their own living conditions through their own efforts' (Chapter 4).

In parallel to addressing this study's hypothesis, these governance perspectives raised the issue of best practice and whether better practice would enhance peace building (in a similar way to needs perspectives in the previous Chapter). The anecdote about the Kormende clinic drew attention to a serious practice preach dichotomy. The very actors that preached human rights denied people freedom of religious expression in their own community. This would incense human rights activists in any liberal democracy.

Thus, in the light of these governance perspectives, this study's hypothesis appears shaky; underpinning assumptions that divergence between 'local' and 'external' is 'bad' and that local priorities are 'good' were contradicted and no causal link between attention to local culture and priorities and reduced peace building impact was established (although Galtung's comments would deter anyone from doing so).

¹⁰⁶ Tongo, 17 September 2005.

¹⁰⁷ For example, in 2003, during an NGO health assessment, I took the first vehicle into Yeamai, Margibi County, Liberia (only about 100 km from Monrovia) in over a decade. Thus, a whole generation of children had never seen a vehicle (or mirror). Health assessment 06/11/2003,

¹⁰⁸ Amnesty International, *'Sierra Leone: Women Face Human Rights Abuse In The Informal Legal Sector* p 3.

8 PEACE BUILDING: SOCIETAL RELATIONSHIPS

Chapter 3 highlighted two distinct approaches to peace building, structuralist and psychosocial. The Chapters on need and governance tended to emphasise the former whereas this Chapter concentrates on the latter. However, because these two approaches are complementary and maybe because, as actors such as Caritas suggest, relationships are central to all peace building (Chapter 3b) some relational issues already surfaced among the needs and governance perspectives. Therefore, this Chapter starts by briefly recapping those perspectives related to societal relationships that emerged in previous Chapters. Next relationships involving civilians and the various combatant groups (and their constituencies) are discussed within a framework based on Lederach's reconciliation model (peace, truth, justice and mercy, Chapter 3a). The story of the Organisation for Peace, Reconciliation and Development (OPARD) is narrated as a short case study since it supports the focus groups' perspectives. The third part of this Chapter considers the effect of the war on relationships between civilians, particularly the generation gap. Finally, the extent to which these perspectives inform this study's hypothesis is discussed. This Chapter includes perspectives about the most well known (internationally) externally driven peace building activities in Sierra Leone, namely the TRC and the SCSL, it also illuminates more aspects of local culture.

(a) Recap

Perspectives were unanimous about three root causes of the war, two of which were relational, hatred and tribalism. The majority of perspectives proposed corruption as another root cause; this remained a concern post war and was often attributed to relational roots such as selfishness or lack of care for each other.

Family relationships and responsibilities were the context for many of the need perspectives, how to feed children or pay their school fee for example and the greater difficulties faced in this respect by vulnerable community members such as widows and amputees. Anxiety about the potential for young people to destabilise society (again) often emerged when the needs for education or jobs were linked to the relationship between youth and society generally.

The issue of power relationships between grassroots communities, the State and the nongovernmental sector first emerged from the needs perspectives but also underpinned the governance perspectives. Democratisation and an increasing sense of citizenship seemed to be changing the dynamics of some societal relationships.

Overall, most of the perspectives in the previous two Chapters stemmed from relationships, non-relational structural issues such as sectoral reform or macroeconomics generated few perspectives. This is unsurprising in a society entrenched in an Ubuntu-like system of values (Chapter 3b).

(b) Civilian Combatant Relationships: Peace

Perspectives concerning relationships between civilians and 'fighters' were particularly heterogeneous and generated more data than any other subject, presumably because everybody was anxious to present their particular perspective. These perspectives are now narrated within four milieu, peace (negative and inner), truth, justice and mercy, although inevitably there was overlap.

The first step towards peace that drew comment was DDR, a largely externally driven activity. The focus groups did not mention the Lomé process or the deployment of peacekeepers (ECOMOG and UNAMSIL) other than on some of their timelines, 'during the time of disarmament I used to see how some ex-combatants were misbehaving to the UNAMSIL officers. They were very wild and arrogant just as they used to do when in the bush.'¹ Chapter 6b covered the strengths and weaknesses of the skills training that accompanied DDR.

In terms of reintegration, only Benducha was cautious; they described coexistence rather than any degree of reintegration; 'as for us civilians and the former rebels and CDFs, no one is saying anything against the other. We are living a quiet life'.² Whereas the other five focus groups were upbeat and described life among ex-combatants and civilians with remarkably similar vocabulary; 'doing things in common', 'involved in community activity' or as the Tongo focus group put it, 'playing together'. 'We have become used to each other, [ex-combatants and civilians] share things in common, we joke and laugh. We are all civilians now. We are now brothers and sisters',³ 'the ex-combatants are now living peacefully in our community engaging in skills training'⁴ and 'reconciliation is ongoing because former fighters are with us, we play together. They are not apprehensive neither are we'.⁵ The first comment underlines the role of demobilisation in redefining identities, changing 'combatants' in to 'civilians', even 'brother and sisters', 'they [Imams and Pastors] pleaded with us to refrain from calling them rebels.'⁶ Although civilian identity was not adopted everywhere, in Panguma, Kamajor ranks and titles were still used well in to 2005.⁷

Participant observation moderates Tongo's positive statement that nobody was apprehensive. A weak and emaciated man in his twenties was admitted to Panguma Hospital (10 km from Tongo) with 'dry cough' (probably pulmonary tuberculosis). He reported losing his 'job' (mining diamonds) because of illness, was from Kailahun but had no family contact and 'could not go back there'. The nurses would not give him drugs, meals or any other care and justified this by saying that the fellow was a former RUF fighter and that 'nature should take its course' (he be allowed to die from TB). Later, the patient absconded,

¹ Mafokie, 22 May 2005.

² Benducha, 17 April 2005.

³ Mafokie, 10 September 2005.

⁴ Mile 91, 27 November 2004.

⁵ Tongo, 17 September 2005.

⁶ Tongo, 17 September 2005.

⁷ I first experienced this when being introduced to the Panguma Development Committee 16/10/2004.

leaving behind his merge processions. He had probably overheard such conversations and feared for his safety at the hands of the nurses.⁸

Perspectives showed that there were different depths of reintegration; while some ex-combatants returned home, others reintegrated into civilian life outside their communities of origin,

After the disarmament, most of them [ex-combatants] decided not to go back to their places of birth. They asked us to allow them to stay and to build shelters. They are still living with us. We are living together and doing things in common.⁹

When focus groups used gender-specific terms in the context of DDR, they were always male. This was not surprising, it was acknowledged that 'reintegration policies and programmes ... did not adequately address their [girls] own peculiar needs. In fact, the majority of them [girls] were marginalised by DDR at all levels'.¹⁰

While perspectives indicated that overall civilians coped with reintegration, three focus groups were concerned about the poor relationships between former fighters from different factions, highlighting a possible gap in DDR's activities. 'The drug addicts in the former fighting forces have still not deemed it necessary to reconcile. The Kamajors still have bad feelings against SLA',¹¹ 'the former fighting forces always say odd things about each other and this has spill-over effect on us the civilians'¹² and

Up till now [when] you find a rebel, Kamajor or former soldier, they will end with quarrel. We, civilians have no problem with them. It is because they are all warriors. A thief does not like a fellow thief. I think the two fighters will never come together because they know each other'¹³

This resonates with Beah's dramatic accounts of murderous fights between recently demobilised RUF and SLA followers even at demobilisation centres.¹⁴

During DDR, there was a multimedia campaign to sensitise civilians about the process; perspectives suggested that this, together with other activities that accompanied DDR, was influential. 'Government organised radio programmes and drama shows to teach people how to forget about what has happened. These programmes even encouraged ma[n]y rebels to come out of the bush to disarm',¹⁵ 'peace concerts were organised, we went there with the combatants, with nothing up our sleeves',¹⁶ 'Zambat¹⁷ gave us food we ate and drank together with the fighters. When they disarmed we made no difference to them'¹⁸ and,

⁸ Panguma Hospital, Christmas 2004. Panguma was a Kamajor stronghold during the war.

⁹ Mafokie, 10 September 2005.

¹⁰ Gbla, 'Conflict and Postwar Trauma Among Child Soldiers in Liberia and Sierra Leone' in Sesay (ed), *Civil Wars, Child soldiers and Post Conflict Peace Building in West Africa* p 191.

¹¹ Firestone, 12 February 2005.

¹² Regent, 20 May 2005.

¹³ Tongo, 2 April 2005.

¹⁴ Beah, 'A Long Way Gone' and Bergner, 'Soldiers of Light' pp 135 – 7.

¹⁵ Mafokie, 22 May 2005.

¹⁶ Tongo, 17 September 2005.

¹⁷ The Zambian contingent of UNAMSIL peacekeeping force. They were very popular in and around Tongo (personal experience of living 10 km from Tongo).

¹⁸ Tongo, 2 April 2005.

One man came and taught us about peace and reconciliation and how we should treat soldiers and other ex-combatants when they came into our society again... I first got the sensitisation about the need for reconciliation in Bo, when young men acted concerts depicting forgiveness, disarmament, reconciliation and resettlement.¹⁹

Numerically, DDR was a success; 72,000 ex-combatants were disarmed and reintegrated (to a greater or lesser extent). Chapters 4 and 5d discussed the wider dimensions of DDR effectiveness.

Perspectives addressed another dimension of peace, related to civilian combatant relationships, inner peace or its lack rooted in the atrocities of the war.

One reason why civilians (esp. victims) did not want to see the rebels was because of the atrocities they caused. Let's say, for example, someone whose hands or feet or ears were chopped off by rebels. Such a person would obviously have grievances and bitterness for rebels because he used to be a healthy person.²⁰

Perspectives highlighted the psychological trauma that disturbed people's 'peace of mind', rape being a prominent example, 'the rebel forces especially, were told of capturing young girls and raping them. This caused a lot of illness and trauma',²¹ and 'some of these women [rape victims] are now stigmatised in their various communities to the point that even to get men to marry them is not easy. This has led them to develop broken hearts.'²² Physical, material and relational losses were all blamed for 'broken hearts',

The destruction of houses and properties that had been acquired long time ago affected some of our relatives psychologically. There was pain in their hearts for this loss, so they died... People who had houses and other valuables lost them as a result they could not withstand the shock they died.'²³

Psychological damage also extended to combatants,

Trauma means sick in the hearts. The person may appear normal in the outside but he is recounting in his heart all what has past. Without the help of expert[s] to detraumatise these people, they may get mad. It affected Sierra Leone greatly. In the war, there were no victors, we were all victims... Everybody in the country including some of the perpetrators (for instance child soldiers) was traumatised... if an eight year old has fired a gun and killed, he becomes traumatised and will always reflect on those days. Some behave abnormally after the war.²⁴

Other experiences verified the strong link that some Sierra Leoneans make between emotional heart problems (heartbreak and heart ache) and physical heart problems (heart 'attack'). As early as 2002, people (including expatriate Sisters with decades of nursing experience in Sierra Leone) were commenting on the numbers of people, particularly middle aged men with no history of physical illness, who were dying suddenly or simply not waking up in the morning. Since post mortems were rare, this was popularly attributed to 'sick in the

¹⁹ Tongo, 2 April 2005.

²⁰ Mafokie, 22 May 2005.

²¹ Regent, 20 May 2005. In February 1998, when on a medical team receiving Sierra Leonean refugees into Vahun, Liberia, I looked after a Lebanese grandmother (in her late seventies) who had been gang raped by 'rebels'. Her son said that before the rape she had been a sprightly old lady, she became a speechless, incontinent automaton.

²² Regent, 20 May 2005.

²³ Tongo, 2 April 2005.

²⁴ Regent, 20 May 2005.

hearts'. In addition, many young male Sierra Leonean refugees in Liberia attended clinic with complaints of chest pain and palpitations but showed no physical abnormalities. Practically all had terrible experiences fleeing from Sierra Leone.²⁵

To summarise so far, perspectives suggested that DDR contributed to harmonious public (community) relationships between civilians and ex-combatants. However, relationships between ex-combatants from the different factions caused concern and in private, people's war experiences still disturbed their inner peace (peace of mind). This applied to both civilians and ex-combatants. Next, perspectives on civilian combatant relationships are narrated within the context of truth.

(c) Civilian Combatant Relationships: Truth

General perspectives about truth were limited, 'truth is justice. For instance, your relative may have done wrong to some other person and you find it difficult to tell your relative that he is in the wrong. When you do this, then you're not being just'²⁶ and 'one thing about the truth, it is sour, but it heals'.²⁷

The majority of perspectives linked truth to the TRC. Although it was one of the Lomé provisions and established by Act of the Sierra Leonean Parliament, the TRC was essentially an externally sustained (if not driven) activity (Chapter 5d). Perspectives were divided over whether the truth was told at the TRC or not, 'we were brought together to explain the causes of the war. We realised that all of us played a part in the war'²⁸ and 'it [TRC] was a place where people can go to say what they know about the war and to unite Sierra Leoneans.'²⁹ On the other hand, 'the fact that the truth was concealed made the TRC work a fruitless endeavour. The fear of being implicated by the Special Court made testifiers not to reveal the whole truth. TRC had no impact in our community.'³⁰ Others also felt that the SCSL compromised the TRC, 'some people had a problem with the timing [of the TRC], that it preceded the Special Court. People had fear that the TRC report could be used as evidence at the Special Court.'³¹ This parallel two-pronged approach to transitional justice and the role of truth in Sierra Leone has been debated beyond Sierra Leone's borders (Chapter 5d).

The comment that testifiers did not reveal the 'whole truth' raised the question, what is the truth, whole or otherwise? Everybody expected his or her experiential realities, 'my truth'

²⁵ Once, I advised a young teacher (who spoke excellent English facilitating in-depth conversation) that there were no pills for his pain because it was caused by his experiences, not his body. I suggested that he talk about his symptoms with relatives and friends and seek prayer. He wept bitterly and explained that his wife was shot as she ran beside him and that he had failed her because he had not buried her decently. Weeks later, he returned to say that I was right, talking things out with his friends had cured him and he came to realise that many of them were in the same situation. February 1998, in Vahun, Liberia.

²⁶ Benducha, 4 November 2005

²⁷ Tongo, 17 September 2005.

²⁸ Tongo, 2 April 2005.

²⁹ Mile 91, 27 November 2004.

³⁰ Regent, 3 September 2005.

³¹ Firestone, 7 May 2005.

to appear in the TRC's report.³² Chapter 6a pointed out how Easterners' 'truth' (about when and where the war began) diverged from the TRC's report. Earlier, the war was described as a fragmented jigsaw of micro conflicts rooted in each social unit's own experiential and subjective realities (Chapter 6a); truth is essentially the underside of the war jigsaw, micro truths rooted in individual and community realities, which joined, give an overall picture. The quality of the picture depends on its components. Since testimony to the TRC was always likely to be incomplete or untold³³ expectations of the TRC's truth were probably unrealistic. The TRC's mandate was 'to create an impartial historical record of events'.³⁴ The crucial word being 'an' (impartial record), one version of events, 'the' impartial record, 'whole truth', would be impossible to capture. As mentioned in Chapter 5d, the TRC never had any aspirations to achieve this. However, divergent truths undoubtedly devalued and generated suspicion of the whole TRC process. Some believed that 'truth' was manipulated to satisfy an international agenda. For example, the TRC report alleged that the Kamajors practised cannibalism with the full knowledge and encouragement of the late Chief Sam Hinga Norman.³⁵ It was suggested that TRC officials from overseas fabricated these accounts to justify the SCSL's indictment of Chief Norman and to paint Sierra Leone in a bad light internationally.³⁶ Thus, public or official truth (such as a TRC report) must be as comprehensive as possible to avoid fuelling divisive tensions and prejudices.³⁷

Leaving aside the issue of truth, other perspectives about the TRC were balanced. Some saw its value in initiating local reconciliation efforts, 'it [TRC] was somehow effective. They came to our community on a fact-finding mission. We got the realisation that it was high time we came together. It was mostly by ourselves that we were reconciled'³⁸ and

I can say they [TRC] did a good job, for in their absence we could not have reconciled as a country. In fact, nobody went to testify in the TRC session from Firestone community. We are councillors; we have the capability of solving these types of problems. We have a secret Society, so we use our Society to settle our differences. Decisions reached in our Society bush cannot be challenged out of the bush.³⁹

³² Even me; I am disappointed that a mass grave on the outskirts of Kenema that I visited frequently is not included in the TRC Report's Appendix 4 'Memorials, Mass Graves and Other Sites'. The relatives of those buried there must feel even worse that their loved ones are not officially acknowledged.

³³ On the tenth anniversary of the Panguma killings, the Bishop of Kenema used his homily to criticise the level of participation in the TRC process, 'Truth, truth! What truth? We all know what happened here but no one has said anything'. Panguma 12/03/2004.

³⁴ Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Sierra Leone, *'Witness to The Truth'* Vol 1 p 31.

³⁵ Ibid p 497.

³⁶ Personal Communication. The same informants (all well travelled educated Sierra Leoneans) referred to the Special Court as the 'Devil's Court' because it was doing the devil's work by indicting Chief Norman. However, their gloomy predictions that Sierra Leone would return to civil war if Chief Norman died in custody were wrong.

³⁷ I questioned the TRC's capacity to achieve this having met in Freetown the young Scottish TRC official, Gavin Simpson, who claimed to have taken testimony in Kenema about the March 1994 Panguma killings. He spoke neither Mende nor Krio and had never visited Panguma. His account bore no relation to the eyewitness accounts that were posted to me within days of the attack, even his topographical descriptions were wrong.

³⁸ Regent, 20 May 2005.

³⁹ Firestone, 7 May 2005.

While others thought its role in facilitating forgiveness significant. 'The work of the TRC is fine because it allowed people to confess and ask for forgiveness',⁴⁰ 'they [TRC] did a good job by calling the victims and perpetrators under one roof, say what went wrong (to blow their minds) and ask for or forgive one another' ⁴¹ and

Whenever I came across the guy who maltreated me I became angry. But through the power of the TRC (because they came and talked to us about forgiving our opponents) I was able to accommodate them. I would have loved to attack him personally but thanks to the TRC. There is no bad word among people because the TRC had talked to us about forgiving each other's wrong.⁴²

As well as sensitisation, the TRC gave space for ritualising reconciliation, 'we witnessed the TRC at Bonthe. We saw the reconciliation between an elderly man and a Kamajor who had molested during the war. After some procedures, the Kamajor lay customarily before the elderly man who said he had forgiven him.'⁴³

Negative perspectives revolved round money and personal trauma, 'the TRC was a successful way of wasting money. That money should have been diverted to help with the physical needs of those directly affected by the war'.⁴⁴ 'I did not favour the TRC. This is because any time I think of my brother that was killed, and the idea of standing in front of people talking about it, is not good'⁴⁵ and

The other organisation that was to create more problems for us was the TRC. They told us to come and listen to those who killed our loved ones and burnt our houses. We did not want to have anything to do with them. But thank God for giving us the spirit of mercy, forgiveness and reconciliation.⁴⁶

In short, perspectives related to civilian combatant relationships in the context of truth revolved round the TRC. Its role in forgiveness and spurring local reconciliation were considered strengths but for some the idea of revisiting personal loss was unbearable and others were unhappy about its version of truth. However, the latter was probably based on unrealistic expectations of how much truth the TRC could capture, given that the war generated fragments of truth in every community.

(d) Civilian Combatant Relationships: Justice

The SCSL, initiated by former President Kabbah but with the same elements of externality as the TRC, was a potential focus for perspectives about justice (surrounding civilian combatant relationships). This was not the case; apart from perspectives about its relationship to the TRC (above), there was only one other comment about the SCSL,

⁴⁰ Mile 91, 27 November 2004.

⁴¹ Tongo, 17 September 2005.

⁴² Benducha, 17 April 2005.

⁴³ Benducha, 17 April 2005.

⁴⁴ Regent, 3 September 2005.

⁴⁵ Mafokie, 10 September 2005.

⁴⁶ Mile 91, 26 February 2005.

The Government is taking care of itself by establishing the Special Court to deal with those who have disturbed them (the Government). The Special Court is talking about those who bore the greatest responsibility. But there are people who bore the greatest responsibility and are still at large. And such people are to be brought to justice. We know such people; we see them as they walk around. This thing (the Special Court) should be brought to village level.⁴⁷

There were no perspectives on any other aspect of justice. A likely explanation was that 'the Sierra Leonean people have shown themselves to be amazingly forgiving, but they are also very fatalistic. ... In the spirit of peace and reconciliation, many feel that it is for God or Allah to determine retribution'.⁴⁸ 'Fatalistic' suggested passivity whereas many people were active in nurturing their relationship with God and doing what, they believe, God requires, 'we are a religious people. Religions teach us to forgive those who trespass against us.'⁴⁹ Chapter 3b explained that in the African setting 'religion is life and life is religion' and that peace and religion go hand in hand. The fact that the focus groups did not mention divine justice explicitly may be related to the fact that God and 'His' works are self evident to Africans (Chapter 3a). Some perspectives implied a role for God in justice,

'Even this man who is talking ... his father was killed and he was conscripted. My first son, born 1964, was killed in this war. My other daughter in Kenema was killed. But when they say we should take heart and forgive, we have no option. We are looking up to God.'⁵⁰

Other evidence supported Penfold; during a debate about restorative versus retributive justice, a Sierra Leonean delegate challenged the speakers (including the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey) about omitting divine justice from the discussions, 'my people believe that justice rests with God'. Bishop Peter Lee from South Africa dismissed such an approach as 'inadequate'.⁵¹

It was noteworthy that justice was not considered as an option for dealing with perpetrators who had 'got away with it'; confession and forgiveness were preferred,

What I want is to see those offenders who had not gone through the TRC, to be bold to meet those they had done wrong [to] and ask their forgiveness. This will help greatly. There are plenty of people (perpetrators) who have not done this.⁵²

Thus, it can be concluded from the absence of perspectives, as much as by what was said, that justice was a low priority in the context of civilian combatant relationships. A possible reason was the belief that God is ultimately responsible for justice. At first sight, this contradicts the view of Sarpong and others that justice is an essential component of social peace. However, it did not seem that Sierra Leoneans were denying the importance of justice, merely delaying it in the context of unanimous belief in God's omnipotence; this is what Bishop Lee failed to grasp. The topics of truth and justice had associations with externally driven peace building activities (the TRC and SCSL). Next, this Chapter moves on to

⁴⁷ Benducha, 17 April 2005.

⁴⁸ P. Penfold, 'Will Justice Help Peace In Sierra Leone'.

⁴⁹ Regent, 3 September 2005.

⁵⁰ Mile 91, 27 November 2004.

⁵¹ Community of the Cross of Nails Conference, Coventry Cathedral, July 2004.

⁵² Benducha, 17 April 2005.

consider perspectives on mercy in civilian combatant relationships, these give more insight into local culture and priorities.

(e) Civilian Combatant Relationships: Mercy

One of the perspectives above mentioned 'the spirit of mercy, forgiveness and reconciliation' thus linking the issues that surround reconciliation in a similar way to Lederach's model of reconciliation (Chapter 3a). Others offered similar perspectives,

[What is 'mercy'?] Forgiving somebody who has hurt you. Allowing somebody who has hurt you to go free. Forgiving someone who acknowledges his wrongdoing. To free a culprit out of sympathy However, the person has to show remorse.⁵³

Forgiveness was also the unanimous answer to the question 'what is reconciliation?' Justice never featured. '[What does reconciliation mean?] Forgive and forget',⁵⁴ 'reconciliation is about forgiveness and eventually to forget'⁵⁵ and 'when somebody has hurt you, there is the need to forgive and accept the wrong doer. Reconciliation is forgiveness – forget what has happened and embrace the evil doer.'⁵⁶ The literature generally portrays reconciliation as a process or journey; indeed, one of the perspectives above described it as 'ongoing'. However, this was not unanimous; some saw reconciliation as a discrete moment.

[What is reconciliation?] To create an occasion where people who have been apart as a result of palaver⁵⁷ could come together and forget the past. We know that reconciliation has taken place when people who used to hold different views begin to think in the same way for the growth and development of society.⁵⁸

So, what was forgiveness? 'Forgiveness is when one gives up something. When one gives up or abandons a wrong committed against him/her. The person will beg for forgiveness and when the aggrieved person forgets about the wrong against him. This is forgiveness.'⁵⁹

Thus, these perspectives indicated that forgiveness was the highest priority within the practice of mercy and reconciliation, although compassion (sympathy) and acceptance (embrace the evil does) had their places. Indeed, Sierra Leone gained a reputation for a remarkable capacity to forgive, 'the 250 or so mutilated survivors with no hands or no feet say they do not want revenge. It looks like superhuman forgiveness'⁶⁰ (and Penfold, above). This seemed rooted in a pragmatic compassion, for example,

The rebels initially feared reprisals from us. They will take our properties, even our clothes, and say it is own[ed] by the Government. Well, they have gained nothing out of it. They are still languishing and have no hope. In fact, they should be considered more.⁶¹

⁵³ Tongo, 17 September 2005.

⁵⁴ Regent, 3 September 2005.

⁵⁵ Firestone, 7 May 2005.

⁵⁶ Mile 91, 27 November 2004.

⁵⁷ In Krio 'palaver' means an intense argument or conflict, it is more forceful than in English.

⁵⁸ Firestone, 7 May 2005.

⁵⁹ Benducha, 4 November 2005.

⁶⁰ R. Dowden, 'Justice Goes On Trial In Sierra Leone' *The Guardian*, 03/10/2002 accessed on 18/05/2003 via www.guardian.co.uk.

⁶¹ Mile 91, 26 February 2005.

Since forgiveness appeared so pivotal in post conflict societal relationships, it is relevant to examine detailed perspectives about forgiveness to gain greater insight into local custom and practice.

Forgiveness was not freely dispensed; earlier perspectives concerning the TRC's role in forgiveness and 'offenders who had not gone through the TRC' demonstrated that forgiveness had to be requested (in effect, a confession) and accompanied by signs of contrition, such as the former Kamajor prostrating himself before the old man (above). Even the person who defined forgiveness equated it with acknowledgement of wrongdoing. This resonates with Onah's comment in Chapter 3b that for Africans an admission of guilt is indispensable to healing relationships.

However, when forgiveness was requested in an appropriate manner, it was almost obligatory to grant it in the interests of community harmony, 'our general interest supersedes personal interest.'⁶² If a senior figure petitioned on behalf of the offender, it was even harder for 'a cooperant community member', imbued with Ubuntu values (Chapter 3b), to deny forgiveness. 'An offender may ask some of the elders to plead on his behalf. When this is done forgiveness will surely come'.⁶³ The pastor, quoted earlier, whose son and daughter were killed in the war also explained that when 'they' recommended forgiveness, 'we have no option [but to comply]'.⁶⁴

Another reason why forgiveness could not be denied was a sense of shared responsibility for the conflict 'we must forgive; it was our sons and daughters, brothers and sisters that did this. We are all responsible',⁶⁴ 'let God grant us peace because those who offended us are our brothers'⁶⁵ and

The perpetrators were our brothers and sisters, where can we throw them?⁶⁶ We are to embrace them when once they have expressed remorse...Our community makes little room for revenge. We just felt that to forgive and let go the past was the better option.⁶⁷

People that felt they had a role in society's disintegration were less interested in truth and justice because of the personal implications. As Tutu argued (Chapter 3b) from this Ubuntu perspective, forgiveness and reconciliation become pragmatic self-interest, revenge would damage the whole of humanity to which both reconciler and perpetrator belonged. If, as Sarpong pointed out (Chapter 3b) 'sin rebounds on the whole community' so too, must forgiveness.

There was no suggestion that forgiveness was easy, 'there are those who had forgiven their offenders but there are others who still find it difficult to actually forgive those who did them wrong during the war'.⁶⁸ The informant quoted earlier as saying that 'reconciliation is

⁶² Firestone, 7 May 2005.

⁶³ Benducha, 4 November 2005.

⁶⁴ St Paul's Cathedral Choir, Kenema, Sierra Leone at the launch of their Peace Promoters cassette on 20 April 2002 (only three months after the war officially ended).

⁶⁵ Benducha, 4 November 2005.

⁶⁶ Alludes to Mende proverb 'there's no bad bush to throw a bad child' i.e. there is no option but to keep a 'bad' child within the community.

⁶⁷ Regent, 3 September 2005.

⁶⁸ Benducha, 17 April 2005.

forgiveness' also explained that 'reconciliation is one of the most difficult things to achieve after war/conflict. The major support for reconciliation should come from God'.⁶⁹ Forgiveness was seen as both a requirement of faith (above) and a gift from God,

It's for a sababu⁷⁰ that's more the reason why some could forgive whilst others could not. There are crimes that are forgivable and those that are not. For instance, it will be very difficult to forgive the murderer of your only son. If it were I, I wouldn't.⁷¹

This being the case, prayer and religious leaders inevitably had a significant role in facilitating forgiveness, 'we should only pray to God ...pray that we forget about whatever might have happened to us.'⁷² 'The Imams and pastors helped a lot. Sierra Leone is a religious country. Forgiveness is always preached'⁷³ and

The Elders, who we have respect for, advised us to forgive and forget and to accept them as brother[s] and sisters who had gone astray (made a mistake). We minimized these grudges among ourselves with little help from outside. There was no need because we are all from one family.⁷⁴

Victims needed support to forgive but in addition perpetrators had to be taught to seek it, 'we taught them about forgiveness as some were with the idea that those who killed will never be forgiven by God. We told them there is hope of survival without the gun. Peace has been sustained.'⁷⁵

The positive roles of sensitisation campaigns and 'Secret' Societies in facilitating forgiveness were mentioned earlier. In addition, the whole community supported victims to forgive through rituals and dance,⁷⁶

Even if we are to make sacrifices, we will do just that to bring about forgiveness and reconciliation in our community... we could even perform some ceremonies like making some festivities... dancing and singing. This will soften the aggrieved person's heart and he will forgive easily. The aggrieved person's name will be mentioned in the song and people will dance for him.⁷⁷

Evidence of the significance of song and dance in community peace building also came from the Luawa peace-building workshop mentioned in Chapter 2c. 'Peace songs' were spontaneously composed and performed by both participants and a facilitator. The songs 'echoed the root causes of the dispute and the solutions to bring about peace'.⁷⁸ These community rituals seemed to provide victims with a public acknowledgement of their suffering, which is recognised as 'decisive in the reconciliation dynamic'⁷⁹ (and psychological

⁶⁹ Mile 91, 27 November 2004.

⁷⁰ 'Sababu' is a gift (from God), or 'grace' in Christian tradition.

⁷¹ Benducha, 4 November 2005.

⁷² Benducha, 4 November 2005.

⁷³ Tongo, 17 September 2005.

⁷⁴ Tongo, 17 September 2005.

⁷⁵ Tongo, 17 September 2005.

⁷⁶ To be danced for has deep meaning, concerned with love, honour and praise. At the memorial service for the Bishop of Kenema's late mother, one brother recalled how she used to dance for her children whenever they achieved in life, the only tears of day came when he concluded 'and now there is no-one to dance for us'. Holy Trinity Church, Kenema, May 2006.

⁷⁷ Benducha, 4 November 2005.

⁷⁸ Report on 'Rights-based Peace and Reconciliation Sensitisation Workshop, Kailahun, 10 and 11 April 2006'.

⁷⁹ Lederach, 'Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation In Divided Societies' p 26.

healing). Paffenholz's research cited in Chapter 4 suggested that bridge building activities have little effect on peace building; however, perspectives in this study were positive about such engagement although there was no way to assess impact. 'Another way to strengthen reconciliation between us and ex-combatants is through the organising of social activities such a football, drama and so on and so forth'⁸⁰ and

Social activities such as footballs, mask devil outings, beach outings can all help the process. We promote cultural activities such as dancing with mask devils. We have ogeh, hunting and bondo; we have mau-mau society, which is purely male membership. During our carnival on 1st Jan, we bring people together to celebrate with us and during this occasion, we iron out our differences.'⁸¹

The later resonated with the 'peace spaces' mentioned in Chapter 3b.

External actors commented on Sierra Leoneans' capacity to forgive but their credulity was strained by Sierra Leoneans' emphasis on forgetting. How could anyone forget his or her war experiences? Yet, the majority of perspectives that described mercy, forgiveness and reconciliation linked them to forgetting. It took years of participant observation to understand that people were not referring to amnesia (erased memory) but 'forget' in the sense of leaving something behind but still recalling it, 'I have forgotten my umbrella' means 'I have left my umbrella behind but I still know that I have an umbrella' i.e. remember it. One informant spoke about 'abandoning' wrongs committed against him/her; this may be a clearer term since it does not have connotations of amnesia. A woman, who abandons her baby, removes it from her life, abdicates responsibility for it, but forever knows that she had that baby. Sierra Leoneans in the diaspora have commented on how Europeans bear hurt, grudges and pain, 'you carry too much baggage with you, learn to put down your loads along the journey of life'.⁸² 'Umbrella forgetting' resonated with Shaw's 'social forgetting' (Chapter 5d) but the latter did not adequately encapsulate the notion that personal knowledge of the past persists and is privately remembered.

Another issue related to 'umbrella forgetting' (or abandonment) in the forgiveness process was identities. Western thinking suggests that mentally delinking the perpetrator from their deed can facilitate forgiveness; the deed stands, the human being is forgiven.⁸³ In Sierra Leone, delinking (or redefining) identities seemed more to the fore. A negative identity such as 'fighter', 'killer' or 'criminal' was left behind in favour of a more positive (or less emotive) identity like 'student', 'brother/sister', even 'son/daughter' (in Chapter 5d, Kelsall gives the example of the 'murderer' Tactical who became re-identified as a 'schoolboy'). People with these more positive identities were much easier to accept back into the community, the public manifestation of forgiveness. There was evidence of this re-identification being attempted formally. The Kailahun District Medical Officer, short of personnel, offered former RUF first aiders (many of whom had been conscripted rather than volunteered) training if they joined the Ministry of Health and Sanitation. This demonstrated forgiveness (former rebels now

⁸⁰ Mafokie, 10 September 2005.

⁸¹ Firestone, 7 May 2005.

⁸² Personal communication.

⁸³ M. King Jr., 'The Power of Non-violence' 04/06/1957 accessed on 12/09/2008 via www.teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=1131

working for the government) and gave them the new identity of 'health worker' which changed communities' perceptions of them and enhanced their social standing.⁸⁴

Thus, forgiveness, underpinned by several dimensions of 'umbrella forgetting' was a public position adopted to build community cohesion (public peace) usually facilitated by other community members. However, it did not appear to address inner peace, 'people are forgetting for the time being but the grief is still in their hearts especially those whose houses were burnt and lost loved ones'.⁸⁵ Tensions between public and private, intellectual and emotional might contribute to the sudden deaths from 'sick in the hearts' mentioned earlier.

It can be questioned whether Sierra Leoneans were forgiving (since for some it was not heartfelt and depended on delayed justice) but rather, showing mercy to perpetrators in the 'knowledge' that community needs superseded their own. A contention throughout this study is that context frames definitions so what Sierra Leoneans mean by forgiveness and reconciliation may be different from what a South African, Serbian or Cambodian means but has to be acknowledged as their reality. Also, given that at any one focus group meeting a minimum of three languages were used to discuss such profound issues, allowances must be made for the possibility that subtleties were lost in translation. Mercy, forgiveness and reconciliation are not absolutes so it was likely that dimensions of each happened simultaneously or separately in different places at different times. This may be why focus groups demonstrated different progress towards reconciliation. Tongo and Mile 91 were generally positive about relationships in their communities whereas Benducha was the opposite. They described problems with crime and an uneasy, pragmatic 'truce' between civilians and former fighters where 'no one is saying anything'. Benducha's isolation probably meant they were less exposed to sensitisation during DDR and by the TRC; they lacked a 'midwife' to the process of reconciliation so their progress was slow.

It may not be coincidence that Regent and Tongo, the most positive about the role of religion (God) and opinion leaders in reintegration and reconciliation where the focus groups that included ex-combatants who felt comfortable to identify themselves. Those communities must have travelled some distance on 'the journey towards reconciliation'⁸⁶ to allow an ex-combatant to publicly mention his murders and arson without being lynched. 'We reconciled with one another. First, like me, I have burnt houses, killed innocent people but the people I did these things to have showed me mercy and come around me'⁸⁷ and

I am a former fighter. When the war ended people pointed fingers at me. I feared revenge. But now I am living peaceably in this community, contributing to its development. I feel safe that the community has forgiven me. No one can tell the difference between us and the former combatants. They are not distinct from us. We do not make them feel guilty.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Interview with Dr Alasana Sesay (Director of Maternal and Child Health and Expanded Programme of Immunisation at the Ministry of Health and Sanitation), 16/03/2004, Freetown as part of the Bonthe Evaluation. In Liberia, the United Nations also considered using ex-combatants to reconstruct infrastructure like roads and bridges, to 'create the perception that these guys are builders rather than destroyers', interview with Alfred Nabeta (Humanitarian Affairs Field Officer), Monrovia, 22/09/2003.

⁸⁵ Mile 91, 26 February 2005.

⁸⁶ Quoting the title of Lederach's book, *The Journey Toward Reconciliation*.

⁸⁷ Tongo, 2 April 2005.

⁸⁸ Regent, 3 September 2005.

These last two perspectives provide sufficient summation of this section on civilian combatant relationships.

(f) Organisation for Peace, Reconciliation and Development (OPARD)

Next, the story of OPARD is presented (using Mile 91's narration and my interview with OPARD's founder and Director⁸⁹) as a short case study because it endorses previous discussions about civilian combatant relationships during and after the war. As a CBO founded in October 1999 and operating out of Mile 91, its perspectives were also grassroots. The Mile 91 focus group explained,

Most members of OPARD including their founder, Mukson Sesay, were once captured by the rebels. In fact, when the rebels attacked us in Mile 91 Mukson was made head of a rebel group called G-5. Through this, he was able to know most of the RUF top ranks including General Issa Sesay.⁹⁰ Even when ECOMOG and the Kamajors came later and drove the rebels and civilians from Mile 91, Mukson continued with the G-5. Therefore, when normalcy returned to our area, Mukson and others saw the need to embrace peace and forget the past. We came to realise the irrelevance of the war, the destruction being caused. We saw the need to talk to the rebels, we told them [RUF] that we are all Sierra Leonean, brother and sisters and God's creation. We also told them that the war has caused too much suffering and destruction and that it was us, and not outsiders, that should help develop Sierra Leone. We encouraged those offended to learn to forgive the rebels and embrace them to put an end to our suffering. Therefore, we were able to sensitise both the rebels and the community people on the need to reconcile so that development and peace returns to [Mile] 91.

Even when UNAMSIL officers wanted to contact the rebels, they used to go through OPARD's office ... OPARD was able to facilitate a peace building meeting between the rebels and UNAMSIL peacekeepers at a place called Komrabai. The task was like a tug-of-war but we succeeded in the end.

Also, it was OPARD who facilitated the re-opening of the road leading from Magburaka to Mile 91. Vehicles were now able to transport foodstuffs from one end to the other.⁹¹

In his interview with me, Mukson strongly advocated the use of speeches, drama, fetish and cultural shows to promote trauma healing, forgiveness, reintegration and peace. For example, one drama was based around the story of 'a normal person', attacked and abducted, who came home to find the community was afraid of him, although his situation was 'not of his own making'. Mukson commented that the distinction between perpetrators and victims was blurred, particularly in the case of 'children back from the bush'; they feared that the Government would think of them as collaborators. Mukson was the only informant to point out teachers' key role in reintegration, starting school again brought some normality to the lives of youthful ex-combatants.⁹²

⁸⁹ Interview with OPARD's Director, Ahmed Mukson Sesay, at OPARD's Mile 91 offices on 1 July 2006.

⁹⁰ Indicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone on 3 March 2003 for 'crimes against humanity, violation of the Geneva Conventions... and other serious violations of international humanitarian law ...' see www.sc-sl.org/sesayindictment.html

⁹¹ Mile 91, 26 February 2005.

⁹² A considerable challenge for teachers. In Liberia, they complained of having too many 'top generals' in class who were used to imposing discipline not conforming to it. Personal communication, Kakata, Margibi County, Autumn 2003.

Mukson's perspectives diverged from the focus groups in one respect; he was negative about DDR. Six months training was insufficient to learn a skill such as carpentry and since tools were not provided at the end of training, skills could not be used anyway. Reintegration was superficial; although living in communities, ex-combatants were socially isolated. He did not relate this specifically to the locality of reintegration. Therefore, many ex-combatants were 'reassembling in ghettos with nothing to do'. The focus groups differentiated depths of reintegration (living in any civilian community or living back at home) Mukson's comments added another, reintegration in to the peace economy or economic (as well as social) marginalisation. Mukson wanted to survey beggars and prostitutes to find out how many were 'graduates' of DDR. Mukson's perspectives on DDR came more than 18 months after the first focus group meeting; therefore, it was possible that the manifestations of DDR had changed over time. This again highlights the question raised in Chapter 6b of when to assess impact.

It is relevant to conclude OPARD's story by noting that their strong advocacy of 'theatre' in peace building resonated with the Luawa peace building workshop, another indigenous peace building endeavour. During the Luawa workshop a range of 'theatre' publicised social cohesion, as if being seen to be united, would make 'us' united. The workshop started with exhortations from the Paramount Chief (PC) and District Council Chairperson to work for peace and development since commitment from 'big men' was essential. A peace oath was sworn and peace songs composed and performed. At the end of the workshops peace t-shirts were distributed and worn by all participants.

Participants [and]... brass band, then marched... around Kailahun town. Each ruling family compound was visited ... as a sign of peace. Other family members and bystanders joyfully joined the march past as it wound its way through the town. Finally, the marchers arrived at the PC's [Paramount Chief's] compound where there was much dancing, jubilation and embracing. Then, the PC hosted a delicious Peace Meal for about 150 people (participants, dignitaries and other visitors). The occasion ended with Muslim and Christian prayers and a final blessing from the PC.⁹³

The significance of this 'theatre' was reinforced by the fact that, when planning future activities, the Luawa participants debated whether to undertake commercial, agricultural or drama (cultural) activities and opted for the latter. Part of their plan was 'cultural repatriation' of the youth because participants felt that while displaced during the war, many young people lost touch with their culture, which had so much to teach about 'peace, development, the sacredness of life and the need for unity in nation building'.⁹⁴

In conclusion, OPARD's story and information in their brochure (see Box 2 below), endorsed most of the focus groups' perspectives on civilian combatant relationships and peace building. There was no mention of truth or justice, peace was seen as God-given and inextricably linked to development. Former combatants were to be embraced as brothers and sisters. Community ritual and 'theatre' provided public acknowledgement of both the

⁹³ Report on 'Rights-based Peace and Reconciliation Sensitisation Workshop, Kailahun, 10 and 11 April 2006'.

⁹⁴ Project Proposal 'Cultural Peace Festival for the Youth of Luawa Chiefdom' submitted to GTZ, June 2006, p 2.

victims' pain and suffering and the perpetrators' remorse for their wrong doing. Forgetting was part of forgiving.

Box 2

Extracts from OPARD's Brochure⁹⁵

OPARD'S Mission Statement:

To educate every Sierra Leonean to forgive and forget about deep wounds of war and embrace god-given peace and reconcile with old enemy as new friends and create a peaceful environment for sustainable development.

Beliefs:

- Peace does not depend only on the absence of war but also depends on adequate food, clothing, medical and shelter facilities.
- To achieve total peace in a country that has just emerged from a complex war, we must make a genuine sacrifice and encourage mercy for all.
- For sustainable development people must be made aware of their problems, participate in the planning and implementation of community-based projects.

Interventions:

- Peace education and campaigns
- Trauma healing
- Counselling and guidance
- Child tracing and family reunification
- Child protection
- Support to community self help projects in education, agriculture and health (community cleaning, digging wells and toilets)

(g) Relationships Between Civilians.

Peace building tends to focus on relationships involving disputants and civilians. However, relationships between civilians also attracted comment, tribalism for example. Although perspectives were unanimous that it was a root cause of the war, there was disagreement about the post war situation. 'Evils such as tribalism is still evident. The politics of tribalism and political differences had been immuned [immured] in us'⁹⁶ or 'there is no tribal limit i.e. the Mende can come to 91 and the Temnes can also visit Mende country.'⁹⁷

However, it was perspectives related to deepening fault lines in society caused by the war that highlighted divergence between externally driven peace building activities and local culture and priorities, specifically a widening generation gap.

Three focus groups raised the issue of waning parental control over girls who had early sexual intercourse (which confers 'adulthood', initiated or not). 'These girls [abductees] got out of hands/control because of this early exposure to sex, particularly those who spent quite a long time with the rebels. They no longer listen to elders',⁹⁸ 'even nine years of age girls became pregnant and they no longer respected their parents. Because the child has been exposed to sexual intercourse, she no longer listens to her parents'⁹⁹ and,

⁹⁵ Copied from OPARD's brochure by researchers.

⁹⁶ Regent, 20 May 2005.

⁹⁷ Mile 91, 27 November 2004.

⁹⁸ Mafokie, 22 May 2005.

⁹⁹ Mile 91, 27 November 2004.

Girls were raped and introduced to sex. This exposure to sex made girls no longer submissive to their parents. ...Most of them cannot avoid pregnancy and do not know the value of education. The marriage system is no longer respected... Children are being born by these young girls with no men to own up. ... These wayward girls who have no hope can form a group in our community that will create sensation. They are still useful and Government must help them.'¹⁰⁰

'Create sensation' was code for social conflict of one form or another. Abduction and rape were not the only cause; poverty was another, 'children do not respect their unemployed parents... the Family Support Unit of the Sierra Leone Police Force is seriously engrossed in matters of parents not been able to take care of their families'¹⁰¹ and

As long as you, the parent, cannot afford to provide for these young girls, they just have to go about chasing men to survive... Prostitution has increased...Influence from friends is another factor. Because parents no longer have firm control over their children, they cannot even determine the type of friends these girls should associate with.¹⁰²

These girls risked HIV/AIDS, other sexually transmitted infections and death.

'They [girls abducted or raped] now move with lots of guys because they are used to it... Some even die due to early pregnancy because they have not reached the stage to give birth... one died recently by this swamp. Another died in Bumpetoke... we have warned them to use condoms.'¹⁰³

Apart for the potential for social conflict and the loss of human capacity, the children born in such circumstances would have poor life chances (Chapters 1a and 5d).

Although the psychological trauma of rape was recognised in earlier perspectives, this behaviour and trauma were not linked. It would not be surprising if these girls rejected male authority, which would weaken social fabric since male relatives generally 'ruled the roost'. Boys also had problems, which some linked to their psychological state,

The young boys still continue to take it [drugs] for they are now addicted to it... they are a danger to society because they do things that are not characteristic of a normal human being... Most of the children that were given drugs are not normal today, they do not respect elders, some of them are traumatised because they had to use guns and were used on very deadly missions during the war. Today most of these children are on the street, and one of their major means of survival is theft.¹⁰⁴

All forces involved in the war were seriously involved in drug abuse. This has led to the rapid [rise in] murder cases as a result of the influence of drugs. People become mad no sooner they have taken drugs so that they are never hesitant to behave in any way they feel like.¹⁰⁵

Only Firestone spoke about action against illegal drugs 'now we condemn drugs, campaign against HIV/AIDS etc'¹⁰⁶ but this had started in the Firestone community before the war.

From the time of DDR, NGOs and faith-based groups attempted to address the psychological trauma of young people, focusing chiefly on ex-combatants and 'child'

¹⁰⁰ Tongo, 2 April 2005.

¹⁰¹ Mile 91, 26 February 2005.

¹⁰² Firestone, 12 February 2005.

¹⁰³ Benducha, 17 April 2005.

¹⁰⁴ Regent, 20 May 2005.

¹⁰⁵ Firestone, 7 May 2005.

¹⁰⁶ Firestone, 7 May 2005.

soldiers. Beah graphically described his experience of these services and 'the one-to-one counselling sessions in the psychosocial therapy centre that we hated'.¹⁰⁷

An example of how a mother handled her daughter, who had spent several years in the hands of the RUF (and inevitably been raped), demonstrated divergence from externally driven approaches to trauma healing. The mother, a nurse and midwife, explained that when her daughter was released, 'I flushed all the poison out of her by administering three litres of intravenous fluids quickly'. Then, 'after a rest, I insisted that she went back to school to make something of her life'. Asked about psychological support and testing for sexually transmitted infections, the mother shrugged.¹⁰⁸ (It should be noted that it is taboo for parents to discuss sex with their offspring.) Thus, 'ritual cleansing' (the intravenous fluids being the equivalent), with no other action seemed to put the matter to rest, another manifestation of 'umbrella forgetting' or abandonment. This resonates with the OPARD director's comments, which advocated the same types of 'theatre' to facilitate both forgiveness and trauma healing.

Research by Sierra Leonean academics found 'the problem... is that western psychological healing methods locates the causes of psychological distress within the individual, and therefore devises responses which are primarily based on individual therapy'.¹⁰⁹ The community and victims (including those who are dead) have to participate in healing since 'war related psychological trauma is linked to the anger of the spirits of those killed during the war'.¹¹⁰ These spirits torment their murderers causing symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder such as bedwetting, nightmares and flashbacks. In Northern Sierra Leone, former 'child' soldiers reported that these symptoms stopped once they had participated in public ceremonies, usually including sacrifice, to appease their dead victims.¹¹¹ These ceremonies¹¹² often redefined identities (mentioned above) and brought peace and harmony between the ex-combatant, the community and the ancestors. Western trauma healing was not rejected but 'effective rehabilitation and reintegration of these children... would only be meaningfully realised by the convenient blend of western and African traditional approaches'.¹¹³

The emphasis on 'child' soldiers itself highlights divergence between externally driven activities and Sierra Leonean culture. Initiation into the Poro or Sande Societies confers adulthood rather than chronological age. Since teenagers can be initiated, Sierra Leoneans traditionally considered as adults (responsible for their own actions) many ex-combatants

¹⁰⁷ Beah, 'A Long Way Gone' and Bergner, 'Soldiers of Light' p 138.

¹⁰⁸ Whenever I met the girl (by then 19 years old) she was lively, articulate and doing well at college. Identities withheld, Freetown, several occasions during 2006.

¹⁰⁹ Gbla, 'Conflict and Postwar Trauma Among Child Soldiers in Liberia and Sierra Leone' in Sesay (ed), *Civil Wars, Child soldiers and Post Conflict Peace Building in West Africa* p 186.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Studies in Mozambique and Angola produced similar findings. For example, A. Honwama, 'Healing And Social Reintegration In Mozambique and Angola' in E. Skaar et al (eds) *Roads To Reconciliation* (USA: Lexington Books, 2005) p 83 – 100.

¹¹² For example, the ex-combatant goes into a specially constructed hut, undresses, the hut and old clothes are set on fire and the ex-combatant is symbolically rescued (usually by an older male relative) from the evil of his old life, which is left behind as ashes.

¹¹³ Gbla, 'Conflict and Postwar Trauma Among Child Soldiers in Liberia and Sierra Leone' in Sesay (ed), *Civil Wars, Child soldiers and Post Conflict Peace Building in West Africa* p 168.

defined internationally as 'children' (less than 18 years old). Hence, some are baffled, even annoyed, over the attention given to teenage combatants by external actors.¹¹⁴

However, as mentioned at the beginning of this section, 'unruly' youngsters had not all been fighters, the war damaged intra civilian relationships too. It should be remembered that the majority of young people did not fight in the war; indeed many fled to Guinea to avoid doing so.¹¹⁵ Psychological trauma, drug abuse and poverty appeared to contribute to a widening generation gap. Probably, imported 'youth culture' through the proliferation of relatively cheap video shops also contributed. Western and local approaches to trauma healing had divergent foci. The former concentrated on the individual (perpetrator) and the latter, on the community including victims but the two were not mutually exclusive. This widening generation gap is an example of the risk of putting back in place the pre-conflict status quo (Chapter 4). Since youth marginalisation was a cause of the war, peace building needs to bring positive change in this sphere, not merely more of the same or consequences could be dire (as pointed out in many of the perspectives quoted in previous Chapters). Although some 'children' reported relief following traditional rites, a broader survey of young people's response to traditional beliefs and culture might help inform such change. Research from Uganda gives a clue to a possible problem; there, CECORE found young people were indifferent, even hostile, to traditional methods.¹¹⁶

Finally, the extent to which these perspectives on societal relationships inform this study's hypothesis is discussed. The need and governance perspectives (in previous chapters) provided little support for the hypothesis (that insufficient attention to local culture and priorities reduced the impact of externally driven peace building activities) but showed the negative impact on peace building of other factors such as the war economy and corruption. These perspectives on societal relationships produced no data linked to the latter point but a range of evidence related to peace building impact and local culture and priorities. Some perspectives rendered the hypothesis extraneous by suggesting a complete disconnect between the 'local' and 'external' while others tenuously supported it. Determinants were the level of societal relationship and whether the peace building was direct or indirect (Chapter 3b).

The 'disconnect' between external and local contributions to transforming societal relationships that undermined the hypothesis was partly because these perspectives came from grassroots communities where the main concern was how to live every day with people who had all sorts of different war experiences. Inner peace appeared secondary to public (community) peace. This equated with 'African' peace building's concern for harmonious living but opposed the idea of public peace flowing from inner peace (Chapter 3a). Thus, the sustainability of public peace is questionable when people are still sick at heart. The

¹¹⁴ Personal communication with the Revd Francis Nabieu, President of the Methodist Conference of Sierra Leone March 2005, Freetown. The clash between Indigenous and international values formed the basis of his Masters dissertation at Cliff College, Derbyshire.

¹¹⁵ Personal communication, Eddie and Sao Brima among others, Kenema, 2005/2006.

¹¹⁶ CECORE, '*African Traditional Methods In Conflict Resolution*'.

perspectives showed that different communities (and individuals) were undertaking community life in different ways ranging from coexisting to 'doing things in common'. Creating a more integrated cooperant community was labelled 'reconciliation' (undoubtedly a legacy of the TRC). The literature proposed that reconciliation requires the 'active participation of those who were divided by enmity' (Chapter 3a). Such 'participants' inevitably depend on their own cultural, spiritual and leadership resources which leaves little direct role for 'the external'. The Chapter on needs already commented on the profundity of such local resources in Sierra Leone. The fragmented nature of the conflict and of the truths generated by it also meant that the cultural, spiritual and leadership resources upon which 'participants' drew during reconciliation were very specific to their situation. At times of psychological, as well as physical insecurity, the 'primordial' (Chapter 5a) was to the fore. Again, reducing the role of 'the external' and explaining one of the comments that originally motivated this study, 'foreigners should keep out of other people's reconciliation processes, they do not understand'.¹¹⁷ The intimate nature of the 'resources' required for reconciliation may also partly explain two of Davidheiser's findings in the Gambia, the 'heterogeneity of mediation praxis'¹¹⁸ and the preference for mediators with close links to disputants or the communities in disharmony. It is noteworthy that although dozens of organisations, both international and indigenous, claimed to have supported reconciliation through their activities,¹¹⁹ only one (OPARD) was mentioned by the focus groups. Thus, another assumption underpinning this hypothesis, an inevitable interconnection between the 'local' and 'external' was disproved.

While 'it was mostly by ourselves that we were reconciled', perspectives showed that externally driven peace building activities had a role in creating an 'enabling environment' for the processes of grassroots reconciliation. DDR was clearly a necessary first step and, as such, converged with local priorities. It was externally driven following standard international procedures. There was nothing in local culture to inform disarmament and demobilisation since these activities were totally outside local experience; another example of a complete disconnect between the 'local' and the 'external' that undermined the hypothesis. However, reintegration was a different matter; there was evidence that greater attention to local culture would have increased the impact of the process although the caveats about timeframes and 'desegregation' (Galtung's megalomania) discussed in previous chapters still applied. 'Experts' could prepare ex-combatants for reintegration but communities needed the chance to deal with such people in their own way and to receive them back

¹¹⁷ Personal communication with the Rt Revd Patrick D. Koroma, 06/12/2004, Kenema.

¹¹⁸ Davidheiser, 'Culture And Mediation: A Contemporary Processual Analysis From Southwestern Gambia' p 734.

¹¹⁹ For example, Conciliation Resources (CR) an international NGO registered in the UK facilitates locally led peace initiatives such as the Bo Peace and Reconciliation Movement, which successfully fuses traditional and modern methods of peace building. Accessed on 03/11/2007 via www.c-r.org/about/staff-sierra-leone.php Others include Campaign for Development and Solidarity, Caritas, Children Associated With The War, GOAL Ireland, GTZ, Lutheran World Federation, Methodist Conference of Sierra Leone, Network Movement For Justice and Development, Search For Common Ground, Sierra Leone Red Cross, Tearfund, World Vision (see www.daco-sl.org/encyclopedia and SLANGO NGO Encyclopaedia for more examples).

appropriately. Perspectives demonstrated the importance of public peace building 'theatre' as a forum for this, wrongdoing was acknowledged (confessed), identities redrawn, 'victims' (living and dead) appeased, forgiveness given and there was the potential for any party to experience healing (mainly through abandonment or 'umbrella forgetting').

It is germane that many of the needs and governance perspectives were also concerned with creating an 'enabling environment' by meeting survival needs, re-establishing utilities and services, securing livelihoods, tackling corruption and nurturing citizenship. When responses were inadequate or inequitable, the converse, a 'disabling environment', was also possible. This echoes two aspects of the literature. Firstly, that structuralist peace building should provide a framework for psychosocial processes. Indeed, as mentioned in Chapter 3b, Abu-Nimer used the same example as Mafokie 'reconciliation without addressing... the physical reconstruction of houses ... will be resented'.¹²⁰ Secondly, that external actors best serve reconciliation as Kraybill's 'allies' or as 'midwives' (Chapter 4).

Perspectives suggested that the TRC process was another contribution to the 'enabling environment'. Few informants had engaged with it directly (the Firestone community actively decided not to do so) but its sensitisation campaign (built on earlier DDR activities) raised the profile of reconciliation so triggering local initiatives. The population was receptive to sensitisation because their culture values and accepts the advice and guidance of opinion leaders such as Chiefs, Elders or clerics. Similarly, people were upbeat about any space the TRC gave to peace building 'theatre'. This positivity when the TRC process aligned with local culture provided some support for this study's hypothesis.

There was evidence that its outcome, the TRC report, was potentially divisive because its 'truth' was contentious. Perspectives suggested that the local priority was forgiveness rather than truth or justice. However, truth and justice are part of a globalised agenda that over takes the traditional in a similar way to democratisation and citizenship (Chapters 3a and 7a).¹²¹

The question of when impact should be assessed was discussed in the context of the needs and Mukson's perspectives. Similarly, it pertains to justice and since Charles Taylor's trial at the SCSL is ongoing, it is too soon to comment on the Court's impact on peace building (if any).

Although the literature warned that some African and external actors undervalued African peace building approaches (Chapter 3b), this study's hypothesis (framed while surrounded by disenchanted rural Sierra Leoneans) did not allow for the weakness of local culture and priorities relative to the globalised agenda that underpins much externally driven peace building. The issue of 'child' soldiers (above) is another example along with democratisation, citizenship, truth and justice. Since the 'traditional is not systematised',¹²²

¹²⁰ Abu-Nimer, cited Gawerc, 'Peace Building: Theoretical and Concrete Perspectives' p 459.

¹²¹ The ICC's indictment of Joseph Kony against the Uganda Government's wishes is a glaring current example.

¹²² S. Tadjbakhsh, Centre D'Etudes et Recherches Internationales, Sciences Po, Paris contribution to plenary session 'Human Security and The Legitimisation Of Peacebuilding' IPRA Conference, Leuven Belgium, 15 -19/07/2008.

local tradition and culture cannot not easily compete against 'the predominate thinking in world today'. This resonates with Ould-Abdallah's view that conflicts are 'only internal in principal'; the external is always a factor (Chapter 4). To forge relationships with the international community (and secure external funds) the Government of Sierra Leone had to adopt the 'international agenda' even if at odds with local culture and priorities (Chapter 5d discussed funding conditionality). Former President Kabbah was criticised for his 'deference to Anglo-American opinion'¹²³ but maybe he was just realistic. This is another example of power asymmetry (usually rooted in access to funds) similar to those of international and local NGOs partnerships (Chapter 4) and citizens' relationships with state institutions (Chapter 7a.) Practically, it may seem irrelevant whether or not the impact of externally driven peace building activities was reduced because of insufficient attention to local culture and priorities. However, the issue of better practice remains (Chapter 7c). It is more consistent with the rights based and human security agendas to give attention to local culture and priorities; synthesising means and ends reduces negative 'implicit ethical messages'. Thus, the contention originally generated by the need perspectives that attention to local culture and priorities gives 'added value' to peace building activities rather than dictates overall impact, stands.

¹²³ Jackson, *'In Sierra Leone'* p 99.

9 IN CONCLUSION

This Chapter starts with observations relating to this study's research process and the thesis itself. Next, findings are discussed in the light of the hypothesis and the assumptions that underpin it. Overall shortcomings of the hypothesis in relation to its comparative nature, breadth and 'the global' are summarised. The third Section of this Chapter comments on incidental findings related to externally driven peace building activities. Then, possible gaps in the findings are highlighted and related to the research process. Finally, while cautioning that conclusions are problematic in the context of peace building in Sierra Leone, reflections on how this research might be applied are included and then programmatic questions for practitioners in other contexts tabulated.

(a) About The Research Process

Since discussion in this Section evaluates this study's methodology, it follows a similar structure to Chapter 2. Thus, primary data collection (including tools and approaches) is discussed first, then the research team and the focus groups followed by participant observation. Lastly, the relationship between the research process and this thesis is briefly mentioned.

Primary Data Collection: Tools

In terms of tools, the timelines did not work from a chronological perspective (see Chapter 2) but were still useful in stimulating discussion. The fact that the conflict trees were so contentious and caused a lot of argument gave a dynamic start to focus group meetings; they got the groups working together and turned the spotlight away from the researchers. However, the use of poster sheets and marker pens gave participants the idea that they were attending a workshop for which they should be paid per diems.¹ The SWOT analysis of NGOs did not add to discussions, they were too focused on outcomes.² Maybe the researchers were not clear that SWOT could be used on processes as well as outcomes.

The failure to pilot formally the focus group questionnaires (interview guidelines) was a weakness in the research process; it was a mistake to assume that the researchers (as Sierra Leoneans) would spot difficulties during the November 2004 workshop without field-testing. Fortunately, another mistake redeemed the situation; the researchers did not tape record the first focus group meeting at Home Base in Freetown so the meeting was invalid in research terms but useful for learning lessons about the questionnaire. The fourth question about reconciliation proved inadequate and was redesigned (see Appendix B for further details). The use of the word 'personally' in the questionnaires was debated since rural focus groups could not talk to the 'I', being so community orientated. However, it remained since the Freetown focus groups had fewer problems with the 'I' than with the 'we' (community-

¹ The alternative, drawing images in the sand, would have put the researchers under too much time pressure (to draw copies on paper before darkness fell).

² Strengths revolved round what the NGO had given, bags of rice or wells for example, weakness was the number of bags of rice/wells that the NGO had failed to deliver, opportunity was more rice or wells and threats were the dire consequences in the 'underserved' community such as starvation or cholera.

orientated questions). If focus groups could not speak from a particular perspective (personal or community), the researchers just moved on to the next topic.

Primary Data Collection: Approaches

The focus groups and their communities would be better placed to comment on how the approaches worked. However, the researchers' reports detail good cooperation from communities, a warm reception when they returned for second meetings and 'fond farewells' on their departure. They did face problems with expectations, which would probably have been greater if I had gone to the field. The tape recordings indicated that the researchers were facilitative and good at unpacking comments but less skilled at managing dominant and long-winded participants (maybe because of their youth). Better quality tape recorders with directional microphones would have enhanced the research process. The researchers sometimes forgot or were slow to take the microphone to speakers; overall, the quality of recordings was poor and full of background noise. Unfortunately, two thirds of the tape recordings of the focus group meetings were subsequently stolen when my house in Segbwema was burgled.³ The researchers' reports and completed interview guidelines (English transcripts) were not touched.

In Chapter 2, it was mentioned that 'in qualitative research, the researcher is part of the process'; similarly in peace building 'there is no such thing as a neutral presence during or post conflict'.⁴ Although this study was not concerned directly with building peace, given its context it seemed best to attempt 'peaceful means'⁵ where possible, at least to 'do no harm' (Chapter 3b). For this, I relied on ideas that had been useful in other places, specifically from Lederach, IA and the Caritas Peacebuilding Manual⁶ (Chapter 3b). Thus, culture, relationships, participation, knowing the context and the dynamics between the research, the context and myself were key.

Knowing the dynamics between the context and research(er) largely informed the decision not to undertake field research myself and is described in Chapter 2. Culture was respected by using the Chiefs and Elders as the entry point to communities, giving the Chiefs a substitute for 'kola'⁷ (equivalent to about two pounds sterling a time), serving participants a rice-based meal during workshops and meetings and not insisting on equal numbers of men and women in the focus groups.⁸

The Chief accepted the kola in the presence of other Elders and blessed us for our show of respect. He then asked us to convince him and his Elders about the purpose of our visit... the Elders appreciated us and wished us success... With regards food for the groups, the Quarter Chief was very instrumental; he called his wife ... while he retained the arrangements for soft drinks. [She] suggested that their favourite meal in that area, which was rice and cassava leaves, will be appropriate and was able to work within our budget to cook a delicious meal.⁹

³ The culprits probably thought the tapes were blank and could be used for recording pop music.

⁴ CDA, 'Reflecting on Peace Practice Project' p 5.

⁵ From Galtung 'Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization'.

⁶ Cilliers, Fast et al 'Peacebuilding: A Caritas Manual'.

⁷ Kola is a nut, which contains caffeine and is said to relieve hunger pains when chewed. It is used ceremonially, principally as a sign of friendship, welcome or respect. Marriages are traditionally formalised by the exchange of kola between the two families.

⁸ Although this happened 'spontaneously'.

⁹ Researchers' report on their first visit to Tongo, 2nd April 2005.

The available evidence suggests that relationships and participation between myself, the researchers and focus group communities worked out. The researchers participated in the planning of the research, as well as in the implementation. From their first workshop, they shaped the process from helping design the focus group questionnaires to selecting the focus group locations. During follow-up days, we monitored the process and made modifications as necessary. Their knowledge of the focus groups informed the design of the follow-up questionnaires (interview guidelines). For clarification and added insight, I always discussed each team's reports with them.

However, participation failed in the final phase. The major failure (and disappointment) of this whole study is that the researchers' have not participated in any evaluation of the process or outcome (the thesis). I lost touch with them about six months after returning to the UK.¹⁰ The only way I have been 'accountable' to Sierra Leoneans is by showing my work to Sierra Leonean postgraduate students who were not part of the research process and who, bar one, are UK-based. They disagree with the focus groups' perspectives in many respects; for example, they see great value in the TRC and SCSL. Since they have elite backgrounds and an international outlook (they are in the UK and two have worked for the United Nations) their dissent lends support to my contention that grassroots perspectives need to be heard directly and cannot be represented by elites.

Primary Data Collection: The Research Team

The research team generally performed well. Early in the process one researcher was dismissed because of his laziness and constant demands for money but the others continued to work hard, remained committed and enthusiastic and made no material demands over and above their original contracts (which were generous in terms of days paid for writing up). The administrator probably bore the brunt of such demands; I was aware in the background of rows between him and the researchers but did not investigate. The only dispute brought to my attention concerned the tape recorders not money. Only once did I suspect that the researchers duped me. Their insistence on an additional Sherbro-speaking team member (who happened to be a fellow student) was not well founded; the first tape recording from Benducha proved that Sherbro was unnecessary and the idea that it was difficult to travel in Bonthe with only English, Krio and Mende was spurious (I had done it myself).

Probably the greatest testament to the efficacy of the research team was the unexpected findings and outcomes. The researchers themselves and Sierra Leonean friends (mentioned above) were surprised that all the focus groups mentioned positive effects of the war spontaneously, Mafokie, Benducha and Regent created separate positive and negative

¹⁰ Maybe they could not afford to maintain their phones or to use internet cafes. Later, I learned via the research administrator that one had died (the brightest and most personable). Another abandoned peace studies for law (as a route to political power) which was so difficult he apparently had no time or energy for anything else. Then, another researcher and the administrator himself were resettled to Australia by the United Nations (because of being refugees in Guinea during the 1990s). This completely took over their lives and entailed many time consuming trips to Guinea before they finally left Sierra Leone. Without a reliable contact in Freetown, it has been impossible to maintain my contacts there. The administrator finished a foundation course at a college in Melbourne and is soon to start a peace studies degree.

lists on their conflict tree sheets (see Appendix D and Figure 4). However, it would have been helpful if the researchers had unpacked some of the 'positives' such as 'good relationship with colonial masters'.¹¹ In addition, my Sierra Leonean contacts outside the research process were adamant that the self-confessed ex-combatants would not have given such candid testimony if a European woman had been present. Similarly, it was surprising that a rape victim agreed to participate in the Firestone focus group

One female member of the group who burst into tears said, she was driven from her house. And during the fight, she lost her mother and father and said she was also taken hostage to the bush where she lived with them for years. At this point, the lady abruptly stopped amidst tears running down her eyes and went away. We had to stop for at least fifteen minutes to run after her, console her and let her continue.¹²

Findings challenged the assumptions that underpinned the hypothesis and offered only limited overall support for the hypothesis itself; this was not what I, at least, expected.

Largely fruitless attempts to conduct interviews myself in Freetown also proved the value of the research team and supported the notion that I might be suspected of links with donors (Chapter 2). Many interviewees were deeply suspicious and their responses obviously guarded. One local NGO director trembled and sweated through out the interview (he did not have malaria).¹³ I could have written every response myself; the interviews produced nothing original or revelatory.

Primary Data Collection: Focus Groups

The focus groups worked well and the wider communities seem to have collaborated. There were no problems with recruiting participants (only occasionally with their time keeping), securing venues and finding other help like cooks (who were paid). Women's participation and the return rate for second meetings were pleasing. Once the Chief(s) give support, rural communities usually cooperate. Their relatively strong representation within the focus groups might be considered a price for their support but was normal in the context. In addition, Chief/Elder was a self-ascribed epithet so they may have been better known as farmers or traders by their communities.¹⁴ Their insistence on sending substitutes and extras to second meetings showed interest, 'in fact, other interested Elders had come to see if we could absorb them'.¹⁵ This suggested that the groups were too small. In this case, I allowed western research methodology to dominate Sierra Leonean culture, which is used to big community meetings.

During the Bonthe evaluation, months before this study began (Chapter 2); the evaluation team held community meetings with up to a hundred people and many more hanging round the meeting venue. People were disciplined about letting others speak; sometimes huddles would mutter in a corner and then push a speaker forward, a consensus reached only one person needed to put the point. Only in Benducha did a slanging match

¹¹ Regent Conflict Tree (Figure 4). The comment may have alluded to the British military intervention at the end of the war which was received positively by Sierra Leoneans but this is speculation.

¹² Firestone, 12th February 2005.

¹³ Interview with Director, Peace Child Rescue Mission, July 2006, Freetown.

¹⁴ The Chiefs did not participate in all the focus groups, 'the Chief, though around the whole day, stayed aloof [from] our discussions'.

¹⁵ Researchers' report on their first visit to Tongo, 2nd April 2005.

develop which neither I nor the other evaluators could control, the meeting ended in disarray. For this study, meetings with hundreds of people would have been logistically impossible (tape recording, feeding, recalling to second meetings) but up to 25 people would have been feasible and increased the sample size with relatively little extra cost.

Primary Data Collection: Participant Observation

This research would have been difficult without experience of, and contacts in, rural Sierra Leone. The alternative would be collaboration with a prestigious local development organisation but this would be costly. Pre-war relationships gave me access to different information from the (male) researchers. For example, it was only because of such a relationship that I could talk to the nurse in Freetown about her daughter (abducted and raped by the RUF).

Conversely, talking to others about my research sometimes caused confusion since everybody had a different opinion. The heterogeneity of the focus groups was typical of my contacts in the wider population. As mentioned in Chapter 2, there often seemed to be as many opinions as there were Sierra Leoneans in a room and they seemed able to hold apparently contradictory views. Before the war, a friend with 26 years experience in Sierra Leone warned me 'the longer you are na Salone [in Sierra Leone], the less you understand'.¹⁶

From the outset, my closest confidant said that the focus groups 'were talking rubbish'; he could not accept their reality. Particularly contentious was tribalism, which he was adamant was absent from Sierra Leonean society. However, in 2008, he facilitated a large peace building workshop in Bo at the end of which the participants prioritised the greatest threats to peace in Sierra Leone. He grudgingly admitted that tribalism topped their list.

Although I foresaw that my identity as a health worker might compromise research, I did not anticipate that this research would undermine my position as a health worker. However, my research activities seriously damaged relationships with the Bishop and Health Coordinator in Kenema Diocese (responsible for Panguma Hospital). They both believed my research interest showed a lack of commitment to the hospital (although my services were free) and the Bishop thought I was interfering in other people's reconciliation which foreigners should not do (Chapter 2). This supports the notion that no presence in a post-conflict society is neutral. This affected the research process since they withdrew logistics and so strained my budget.¹⁷ I could not afford generator fuel for light and the laptop so the research process was extremely slow. For example, I did not tabulate the focus group data from the researchers' hand written reports until I returned to the UK. In addition, lack of Internet access made it impossible to keep abreast of the literature over the two years that I was in Sierra Leone.

¹⁶ The late Revd Father McAllister CSSp, Panguma, late 1980s.

¹⁷ For example, the crucial initial workshop with the researchers (arranged when I first arrived in country) was jeopardised. From my research diary, 'since arriving, I have told everybody... that I need to go to Freetown on 2nd Nov for workshop etc. I arrived in Kenema on Monday evening with a weighty box of books, laptop, printer etc. to be told that no transport was organised. Sister just shrugged. With such luggage, the Government bus was out... He [a friend] arranged the loan of a CARITAS vehicle and driver but I had to pay for the fuel, both to reach Freetown and for it to return straightaway, USD \$ 100!'

In summary, participant observation informed the interpretation of findings, indeed supplemented them but slowed the process of their collation. However, this was not a problem of the methodology itself but a lack of resources in my particular case.

The Thesis

This thesis sought to synthesise means and ends by applying to it the peace building principles that guided the research process. Thus, culture is prominent; indeed, synthesis itself is an aspect of African culture (Chapter 3a). Chapter 3 tries to juxtapose western and African writing. In the absence of Sierra Leonean authored sources, West African authors were cited before including others from the rest of the continent. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the amount of literature about peace building from a western stance has burgeoned in the last two decades but there is a dearth of African sources about peace building generally (partly because peace is integrated with religion and life in general). Thus, it was impossible to give equal representation to western and African sources.

Similarly, with the background Chapter on Sierra Leone, the war and the peace, Sierra Leonean authors were cited where possible but were not equally represented although an increasing number of Sierra Leonean academics (both at home and in the diaspora) are now publishing. The background Chapter on Sierra Leone was detailed since 'knowing the context' is crucial to peace building; it sought not only to give background to the perspectives but to the focus group participants themselves. For example, the importance of a big meal during the meetings is clear when one understands the poverty people endure and that half of all adults are undernourished (Chapter 5a). It makes their participation in the research more remarkable.

In relation to participation, this could only be expressed in the thesis by maximising the space given to direct quotations from the focus group participants. Given that an aim of this study was to give voice to Sierra Leonean grassroots perspectives and that the participants so 'liked the idea of their voices being captured and carried away' this was practically obligatory to maintain integrity. This Chapter now discusses those Sierra Leonean grassroots perspectives in the light of the hypothesis and underpinning assumptions; shortcomings of the hypothesis are also summarised.

(b) About The Hypothesis

The hypothesis juxtaposed externally driven peace building activities and the local culture and priorities of a society in, and emerging from, violent conflict. This study's findings suggested that overall the concerns of 'the external' and 'the local' converged. This was demonstrated by the similarities between the three cross cutting themes of the findings (need, governance and societal relationships) and the peace building tracks in the 'official' narrative (military and political peace building and social reconstruction). The focus groups encompassed the military track in comments about DDR (within the 'need' theme) and in their appreciation of UNAMSIL's sensitisation campaigns. Although the focus groups did not specifically mention security (in the sense of halted hostilities), they made pertinent comments linked to SSR within their governance theme. The latter paralleled the political

track and the focus groups' societal relationships theme covered similar issues to the 'official' social reconstruction track.

However, this convergence of broad priorities was not necessarily because external actors specifically attended to local priorities but rather because of certain peace building fundamentals to which both external and local actors inevitably subscribed. Crudely, fighting had to stop, anarchy had to be forestalled (through overall social control/coordination by some entity, whether the United Nations, regional body or National Government),¹⁸ lives had to be saved and preserved (by humanitarian assistance, basic services, livelihoods) and people had to somehow coexist within a sustainable environment. Such fundamentals largely accord with the structuralist peace building prescriptions described in Chapter 3b. Indeed, another example of convergence on broad priorities and fundamentals was the all-round support for the idea that structuralist peace building should provide a framework for psychosocial processes (Chapter 3b). The 'official' narrative described the mutual interdependence of military, political and social peace building; for example, 'promoting mass welfare and curbing official corruption are... critical to the consolidation of peace and democracy' (Chapter 5d).¹⁹ In addition, findings implied that meeting survival needs, re-establishing utilities and services, securing livelihoods, tackling corruption and nurturing citizenship created an 'enabling environment' (Chapter 8g) within which people could re-establish their 'social' lives.

Moving from broad objectives and fundamentals to the externally driven peace building activities that were core to the hypothesis; discussed first are findings that supported the hypothesis, then those that weakened it (including some that repudiated the hypothesis' underpinning assumptions) and finally three overall shortcomings of the hypothesis are summarised. Only limited examples are drawn from previous Chapters, since it is not intended to repeat all that has gone before.

Support For The Hypothesis

It was from among findings related to externally driven activities and social reconstruction and reconciliation that the strongest support for the hypothesis emerged. These findings suggested that insufficient attention to local culture and priorities may have reduced the impact of externally driven activities. Specifically, insufficient attention to public forgiveness, accompanied by traditional 'theatre' and proper contrition was more crucial to social reconstruction than externally driven truth or justice mechanisms. Thus, forgiveness rituals were the most valued aspect of the TRC's work. Otherwise, the TRC and SCSL seemed to have had little impact at the grassroots; for example, 'it was mostly by ourselves that we were reconciled' and 'the Government is taking care of itself by establishing the Special Court' (Chapter 8d). Other research supported this, Kelsall also found that tradition-based ritual affected the community and perpetrators alike and suggested that truth (in the sense of corroborated fact) was not vital to reconciliation in Sierra Leone.²⁰ Further, Shaw suggested

¹⁸ Somalia is an example of what happens when these are absent.

¹⁹ Kandeh, 'Sierra Leone's Post-Conflict Elections Of 2002' p 190.

²⁰ Kelsall, 'Truth, Lies and Ritual: Preliminary Reflections on The TRC in Sierra Leone' p 380.

that truth telling in itself was not culturally appropriate and the TRC Working Group quoted complaints about insufficient attention to traditional reconciliation mechanisms (Chapter 5d). Similarly, it seemed that greater attention to traditional methods of reintegrating ex-combatants (which Shaw suggested evolved over centuries) would have complemented/completed the practical work of DDR (despite its other weaknesses) and of western psychological healing. Forgiveness, by victims and the wider community both living and dead, was also the crux of traditional reintegration and trauma healing. The OPARD Director conflated healing, forgiveness, reintegration and peace.

Within forgiveness and reconciliation, missing cultural components appeared to reduce the impact of externally driven activities (supporting the hypothesis). Whereas findings related to participation, highlighted a relationship between process and impact, it was not only what was included (or not) in externally driven activities but how activities were implemented that was crucial. Although NGOs have espoused participation for over 25 years (Chapters 1a, 3b and 7b), findings suggested that their practice was narrower than communities expected. NGOs rarely extended 'participation' to the whole project cycle; communities did not feel sufficiently engaged in planning, monitoring and evaluation. In some incidences, when insufficient attention was paid to local wisdom during project planning impact was reduced (supporting the hypothesis); Chapter 6b included the example of untimely seed and fertiliser distribution and, as Mile 91 pointed out, 'without food, there can be no peace'. In addition, NGOs did not extent 'participation' to all 'stakeholders'; interacting with Chiefs alone (excluding 'subjects') not only misinterpreted the Chiefs' role but risked generating suspicion and distrust with a potential for conflict (obviously, the antithesis of peace building). The exclusion of the ancestors and God also reduced the impact of some externally driven activities (Kormende Clinic, for example, Chapter 7b) giving further support to the hypothesis. In resonance with RPP's finding that how agencies work communicates 'implicit ethical messages' (Chapter 3a), it was possible that the impact of externally driven peace building activities was reduced because NGOs failed to adopt peace building 'means' (as defined by local culture).

The 'official' narrative of peace building in Sierra Leone suggested that strategic level peace builders also needed a more holistic approach to methods and outcomes. The United Nation's goal of 'transparent and accountable governance, the promotion of democracy' (Chapter 3a) was undermined in Sierra Leone by undemocratic power sharing at Lomé and the methods adopted by external actors. For example, undue conditionality, a 'carrot and stick' approach to an elected sovereign government, external actors own lack of transparency and accountability to that government and the exercise of 'overwhelming' influence relative to that of civil society, which they supposedly aimed to strengthen (Chapter 5c and 5d). Essentially, the issue was still beneficiary participation but at a strategic level.

In relation to peace building overall (rather than to specific externally driven activities), the hypothesis gained support through omission, rather than commission; when external actors did nothing (seemingly because of inattention to local priorities) the impact on peace

building was reduced. Housing was an example; findings linked the reconstruction of burnt homes and peace building in two ways. Bad housing perpetuated the pain and bitterness of the past conflict, 'if they really want reconciliation to be strong, they should build back our houses...' and it generated new enmity when people compared their plight to that of rich Freetonians, 'everyday people build mighty houses in Freetown while I find it difficult to even afford a thatched house' (Chapter 6b). Yet relatively few homes were rebuilt; this was reflected in the 'official' narrative about post war reconstruction. Over two years after the war had officially ended only 20,000 (Chapter 5b) of the estimated 340,000 homes destroyed in the war had been rebuilt (Chapter 5c).

Findings connected to needs assessment was another example where omission, rather than commission, damaged overall peace building and hence supported the hypothesis. Communities participated enthusiastically, even laying on food and dance for 'assessors' but did not always receive feedback. There was evidence that communities waited for NGOs to deliver rather than starting local initiatives such as constructing schools from local materials or saving to pay schools fees (Chapter 6b). Possibly, the NGOs had selected other, more needy, communities for assistance because of their assessments but their failure to communicate with 'unsuccessful' communities undermined local peace building capacity. Indeed, unclear communication generally, seemed to fuel negative perspectives that were unhelpful in terms of peace building although there was little direct evidence that they reduced impact. For example, the perspectives that ICRC supplied weapons to the rebels or that NGOs took large percentages of project budgets for headquarters costs, so depriving beneficiaries.

Weakness Of The Hypothesis

Weakness was most apparent when the hypothesis was transposed; thus, even when there was attention (either conscious or inevitable) to local culture and priorities there was little evidence that this increased the impact of externally driven activities. Two examples follow. First, health; donors, the government, NGOs and villagers all prioritised health (it featured in both the social reconstruction track of peace building and the focus groups' 'need' perspectives). Yet health programmes, externally driven and internally supported have had little impact on the overall health status of Sierra Leoneans (Chapters 1 and 5d).

The second example was corruption. Tackling it was everybody's priority and it received much attention and resources. Donors invested millions of dollars into the ACC, Auditor General's office and public financial management. In addition, the Government launched a National Anti-corruption Strategy. Yet, there was only minimal evidence that all this effort produced an impact. Indeed, the continued diversion of resources from the rightful beneficiaries created enmity, which obstructed peace building (Chapter 6b).

However, while there was convergence about the need to tackle corruption, findings showed divergence about the method. Grassroots opinion favoured a poverty reduction approach whereas some donors advocated a governance approach. Yet research suggested that the governance approach had not worked elsewhere in Africa (Szeftel, Chapter 7a). Those donors (such as the German Government) that favoured capacity building to secure livelihoods were closest to grassroots opinion.

Of greater challenge to the hypothesis were findings that despite attention to local culture and priorities, externally driven peace building activities actually had a negative impact on peace building. The clearest example was humanitarian relief. Everybody agreed it was necessary but it fuelled a war economy that probably prolonged the war.

The hypothesis was also weakened by the repudiation of some underpinning assumptions. For example, the request for the reconstruction of Barries to support Chiefs' courts (against national law) demonstrated that local (grassroots) priorities were not always apt. This repudiated the assumption that *local culture and priorities are the most appropriate in the context of peace building*. This is not to imply that in every peace building situation national law should take precedence over grassroots opinion. The repeal of draconian legislation after a period of authoritarian or repressive rule can take time.

The assumption that *divergence from local culture and priorities by externally driven activities would inevitably be detrimental to peace building* was disproved by the manner in which the idea of citizenship appeared to take root. An idea originally divergent from a local culture where people had been the subjects of their Chiefs for centuries, subservient to elders and lived under state dictatorship. At first sight, it may seem that external actors imposed an alien concept; however, external imposition without a degree of local buy-in is very difficult. Local culture has proved strong enough to resist other external initiatives locally deemed unacceptable, the campaign to end female circumcision for instance. In addition, the overall concept of counterbalance to power was not so alien; the Secret Societies could always mobilise against Chiefs who abused their power.

Findings of a complete disconnect between the 'local' and the 'external' disproved the assumption *that local culture and priorities would always have the capacity to inform externally driven peace building activities, that interconnection between the 'local' and 'external' was inevitable*. For example, there appeared to be nothing in the 'local' to inform disarmament and demobilisation (as distinct from reintegration). Large-scale disarmament and demobilisation were totally outside local experience. Similarly, macroeconomics was divorced from the daily struggle of securing a livelihood and living on less than a dollar a day.

This discussion of findings in relation to the hypothesis is summarised in Table 4 below.

Table 4 **Summary of Findings in Relation to the Study's Hypothesis**

| Approach or Activity | Apparent Peace Building Impact | Support for Hypothesis |
|---|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| INSUFFICIENT attention to local priority of: | | |
| Forgiveness | Reduced | ✓ |
| Participation | Reduced | ✓ |
| (Re)building homes | Negative | ✓ |
| No feedback on needs assessments (unsuccessful communities) | Negative | ✓ |
| SUFFICIENT attention to local priority of: | | |
| Health | Little | Weakened |
| Corruption | Little | Weakened |
| Humanitarian relief | Negative | Undermined |
| Barrie (Chief's Court) construction | Little | Repudiated assumption |
| 'Citizenship' awareness raising | Unclear | Repudiated assumption |
| Disarmament and demobilisation | Positive | Repudiated assumption |
| Macroeconomic measures | Unclear | Repudiated assumption |

Overall Shortcomings Of The Hypothesis

The first was that the hypothesis did not account for the uniqueness of every conflict. It was phrased in comparative terms implying a baseline against which 'reduced' could be measured. Of course, no such baseline existed. The Sierra Leone experience cannot be compared to other conflicts and nothing in Sierra Leone's history was comparable. Nor will the fifteen years covered by this study provide a baseline for any future peace building should Sierra Leone be unfortunate enough to experience another conflict. Global dynamics produce so many variables that like-for-like comparisons in peace building are virtually impossible. This study did not find reduced (or increased) impact from externally driven peace building activities, only 'impact' per se which was sometimes associated with local culture and priorities and other times was not. No causal chain was found, unsurprising since a peace building expert like Galtung had suggested that to do so was nearly impossible (Chapter 4).

Although not a shortcoming of the hypothesis at the time it was formulated, findings during this study suggested that impact (positive or negative, associated or not with the 'local') was not an adequate indicator of peace building achievement (or failure). Impact is concerned with discernable change, for better or worse, but during conflict and its early aftermath maintaining the status quo, stopping an, albeit dire, situation from getting worse might be a considerable achievement. For example, the fact that post war health indicators and malnutrition rates were little different from the 1980s (Chapter 1a) was possibly an achievement. Rather than truly having 'no impact', the basic health services maintained by the Ministry of Health and Sanitation and NGOs during the war may have stopped the health

situation going from bad to worse. However, if the 'bad' continued through the peace then 'no impact' would be an indictment.

The second shortcoming of the hypothesis was that it was too broad. The findings suggested that attention to local culture by externally driven peace building activities was more significant than attention to local priorities. Thus, conflating culture and local priorities was a mistake. It was unsurprising that culture (defined in Chapter 1) emerged as the greater influence on psychosocial peace building in particular since participation, harmony, relationships and forgiveness (for example) were more culturally dependent than structures and systems. In the world today, structuralist issues such as democracy, justice, rights, economics tend to be defined globally, often by treaties and conventions²¹ (rather than locally) and framed by western thought. However, desegregating the significance of attention to local culture from other influences on the impact of externally driven peace building activities is challenging (Chapter 4 and 6b). Thus, it was probably more realistic to say that attention to local culture by external actors 'added value' rather than dictated overall impact.

The third shortcoming of the hypothesis also concerned the 'global' mentioned above. The hypothesis did not allow for the weakness of local culture and priorities relative to the globalised agenda that underpinned much externally driven peace building (Chapter 7). Although 'since the cessation of the conflict, the priority for most Sierra Leoneans has been the reestablishment of the familiar political order based on "primordial" loyalties and secret societies'²² the reality was that 'rule by the majority'-democracy, citizenship, individual rights, truth and justice were to the fore. Undoubtedly, the power of money gave strength to the external (Chapters 4 and 5c) but other factors may have contributed. 'National sovereignty is unravelling and... States are proving less and less capable of performing their traditional tasks. Global factors impinge on government decisions and undermine their capacity to control either external or domestic policies'.²³ This assertion illustrated a postmodern worldview; other dimensions of which emerged in this study. That there were no absolutes of truth, justice and, indeed, conflict, that reality was shaped by experience and that consequently, in peace building, 'standardized formulas do not work' (Chapter 3b) were all essentially postmodern positions. During its years as a 'pre-modern state', Sierra Leone certainly experienced 'a new kind of imperialism'; supposedly, 'one acceptable to a world of human rights and cosmopolitan values... an imperialism which... aims to bring order and organisation.'²⁴ 'New imperialism' sounded like the ethical version of Dobbin's nation building (Chapter 3b). 'A

²¹ Examples include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights came into force in 1976. Four thematic human rights treaties followed covering racial discrimination, discrimination against women, children and torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Parallel regional treaties also exist; for example the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights which, by August 1997, 51 states had ratified.

²² Fanthorpe, 'Sierra Leone: The Influence Of The Secret Societies, With Special Reference To Female Genital Mutilation' p 12.

²³ S. Tadjbakhsh and A. Chenoy, 'Human Security: Concepts and Implications', (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007) p 90.

²⁴ R. Cooper, 'The Post-Modern State' in M. Leonard (ed.) *Reordering The World: The Long-term Implications of September 11th* (UK: Foreign Policy Centre, 2002).

world of human rights' leads in to the third Section of this Chapter concerned with 'the external'.

(c) About The External

Sierra Leonean grassroots' concerns relative to external interests were central to this study since the original motivation for it were doubts about whether the substantial resources going into peace building in Sierra Leone were improving the lives of 'ordinary' people. Thus, the hypothesis compared 'the local' and 'the external' and considered the impact on peace building of divergence (or convergence) between the two. However, during this study, divergence within 'the external' emerged in all three data sets (need, governance and societal relationships). This divergence represented a practice-preach dichotomy between the fieldwork of 'political, developmental, humanitarian and human rights programmes and mechanisms' (Chapter 3a) and 'theories' intended to inform praxis. These included more recently, human security and rights-based 'theory', but also development philosophies like Paulo Freire's popular education theory (Chapter 3b). Therefore, although not directly linked to this study's hypothesis, these incidental findings are highlighted since they hinted at an influence on the impact of externally driven peace building activities beyond a relationship with 'the local' (although to be categorical, further research would be required, more of which later).

Only examples of such incidental findings from each data set are given and the issues of power and accountability mentioned. Evidence in support of these incidental findings from other research and the 'official' narrative of the Sierra Leone war is mentioned. Possible reasons for this divergence within 'the external' related to knowledge, research and attitudes are discussed and finally, an outline for further research is sketched.

From among the 'need' findings, shelter provided the best example of a practice-preach dichotomy. The rebuilding of homes was a local priority inadequately addressed (to date) by externally driven peace building activities. Article XI of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights enshrined adequate housing as a right²⁵ so prioritising the (re)construction of 'schools, clinics, places of worship, markets and police stations faster than homes' (Chapter 6b) diverged from the rights-based approach mentioned in Chapter 4. It could be argued that education and the 'highest attainable standard of physical and mental health', which obviously require infrastructure, are also rights under the same Covenant (Articles 13 and 12 respectively²⁶) and the Covenant did not prioritise rights (unless implied in the order of the Articles). Cultural rights (which appeared in Part I of the Covenant) may be the crux. If, as suggested in Chapter 6b, shelter was prioritised ahead of other reconstruction because of cultural beliefs about peace and peace building then the greater the divergence from the rights-based approach.

²⁵ 'International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights' accessed on 29/01/2009 via http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/a_ceschr.htm

²⁶ Ibid.

The failure to address shelter needs diverged from human security 'theory' in two respects. Inadequate shelter was clearly a threat to human security; Mafokie spoke about 'severe cold' that resulted from 'no proper shelter'²⁷ and Tongo, of 'sleeping in cold conditions' causing 'some diseases [that] should not have killed our children'.²⁸ In addition, since Individuals are central to the idea of human security, disregarding their priorities (without them at least understanding why) again hinted at this practice-preach dichotomy.

Shelter related to the outcomes of external peace building activities whereas participation (from among governance findings) concerned process. The issue was detailed in relation to the hypothesis but it also illustrated a practice-preach dichotomy; agencies have long 'preached' participation but implemented it poorly. Further, denying the right to participation (as DFID considers it, Chapter 4) and the centrality of individuals also diverged from both rights-based and human security 'theory'.

The Kormende clinic incident (Chapter 7b) illustrated an extreme divergence from rights based 'theory', specifically, denying people cultural and religious expression in line with the local culture and social norms of, and in, their own society. Lofty ideals of human security and human rights apart, this hopefully rare episode simply showed a disregard for good manners and lack of basic respect.²⁹ The community's behaviour as 'passive recipients of aid' was striking and raised questions about power relationships and demonstrated just how much 'enabling' of 'people to claim all their human rights' (de facto participation) is needed in some contexts.

A more general practice-preach dichotomy emerged from the societal relationships findings, this time at national level and again related to rights surrounding culture. A globalised agenda including democratisation, citizenship, truth and justice and 'child' soldiers diverged from local preference for consensus and forgiveness and definitions of 'child'. Power relationships were again the crux.

Anderson suggests that power is 'the capacity to compel someone else to do something that they do not want to do'³⁰ (or visa versa), this capacity traditionally came from weapons but throughout this study money appeared to give external actors the capacity to persuade, if not compel, various local actors. Rights and human security approaches are different versions of a 'capacity to compel' based on legal and/or moral 'force', which can be employed to address power imbalance, particularly at grassroots. However, 'some agencies can proclaim their commitment to human rights, yet the bulk of their practice remains entirely unaffected by nice-sounding policies as it is framed by older or competing development models that remain hegemonic in practice.'³¹

²⁷ Mafokie, 10th September 2005.

²⁸ Tongo, 2nd April 2005.

²⁹ Francis argues that respect is crucial in all peace building; 'respect [is] universal and could provide a common, cross-cultural basis for conflict transformation'. D. Francis, *'People, Peace and Power'* (London, Pluto Press, 2002) p 214.

³⁰ P. Anderson, *'The Global Politics Of Power, Justice And Death'* (London: Routledge, 1996) p 13.

³¹ Nyamu-Musembi and Cornwall, *'What Is The "Rights-based Approach" All About? Perspectives From International Development Agencies'* p 5.

This raises the questions of responsibility (for rights) and accountability, generally and between and within agencies. Chapter 4 mentioned self-regulation (since international agencies and NGOs are not parties to international treaties and obligations under international law) but it is unclear how this works. For example, who could call NaCSA to account for their untimely distribution of seeds and fertilisers or World Vision for their behaviour in Kormende and their 'white elephants' such as the Jagor training centre (Chapter 6b)? Donor evaluations tend to look for the number of kilos of seed/fertiliser distributed, patients treated or women trained, not at processes and longer-term outcomes/impact. The failure of statistics to reflect the quality of people's experiences was discussed in Chapter 5d. This study's findings suggest that intra agency, indeed the government's, monitoring and evaluation were weak (Chapter 6b: 'the Government doesn't seem to care. They give contracts to people without doing any follow up', 'they [NGOs] do not evaluate' and 'they usually give large sums of money to build schools and they do not make follow-up'). Another practice-preach dichotomy (which this study found particularly significant in the context of peace building) was when poor monitoring and evaluation allowed resources to go astray, making the intended beneficiaries resentful and breeding enmity between them and those they saw as responsible .

Evidence from other research and the official narrative of the Sierra Leone conflict backed up the notion of practice-preach dichotomies within 'the external'. For example, RPP found that agencies communicated 'implicit ethical messages' by ignoring their own 'theory', such as displaying 'no guns' stickers in vehicle windows and refusing lifts to those carrying weapons but using military escorts and having armed guards at home, which suggested that, after all, weapons were acceptable/necessary. International actors advocated democratically elected governments accountable to their electorates but in practice, used 'carrots and sticks'³² to pressure those governments to comply with the international agenda (Chapter 5d).

Practice-preach dichotomies are ubiquitous and are not confined to peace building. Examples are legion; many UK health professionals smoke, Panguma nurses berated mothers for not using the latrines then urinated against the wall of Children's Ward, the international community mandates peacekeeping operations and then fails to fund them.³³ In Sierra Leone, it appeared that some politicians never intended to keep their promises,

"The trick in politics," S. B. [Sewa Bockarie Marah³⁴] once told me, "is to promise people the earth... What the African likes is promises... even if you don't have the means to keep your promise. Give people excuses, or make some new promise, and they'll forget about the first thing you promised them".³⁵

Reasons for this quirk of human nature must be many and varied. My experience has been that up-to-date 'thinking' is slow to reach practitioners. This was always the case in

³² ICG *'Sierra Leone After Elections: Politics As Usual'* p 20.

³³ The AU mission in Darfur is an example, established by Security Council Resolution 1564 in September 2004 it was starved of money and logistics, by 2007 'forcing members to patrol in jeeps without radio communication and borrow soap and food from private charities' Washington Post 14th May 2007.

³⁴ Sierra Leonean parliamentarian from Independence in 1961 until his death in 2003.

³⁵ Jackson, *'In Sierra Leone'* p 62.

nursing³⁶ and in the humanitarian arena; the Sphere Minimum Standards in Disaster Response,³⁷ (an attempt at self-regulation that the 'rights-based' approach generated) was an example. Although published in 1998, it was not until Darfur in 2007 (after engaging with five humanitarian emergencies³⁸ in the intervening years) that I met NGO field personnel with more than the vaguest idea about Sphere.³⁹ If practitioners themselves (in any discipline) generated research to improve concepts and approaches, this time lag would vanish. Lederach and colleagues' 'Reflective Peacebuilding: ... Toolkit' aims to equip community-based peace builders to develop 'experience based theory'⁴⁰ by pairing reflection and learning with monitoring and evaluation (the latter to include beneficiaries). The high turnover of fieldworkers in all facets of peace building can mean that organisational learning is weak.⁴¹ Lederach and colleagues suggested, somewhat ambitiously, an 'accessible organisational memory' in the form of video, audio and written materials.⁴²

Even when knowledge in the form of 'organisational memory' or research is readily available it does not always influence practice. Practitioners may make a critical decision not to embrace a new idea but repeating past activities and approaches without demonstrable benefit does not seem sensible either. This study cited examples. DFID continued to favour governance mechanisms to tackle corruption despite evidence that it did not work in Africa (Chapter 7a) and external actors still advocate 'conflict analysis' although RPP found little correlation between it and 'good' programmes (Chapter 3b). Of course, attitudes as well as knowledge, influence behaviour/practice. An example in this study was how British soldiers' attitudes overrode sustainability 'theory' and contributed to the slower than expected progress towards local ownership of the SLA (Chapter 5d). Similarly, the 'dictatorial behaviour'⁴³ of OHCHR personal towards TRC staff (Chapter 5d), at odds with good capacity building/technical assistance, was probably rooted in attitudes rather than knowledge.

As mentioned at the beginning of this Section, to know if this divergence within 'the external' had any influence on the impact of externally driven peace building activities would require more research. Indeed, the whole issue of practice-preach dichotomies warrants systematic exploration. Since most agencies nowadays have websites that proclaim what they do and why, the simplest starting point would be to compare those statements with external evaluation reports (which the bravest also post on their websites). Field research could follow. Focus groups, similar to those in this study, could be used to gather perceptions of the agencies' work from each agency's own 'target population'. This would give a more

³⁶ Today it is still possible to go into nursing homes and find pressure areas being cared for in ways that were discredited in the 1970s.

³⁷ The Sphere Project, *'Humanitarian Charter And Minimum Standards In Disaster Response'* p 260.

³⁸ Albania, Angola, Zambia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, and Sierra Leone.

³⁹ After years of neglect, Sphere Standards were rigidly applied in Darfur rather than contextualised. Thus, the standard of 15 litres of water per person per day was fruitlessly pursued regardless of the desert topography and the fact that many people had not had access to 15 litres of water per day in their entire lives.

⁴⁰ Lederach et al, *'Reflective Peacebuilding: A Planning, Monitoring And learning Toolkit'* p 3.

⁴¹ At Kenema Pastoral Centre in 2005, I met a student from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi researching retaining organisational memory for his PhD.

⁴² Lederach et al, *'Reflective Peacebuilding: A Planning, Monitoring And learning Toolkit'* p 11.

⁴³ ICG, *'Sierra Leone's Truth And Reconciliation Commission: A Fresh Start'* p 8.

direct comparison between grassroots perspectives and externally driven peace building activities than this study provided. A criticism of this study could be that actors from agencies and government did not have a 'right of reply'. However, their points of view were well represented in the overabundance of reports that they have all published and this study was intended to redress the balance, in an albeit very small way, in favour of grassroots' voices.

Having discussed what this study found in relation to the hypothesis and 'the external', this next Section considers issues, which contrary to expectations, were not found.

(d) About Gaps

Since this study is about grassroots perspectives, the focus groups determined the main issues included in it. The introductions to both Chapters 3 and 4 point out that certain peace building issues of international concern are omitted (because they were not raised by the focus groups).⁴⁴ Chapters 6 and 8 do comment on what the focus groups did not say; for example, youth, education and agriculture dominated the need perspectives but the relevant line Ministries were never mentioned in terms of either service delivery or reform of structures and institutions. Another example is the absence of perspectives on justice, suggesting that it was a low priority in the context of civilian combatant relationships.

From my perspective, this study's whole purpose (to explore grassroots perspectives of peace building) could be undermined by consideration of what the focus groups did *not* say; since this leads to alternative worldviews (to those of the grassroots) being applied to the Sierra Leone context. Chapter 5d already questioned whether 'the dominance of the international community' was a concern of the grassroots or of elites and western liberals. However, such considerations may be pragmatic in a globalised world and help highlight divergence between the 'local' and the 'external', which may reduce peace building impact.

The focus group perspectives are not as strongly generational or gendered as the historical narrative in Chapter 5 (and the literature it cites) suggests (at least, to those concerned with human rights and equality). For example, youth alienation is accepted as a root cause of the civil war and, according to Berewa and others, a dire threat to the peace. The experiences, of mainly male, child combatants, have been popularised by Beah⁴⁵ and the sexual violence experienced by women and girls is emphasised in reports by HRW⁴⁶ and the TRC⁴⁷ (although the majority of war victims were men⁴⁸ aged 16 - 45 years). Sierra Leone

⁴⁴ For example, pacifism/non-violence, terrorism, arms and nuclear weapons control, the 'right to protect', international justice mechanisms (the International Criminal Court) and the United Nations Security Council and Peace Building Commission.

⁴⁵ Beah, 'A Long Way Gone'.

⁴⁶ HRW, 'We'll Kill You If You Cry: Sexual Violence in the Sierra Leone Conflict, 2003'.

⁴⁷ TRC, 'Witness to The Truth' Volume 3B, Chapter 3.

⁴⁸ Of 'violations' documented by the TRC, 33% (13038/40103) were against females and 67% (27065/40103) against males. (139 violations did not have the victim's sex). Males and females did not suffer the same kinds of violations. General violations (forced displacement, abduction, assault) follow a 1/3 female: 2/3 male ratio. Some violations were suffered exclusively by females (rape, sexual slavery) and others overwhelmingly by males (forced recruitment, forced labour, killing). 82% (18040/22041) were against adults and 18% (4001/22041) were against children age 17 and under. (18,201 violations had no

Government documents acknowledge the post war persistence of gender bias in areas such as education.⁴⁹ Although the focus groups did discuss generational and gender issues broadly in relation to youth unemployment (Chapter 6b), physical and psychological trauma (Chapters 6a and 8b) and intra-civilian relationships (Chapter 8g), personal perspectives of being young, female or male were few. The candid discussion in mixed sex focus groups about the impact of rape (and drug abuse) on parental control (Chapter 8g) showed a marked departure from pre-war social norms when it was taboo for women to mention rape in the presence of men.

There are several possible reasons why relatively few specifically female, male, youthful (and elderly, for that matter) perspectives emerged from the focus groups. It could be that experiences and memories of the war and its aftermath were 'collectivised'; owned by the whole community rather than by individuals and social groups (just as forgiveness turned out to be a community, rather than personal, matter, Chapter 8e). The researchers found that in rural areas people generally struggled to speak from the 'I' and were more comfortable with 'we' (see Section a and Appendix B).

Another possible reason is that the taboos surrounding interaction between the sexes and generations may not have entirely disappeared. Rarely did focus groups participants speak from the point of view of being young; only Tongo mentioned that although young, they were trustworthy (Chapter 6b). Maybe youthful participants were inhibited by 'elders' (who expressed many negative views about 'youth'). However, female participants did not appear cowed in mixed company. For example, women were the vociferous majority in the Freetown focus groups (Chapter 2), Tongo women expressed outrage at the gender bias of some Elders (Chapter 7b) and the participant, distressed at recalling her abduction (and inevitable rape), chose to rejoin the discussion rather than leave (see Section a). 'Common knowledge' may be a factor; matters, which in the past were kept secret within families (or 'Secret' societies) became public through the disruption and displacement of the war. Taboos are pointless when everybody knows that everybody knows.

The dearth of specifically generational or gender perspectives may be a product of this study's methodology. The focus groups were located to capture different community experiences of the war (Chapter 2); no attempt was made to segregate experiences within communities; for example, by tribe, religion, age or gender. Women's experiences as combatants⁵⁰ did not emerge in this study nor did those of young people (mainly men) who became refugees to avoid conscription into any fighting force (Chapter 8g). Future research, with greater resources, could start segregation by working with peer focus groups (old men,

age given). R. Conibere et al., *'Statistical Appendix To The Report Of The Truth And Reconciliation Commission Of Sierra Leone'* (California: Human Rights Data Analysis Group, Beneath Initiative, 2004).

⁴⁹Government of Sierra Leone, *'Millennium Development Goals: Report For Sierra Leone 2005'* p viii.

⁵⁰ Some women voluntarily became combatants to change the stereotypical image of women. 'Adama Cut hand', 'Lieutenant Cause Trouble' and 'Kumba Blood' were very popular in the RUF. B. Mansaray, 'Women and Peacemaking in Sierra Leone' in A. Ayissi and R. Poulton (eds), *Bound To Cooperate Conflict, Peace and People in Sierra Leone* (Geneva: UNIDIR, 2006) p 146.

young men, old women and young women).⁵¹ This study captures a broad range of grassroots perspectives but, given their critical role in the war and in sustaining the peace, a logical follow-up would be a detailed exploration of young peoples' perspectives (uninhibited by the presence of 'elders'). This might address the question raised in Chapter 8g; young people's response to traditional beliefs and culture particularly in the context of social reconstruction.

(e) About Conclusions and Applications

Various insights from this study suggest that drawing overarching conclusions about peace building in Sierra Leone would be imprudent. Wiser heads caution against it, for example, Fisher (among several writers cited in Chapter 3b), 'no single individual or organisation could know the answers to the problems of building peaceful and just societies... Peace work learns from experience but has no blueprints.'⁵² Even peace building manuals (such as those cited in Chapter 3b from Caritas,⁵³ IA,⁵⁴ and Dobbins⁵⁵), which might be considered 'blueprints'; all warn that there are no 'recipes' or 'simple formulae' for peace building. Grounds for this included the 'complexity of the [peace building] enterprise'⁵⁶ and the 'uniquely human dimensions'⁵⁷ of any conflict rooted in its 'own history, culture, personages, values and tensions'.⁵⁸ 'Contradictions and inconsistencies' in the literature (Chapter 4) reinforced the notions of complexity and uniqueness as did the fact that the particularities of peace building in Sierra Leone supported both sides in certain debates. For example, there was support for both 'external actors generally dominate peace building'⁵⁹ and 'civilian action or protest can be the decisive factor in efforts for peace'⁶⁰ (Chapter 4) and for both democratisation as a greater priority than security and for security as a greater priority than democracy (Chapter 5b). Thus, peace building appeared amoebic, changing shape over time; what was true one day, was not true the next. This is pertinent, since, on any time scale (Chapters 5a and 5d)⁶¹ peace building in Sierra Leone is still a work in progress.

Next, the heterogeneity of the focus group perspectives (Chapter 6a) showed that what was viewed externally as one conflict, namely 'The Sierra Leonean Civil War', was in fact a fragmented jigsaw of micro conflicts, each of which generated its own truths (Chapter 8c). In addition, the ICG implied a similar fragmentation of justice (Chapter 5d). Thus, overarching conclusions would concur with some realities and contradict others, risking

⁵¹ This idea comes from the Stepping Stones methodology for HIV/AIDS education; after a series of workshops with the different peer groups the programme ends with two comparative meetings with all peer groups and a closing meeting for the whole community. See <http://www.stratshope.org/t-training.htm>.

⁵² Fisher, 'Spirited Living Waging Conflict Building Peace' pp 3 and 7.

⁵³ Cilliers, Fast et al 'Peacebuilding: A Caritas Manual'.

⁵⁴ IA, 'Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Building: Tools for Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment' Complete Resource Pack (2004).

⁵⁵ Dobbins et al, 'The Beginner's Guide to Nation-building'.

⁵⁶ Wallenstein, 'Strategic Peacebuilding: Issues and Actors' p 4.

⁵⁷ Lederach, 'Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation In Divided Societies' pp 23 and 24.

⁵⁸ Anderson, 'Do No Harm How Aid Can Support Peace – Or War' p 2.

⁵⁹ Kuhne (ed), 'Winning the Peace: Concepts and Lessons Learned of Post Conflict Peace Building' p 5.

⁶⁰ Gawerc, 'Peace Building: Theoretical and Concrete Perspectives' p 441.

⁶¹ Wallenstein, 'Strategic Peacebuilding: Issues and Actors' p 5 and Ellis, 'How To Rebuild Africa' p 143.

conflict (a point resonant with Shaw's view about the danger of truth commissions,⁶² Chapter 5d). Consequently, such a small study cannot draw overarching conclusions but only generate reflection and questions for the interrogation of other conflict and peace building situations (Chapter 4). Essentially, this study joins the body of literature that provides 'food for thought' through case studies and 'lessons learned' (Chapter 3b).

Chapter 1 explained the genesis of this study in my own experience as a health/relief/development practitioner in Sierra Leone and elsewhere. Therefore, since my interest remains best (or at least, better) practice, this study ends with a practitioner's reflections on how this research might be applied; essentially, highlighting the 'food for thought' and 'lessons learned' from this 'case study' (a research thesis such as this is not the place for detailed policy debates or guidelines). Once again, 'experiential and subjective realities' come into play; my interpretation of these findings may differ from those of practitioners working in other contexts. Four topics are discussed, vertical coherence, communications, power and mainstreaming. Then programmatic questions for other contexts are tabulated.

Vertical Coherence

As discussed in Section c, findings tentatively suggest that the impact of peace building may be reduced by practice-preach dichotomies within the 'external' (although the issue needs further research). Deficiencies in the processes or outcomes of peace building are not usually because Governments, donors or NGOs lack principles or policy. They all espouse human rights (and increasingly human security), which encompass notions such as dignity and freedom from need which means food, housing, employment and education (among many) become 'rights'. Various codes of conduct and declarations give gravitas to these principles⁶³ but the effect is not always apparent (Section c already suggested reasons for this). Although vertical coherence is not exclusively an issue for NGOs, they are increasingly including its evaluation in external consultants' terms of reference⁶⁴ but this is too late; it would be more proactive to include it in routine monitoring (and internal evaluation). The focus groups already identified monitoring and evaluation as a tool of peace building (by ensuring beneficiaries receive their due and so precluding new reasons for enmity); promoting vertical coherence would be another component of that role.

Although beneficiary monitoring and evaluation is widely accepted, it needs broadening to include the wider social networks within which activities are implemented. At grassroots, projects that specifically target, for example, farmers, illiterates, youth or women should be subject to community monitoring and periodic evaluation. The women's micro

⁶² Shaw, *Rethinking Truth And Reconciliation Commissions Lessons From Sierra Leone* p 3.

⁶³ Examples from earlier in this study include: the 'Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness', IA's 'Code of Conduct: Conflict Transformation at Work', Sphere's 'Humanitarian Charter And Minimum Standards In Disaster Response' and 'The Code Of Conduct For International Red Cross And Red Crescent Movement And Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) In Disaster Relief.

⁶⁴ In addition, 'horizontal coherence', but this is more problematic. If 'horizontal' extends regionally or beyond, there is a risk that 'one-size-fits-all' prescriptions overwhelm the uniqueness of context and culture. For example, if DFID uses the same policing model wherever they undertake SSR it is horizontally coherent but that model may not be the most appropriate for the context. In Sierra Leone, there were tensions over which policing models to apply (Chapter 5d).

credit schemes cited in Chapter 1a, might have benefitted from men's input during monitoring and evaluation (and indeed, during planning). At a strategic level, monitoring and evaluation usually does extend beyond immediate 'beneficiaries'; interventions at one Ministry or state institution are coordinated within the Cabinet and/or Presidency. For example, throughout the SSR process responsibility for national security remained with the President.⁶⁵

Broader-based monitoring and evaluation may help reduce 'incoherence' within programmes/projects such as RPP's 'implicit ethical messages' (Chapter 3a) and behaviour inconsistencies like the nutritionist who advocated groundnuts for protein but never ate local food (Chapter 1a).

In summary, vertical cohesion should be addressed by monitoring and evaluation, involving not only target beneficiaries but also representatives of their wider social networks. External evaluations can provide back-up when intra agency, even governmental, monitoring and evaluation are weak (as in Sierra Leone according to this study's findings, Chapter 6b)

Communications

Chapter 6b and Section b, suggested that some of the focus groups' negative perspectives stemmed from unclear (or non-exist) communication breeding misconceptions. In addition, the research process itself showed the complexity of sharing meaning rather than just words (for example, 'forget' in Chapter 8e). In some instances agencies and communities used the same vocabulary but meant different things; 'community' and 'participation' had a narrower meaning for some agencies than their 'beneficiaries'. Chapter 7a pointed out that 'citizenship' might have been accepted more quickly if, the meaning of 'city' (whether family, tribe or nation) had been explored.

Good teachers, development and health workers know to establish whether the intended message was the one actually received,⁶⁶ most simply by asking recipients of the message to repeat it or answer questions about it. More generally, agency personnel need to use communication as an opportunity to explore meaning rather than just for didactic input, for facilitation rather than sermonising. This would help address the 'quality of communications' mentioned in the German Utstein report (Chapter 3b).

It is noteworthy that muddled use of words and meaning exists among peace builders themselves. In Sierra Leone much of the discussion about 'reconciliation' (restoration of pre-existing relationships) was actually about 'conciliation' (the establishment of new positive relationships). Many who speak of 'reconciling' with the ex-combatants who had destroyed homes, do not actually know who burnt down specific homes, they are talking about

⁶⁵ President Kabbah had several roles, including Minister of Defence (who appoints the Chief of Defence Staff), Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Chairman of the National Security Council and Chairman of the Defence Council (which depended on his consent to make rules). O. Gbla, 'Security Sector Reform Under International Tutelage In Sierra Leone' p 88.

⁶⁶ In the health sector, examples of misinterpreted messages are legion. For example, a mother putting antibiotic syrup in her baby's infected ears (rather than giving it by mouth) or a woman complaining of pregnancy despite placing a condom-covered banana beside the bed every night. A friend (working in Belize) used a banana in a demonstration of condom use and had clearly failed to communicate what the banana was representing.

conciliation between ex-combatants and victims with whom those ex-combatants had no pre-existing personal ties. Restarting a pre-existing relationship shattered by the war such as living in the same village as a neighbour's son who killed your father (or your own son, who raped you, killed your husband) is something very different. Being clearer about the different processes that contribute to post-conflict societal relationships would make it easier to target support, important when resources are scarce. For example, victims and perpetrators engaged in reconciliation have more need of trauma healing services than those engaged in conciliation.

The end of Chapter 4 cautions against 're-creating pre war conditions since these were often structurally violent. The same is true for relationships; in some circumstances (between young people and the Chiefs for example) conciliation may be more supportive of positive social change than 're'conciliation

Power

Many aspects of power emerged during this study; the abuse of political power that contributed to the war, the problems of sharing it at Lomé, the 'overwhelming power of the international community' linked to the 'one-sided control of the wallet [that] gives the lie to the equality implied by the term [partnership]',⁶⁷ grassroots powerlessness in relation to structures and institutions, the traditional role of Divine and mystical power in peace building.

For a practitioner, the power dynamics between internal and external actors are a particular concern, but difficult to address through policy. This study suggests that peace building actors need to be conscious of their own power from whatever source⁶⁸ and the responsibilities that it brings but also conscious of the power of others, sometimes derived from less obvious sources. Chapter 6b discusses how local knowledge has the power to make things work when money (with ignorance) cannot.

The need to exercise of power sensitively resonates with Brand-Jacobsen and Jacobsen's caution (cited in Chapter 4) that external actors need to 'be humbler... and work to promote greater co-operation between efforts and greater support for indigenous forces and capacities for peace'.⁶⁹ This comment makes an excellent summation of many of this study's findings.

Mainstreaming

I agree with Caritas that peace building should 'permeate'⁷⁰ all interventions in a conflict context (pre, during and post); 'mainstreamed' in current jargon. Since no presence in any phase of a conflict is neutral (Chapter 4), being present brings a responsibility to strive for positive impact on peace processes. This includes those who work *in* conflicts as well as those that work *on* conflicts. Mainstreaming is more actively pro-peace than the 'do no harm' approach (Chapter X) and means applying a peace building filter to all activities and

⁶⁷ Clark, 'Democratising Development - The Role of Voluntary Organisations' p 70.

⁶⁸ The peacekeeper's gun, human rights activists' legal and/or moral 'force' or money in the case of the United Nations, Governments, donors and NGOs.

⁶⁹ Brand-Jacobsen with Jacobsen, 'Beyond Mediation: Towards More Holistic Approaches To Peace-building And Peace Actor Empowerment' in J. Galtung et al. *Searching For Peace, The Road To Transcend* p 76.

⁷⁰ Cilliers, Fast et al 'Peacebuilding: A Caritas Manual' p vii.

processes. Agencies that do not have specific peace building mandates may not want to change their core activities but can employ 'peaceful means' to achieve their goals. Caritas suggests these should include genuinely participatory processes and attention to relationships (not only between disputants but between external actors and agency personnel, beneficiaries and their social networks). Local cultures and priorities will determine other 'peace means'; for example, in Sierra Leone, working for consensus rather than majority decisions. The programmatic questions for other peace building contexts in Table 5 (below) also imply other 'peaceful means'.

Table 5 **Programme Questions For Other Peace Building Contexts**

| Question | Related Findings/Comments: |
|--|---|
| <i>Is another needs assessment necessary just to select the location/sector of an intervention?</i> | <p>Lack of feedback to 'unsuccessful' communities after needs assessment stifled local initiatives (Chapter 6).</p> <p>Often communities are repeatedly 'assessed' so raising their expectations when the information for an initial decision about what to do, where, is available from other agencies and governments.</p> <p>If an initial assessment is unnecessary, then a clear statement of the agency's agenda (such as World Vision's introduction in Benducha) is transparent, participation starts with detailed planning of activities and methods.</p> <p>When an initial assessment goes ahead, actors need to plan how to communicate the purpose of their visit and how to deal with 'unsuccessful' communities or social groups (while implementing in other locations or sectors). A first step, might be asking communities what they will do if the visit does not result in assistance.</p> <p>Actors might abandon 'needs' assessment (concerned with needs and wants) in favour of 'capacity' or human security assessment (concerned with communities' pre-conflict livelihoods, current activities, future plans and how they intend to realise them). This approach raises fewer expectations, recognises community members 'as dignified humans, not hopeless objects'⁷¹ or passive recipients of aid and refocuses on rights and justice rather than needs and charity. Chapter 6b discusses holistic assessment.⁷²</p> |
| <i>Are the dynamics between the context and intervention well understood? How can negative impacts be avoided?</i> | <p>Humanitarian relief, agreed by all stakeholders as necessary, fuelled a war economy that probably prolonged the war (Chapter 5 and 6).</p> <p>Similar to PCIA but with a deeper understanding of context to enhance impact prediction (rather than assessment).</p> <p>There was evidence in this study that conflict analysis alone neither captures all facets of context nor adequately predicts impacts.</p> <p>All stakeholders should contribute to impact prediction through participatory planning. In addition, case studies and lessons learned literature has a similar role.</p> |

⁷¹ IFRC/ICRC, 'The Code Of Conduct For International Red Cross And Red Crescent Movement And Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) In Disaster Relief' in The Sphere Project, 'Humanitarian Charter And Minimum Standards In Disaster Response' p 320.

⁷² I adopted this 'livelihoods approach' with a wide range of groups in Eastern DR Congo in February 2004 and found it gave more insight than needs assessments. For the report, information was organised into the following Chapters: Vulnerability Context (which subsumed 'conflict analysis'), Livelihood Assets, Transforming Structures and Processes (thus addressing structural violence), Livelihood Strategies and Comments on Interventions. Donors responded that it was the best assessment they had ever received (up to that time).

Table 5: Programme Questions For Other Peace Building Contexts continued

| Question | Related Findings/Comments: |
|--|---|
| <i>Do interventions address root causes? Are they simply repeating past practice? What are the impacts (if any) beyond narrow project/programme goals (effectiveness)?</i> | <p>Local and external actors agreed on the need for improved health and reduced corruption. Despite the huge resources committed to addressing these issues, health indicators and corruption levels have not significantly changed since before the war (Chapters 1 and 6).</p> <p>Answers to these questions depend partly, once again, on the quality and depth of initial research and assessments. beneficiary participation early in the project cycle might help 'break the mould' of previous practice.</p> <p>Chapter 1 quoted the example of TBA training favoured for tackling Sierra Leone's high maternal mortality rate. Yet, local informants (and others) could identify other factors that contribute to the problem, which are often unaddressed.</p> |
| <i>Is common ground among all stakeholders explicit and mutually understood?</i> | <p>Convergent broad peace building priorities rooted in peace building fundamentals (Chapter 9).</p> <p>Experience in Uganda of wasted time when mutual understanding of 'peace' (between the Iteso and Karimojong) was only assumed.</p> <p>(Needs to be asked early in peace building).</p> |
| <i>What (if any) are the traditional mechanisms for reintegration, reconciliation and building social cohesion and how can they contribute to present and future peace building?</i> | <p>Public forgiveness was more crucial to social reconstruction than externally driven truth or justice mechanisms (Chapter 8).</p> |
| <i>Is peace building holistic, do the means employed support or undermine the desired outcomes (harmonise with peace building ends)?</i> | <p>Strategic peace building 'means' sometimes contradicted the desired outcomes (Chapter 5).</p> <p>Local notions of 'participation' encompassed the whole protect cycle, ancestors and God. (Chapters 7)</p> <p>Initial research and assessments require quality and depth to inform decisions about process as well as the selection of goals and objectives.</p> <p>Stakeholder analysis should extend beyond the temporal and encompass community power dynamics (even if external actors cannot engage with certain major power holders such as the Secret Societies in Sierra Leone).</p> <p>Deities and their various acolytes, spirits, ancestors, divination and dreams are significant in many cultures even if they have faded from the western psyche.</p> <p>If NGOs lack expertise or time for such 'anthropological' approaches, helpful primary research is often available from anthropologists and missionaries.⁷³</p> |

⁷³ In this study, K. Little, Archbishop Sarpong (who has a Masters in Anthropology from Oxford University), R. Rweyemamu and G. Onah. In addition, the Jesuits and the Missionaries of Africa ('White Fathers') include many anthropologists for example Father Aylward Shorter (who also studied at Oxford).

Table 5: Programme Questions For Other Peace Building Contexts continued

| Question | Related Findings/Comments: |
|---|--|
| <i>How can conflicts of interest between the target beneficiary group and wider society be mitigated?</i> | |
| | <p>The subject of Chiefs' Barries and their courts, highlighted the different layers of 'local' with which external actors may engage (Chapter 7).</p> <p>At the same time as exploring this question, Lederach's 'gap of interdependence' (Chapter 4) could provide a framework within which to identify (and plan to strengthen) positive linkages between beneficiary groups and wider society.</p> |

Community development is one of the 'experiential ... realities' (mentioned above) which shaped my thoughts on this research's practical applications (and indeed, its methodology). Many of the approaches to applying this research (such as the importance of process, communication, participation, relationships including concern about power imbalances) come from community development practice although such approaches are also relevant at a strategic level, for bilateral donors and governments for example. As cited in Chapter 3b, more experienced peace builders that I have also found that 'good peace building practices are very similar to good sustainable development strategies... it is not easy to distinguish development practice from peacebuilding'.⁷⁴ One of the early tenets of community development, 'putting the last first',⁷⁵ also applies to peace building. This study suggests that external actors, with their own set of cultural assumptions, cannot easily grasp on their own the multiple realities to which peace building contributes. They need to be informed by 'the last', the grassroots voices at the centre of this study, in order to build the best peace for those so grievously affected by its absence.

⁷⁴ Lederach et al, 'Reflective Peacebuilding: A Planning, Monitoring And learning Toolkit' p 2.

⁷⁵ Chambers, 'Rural Development, Putting The Last First'.

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APPENDIX A

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE – FIRST MEETING MODIFICATIONS (JAN 05) IN RED

Reminders: -

1 **Approach and appearance.** We discussed not appearing too prosperous or 'superior'.

2 **Explanation of activity.** We agreed on something about Researchers from a new Centre (that is trying to establish itself) wanting to find out about people's experiences since the war and how they are coping. The aim is to present the findings to opinion leaders so they have solid information on which to base policy and plans. Lots of talk going round but want to find out and document real experiences.

Do not give ideas to Chiefs, group leaders or participants. Avoid words such as 'peace', 'forgiveness', 'reconciliation' or 'NGOs'.

3 **Introductions and getting to know the group.** Worth taking time over this to build confidence and trust.

I will need the profile of the group although not necessarily names i.e. details of gender, idea of age and socio-economic background.

4 **Recording.** Ask permission to tape record but do not do so straight away, certainly not during introductions, may arouse suspicion. **Begin recording only when you start exploring the 'effects of conflict' as presented on their Conflict Trees.**

Activity 1

Conflict Trees and Time Line – use a literate member of the groups as the scribe.



Leaves – the effects of the conflict.

Trunk – the issue of disagreement

Roots – show the root causes of the conflict.

Major positive events, **MILITARY, SOCIAL, POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC** above the dates

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|

Major negative events, **MILITARY, SOCIAL, POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC** below the dates

Questions – Set 1 (Record on a separate sheet of paper).

Using their leaves (effects) shown on the Conflict Tree as a starting place, explore the changes caused by the war.

Try to use questions

'You said that is an effect of the war, please tell us more about this'

'You said that is an effect of the war, how has this affected you personally'

'You said that is an effect of the war, how has this affected your community'

'You said that is an effect of the war, how has it affected the country as a whole'

Questions – Set 2 Look at their time line to see when the war ended (according to them).

At the end of the war, [point to the time line] what did you hope would change?

- a) in your own life
- b) in your community
- c) nationally

[Record as words or symbols for the group to refer back to later*].

PERSONAL

COMMUNITY

NATIONAL

Questions – Set 2 continued

'Who, did you think / imagine, could help to bring about these changes?'
'How? Why?'

'Tell us about the things you were worried about at that time?'

'Thinking about today / the present, which of your hoped for changes have occurred (happened) and which have not?'

'Why do you think this is / things have turned out this way?'

Questions – Set 3

‘Thinking about the next year; what changes would you still like to see happen in

- a. in your own life
- b. in your community
- c. nationally’

‘What support is needed to make these changes happened?’

PERSONAL

COMMUNITY

NATIONAL

¹ This is a natural breaking place, maybe for lunch. Thank the participants for their help, maybe you can say something about ‘we’ll see what happened over the coming months’ ... this gives a lead into the next meeting.

Questions – Set 4 (about reconciliation)

‘At the end of the war which groups / organisations still had bad relationships (feelings) between them?’

NATIONALLY

IN YOUR OWN COMMUNITY

‘How did you know?’ ‘What were the main reasons for these bad relationships?’.

Questions – Set 4 continued (about reconciliation)

‘What was done, if anything, to try and improve these bad relationships between different groups / organisations?’

‘What still needs to be done?’

Is anybody helping this to happen, nationally and in your own community?

**If ‘yes’:
‘Who? In what ways?’**

**If ‘no’:
‘Why not?’**

Questions – Set 5 (about NGOs)

Are there any NGOs working in your area?

Which ones? What are they doing?

Factual details i.e. full name and details of what they are believed to be doing.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

How do you see their output?

[illegible]

In the past, have you come across any NGOs that really did well?

If 'yes':
'Which NGO(s), doing what, where? What was good about them?'

If 'no':
'Why do you think this is?'

2

² Finish, thanks, look forward to meeting them again early next year, will be in touch nearer the time to arrange the exact time.

APPENDIX B

INITIAL LESSONS LEARNED REGARDING RESEARCH PROCESS

FEEDBACK DAY 220105

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Re | 'Home Base' (Freetown) and Mile 91 (Tonkolili) |
| Venue | Kenema Pastoral Centre |
| Chair | Sue |
| Participants | Bruce Eddie AKK Samuel Cherinor Mohamed |

WHAT WENT WELL?

Tonkolili: -

- Good group, very mixed ... participants were called over the local radio station (announcement cost Le 2,000).
- Tape recorder was well accepted, participants liked the idea of their voices being captured and carried away.
- The women in the group were very vocal. The pastor tended to dominate but the Imam 'buttressed' what he said.
- Plenty of food and the Chief was happy with Le 10,000 'kola'.
- Report was well presented with Focus Group participants and data from Conflict Trees and Time Lines tabulated.

PROBLEMS?

- Conflict Trees, Time Lines, Reports and cassette tapes not clearly labelled with the author or the location to which they referred.

Tonkolili: -

- Expectations were very high, the group wanted per diem. It will be necessary to give more after the second visit (three dozen school copybooks and pens per group was agreed).
- The use of vanguard and pens reinforced the idea that they were attending a workshop for which per diems should be paid.

'Home Base': -

- **Session not recorded so invalid in research terms, although can be considered a pilot.**
- It was hard to assemble a group over the festive Season ... Pray Day and Christmas.
- Group demanded transport (Le 1000), maximised this by extending the programme to three separate sessions (of 2 hours).
- The group expects 'more benefit' out of the second meeting (will not happen as the first session was invalid).

COMMENTS

- 'Home base' group was very divergent, a lot of disagreements. Personal problems and feelings tended to dominate the sessions.
- Trying to work with one group on the Conflict Tree was a 'serious mistake' there was so much argument. Mile 91 had two groups and then brought them together to explore overlap and disagreements.
- 'Personally' was not a good word for the Mile 91 group, could not talk to the 'I', much more community orientated. Home Base had no problem with the 'I', less community orientated, in Freetown, it is 'one man business'.
- When opening up the effects of the war from the Conflict Trees 'throw more light' [on an issue] was a useful phrase.
- Local language helped with the explanation of more difficult questions (Mile 91).
- Both groups found the Time Line difficult, too taxing to remember dates, assured that year +/- months would do. Home Base could not agree a date for the end of the war; some felt that it was not over yet since 'the reconciliation process needs to be completed before the war ends'. In Mile 91 there was no interest in 'paper' the end of rebel attacks

defined the end of the war ... 'the war only became your business when you were attacked'.

- **BB suggested that Question 4 (about reconciliation) was weak;** the researchers felt that the Focus Groups had been puzzled by the sudden introduction of the TRC and the subject of reconciliation. A new set of questions was developed.
- **BB suggested that since change takes a long time and is difficult to measure, a longitudinal survey in 12 – 18 months was impossible.** Therefore, it would be better to survey more groups over a shorter period. A new plan to set-up more groups, but only visit them 2 or 2 times, was developed.
 1. Mile 91 (follow up only)
 2. Firestone Community, Freetown (to replace Home Base, as meeting not recorded).
 3. Tongo (Bomie) ... RUF area
 4. Bonthe... for a truly rural area, (need to recruit a Shebro speaker)
 5. Regent Community, Freetown rural
 6. Port Loko ... returnee community

FUTURE PLANS

- A timetable for Focus Group Meetings and other tasks was developed, responsibilities allocated, see page 3.
- Follow-up visit to Mile 91, community does not have water in February and March so were concerned about receiving visitors at that time.
- The Time Line to be presented in terms of 'social, economic and military events' to try and illicit a broader range of responses from just military.

APPENDIX B continued

RESEARCH TIMETABLE 2005

| | WHEN | WHAT | WHO | NOTES |
|---|------------------|--|----------------------------|-----------|
| | JANUARY | | | |
| ✓ | 22 | FEEDBACK DAY | Whole Team | Kenema |
| ✓ | | Buy second tape recorder | Eddie | |
| | FEBRUARY | | | |
| ✓ | | Firestone group formation and initial meeting | AKK and Samuel | SC: print |
| ✓ | 9 | Meet +/- train potential new team members | Sue and Cherinor | F'town |
| ✓ | 11 | Roy and co arrive | | |
| ✓ | 9 | Design probing questions for Mile 91 | Sue, Cherinor and Mohammed | SC: draft |
| ✓ | | Buy notebooks and pens for follow-up meetings | Sue/Eddie | |
| ✓ | 26 | Mile 91 follow up | Cherinor and Mohammed | |
| | MARCH | | | |
| | 7 | Submission of reports from Firestone and Mile 91 | | |
| | | Draft probing questions for Firestone | Sue | |
| | | Tongo (Bomie) group formation and initial meeting | AKK and Mohammed | |
| | APRIL | | | |
| | 1 | Submission of reports from Tongo | | |
| | ??6 | FEEDBACK DAY | Whole Team | |
| | ??7 | Firestone sub meeting re. probing questions | Sue, AKK and ??? | |
| | | Bonthe District (rural) group formation and initial meeting | Cherinor and Augustine | |
| | | Design probing questions for Tongo | | |
| | MAY | | | |
| | | Regent group formation and initial meeting | AKK and Mohammed | |
| | | Port Loko group formation and initial meeting (returnee community) | ??? and Cherinor | |
| | JUNE | | | |
| | | FEEDBACK DAY | | |
| | | Tongo follow-up | AKK and Mohammed | |
| | | Bonthe follow-up | Cherinor and Augustine | |
| | JULY | | | |
| | | FEEDBACK DAY | | |
| | AUGUST | | | |
| | | Regent follow-up | AKK and Mohammed | |
| | | Port Loko follow-up | ??? and Cherinor | |
| | SEPTEMBER | | | |

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Firestone follow up can't read | AKK and ??? |
|--------------------------------|-------------|

APPENDIX C

CHRONOLOGY OF THE CIVIL WAR AND CONCOMITANT PEACE BUILDING (1991 – 2002)

- Mar 1991** The RUF, comprising Sierra Leonean dissidents, Liberian fighters loyal to Charles Taylor and mercenaries from Burkina Faso, enter Sierra Leone from Liberia.
The RUF is unknown but believed to be a front for Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia. Foday Sankoh emerges as the RUF's leader. Since its inception, the RUF never articulated a clear political agenda.
- Apr 1991** The RUF wages war against farmers, villagers, and alluvial miners rather than against central government. They use brutal tactics to terrorise civilians including mutilation, amputation of limbs, rape, and forced abduction.
- Sept 1991** New constitution providing for a multiparty system is adopted.
- Jan 1992** Daring attacks in the diamond-rich S.E., RUF strategy changes from terrorising civilians to attacking economic targets.
- Apr 1992** Military coup. Captain Valentine Strasser becomes the youngest head of state in the world. His pledge is to end the rebel war and clean up the country's politics. Strasser tries to negotiate with Sankoh.
- Nov 1992** Strasser launches major offensive against the RUF after talks with Sankoh fail.
- 1993/1994** Taylor helps RUF with military aid and logistics.
RUF becoming more successful and savage. Thousands killed and 50 per cent of the population displaced.
Nigeria moves troops from Liberia to assist Strasser's war efforts.
RUF asset stripping of most mining operations in Sierra Leone hits government's revenue base.
- Feb 1995** Well-organised and ruthless RUF fighters advance on Freetown. 2,000 Nigerian troops ready to defend the city. As the SLA is grossly ineffective, Strasser asks mercenary groups (S. African Executive Outcomes) to assist.
War becomes international news as RUF take western hostages.
- May 1995** Bloody fight 15 miles from the centre of Freetown.
- End 1995** Rural militias (Kamajors) emerge to provide local defence in the absence of a competent government army.
- Jan 1996** Julius Maada-Bio (whose sister is a senior member of the RUF) over throws Stasser claiming that he has been too slow returning to civilian rule.
- Feb 1996** Multiparty elections.
- Mar 1996** President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah elected, by 59.5 per cent of the vote, after second round of presidential elections.
- Aug 1996** Increasing criticism of the slow pace of Kabbah's government.
Nigerians and mercenaries inflict heavy losses on RUF so Sankoh offers negotiations.
- Now 1996** Peace agreement between the Kabbah government and the RUF signed in Abidjan.
RUF to participate indirectly in government through a series of peace, reconciliation, and demobilisation commissions.
- May 1997** Major Johnny Paul Koroma leads successful coup against Kabbah. An unprepossessing head of state, inarticulate, poorly educated and dressed in tee shirt and baseball cap he forms a ramshackle military junta that loots Freetown, persecutes members of Kabbah's government and preys on civilians.
Nigerian troops attempt to oust Koroma but end-up as hostages together with foreigners (awaiting evacuation) in a Freetown beach hotel.
Koroma invites RUF to join junta; they arrive in Freetown to misrule in the name of a "people's army".
Junta is internationally isolated, unstable, and savage.

Chronology of the Civil War and Concomitant Peace Building continued:

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| May 1997 continued | Massive civil disobedience campaign organised by the Labour Congress in protest at the coup. Schools, shops and offices remained closed for more than two months after the coup. |
| July 1997 | Nigeria moves 4,000 troops from Liberia and mounts a naval blockade and bombardment of Freetown. Junta accuse Nigeria of bombing civilian targets. United nations Security Council condemns coup and imposes an arms and fuel embargo. Commonwealth suspends Sierra Leone. |
| Feb 1998 | Nigerian and ECOMOG troops defeat Junta after less than one week's fighting in Freetown. Lungi airport opened to commercial traffic. The Kamajors seize Bo and Koindu from the RUF. |
| Mar 1998 | President Kabbah returns to office. |
| Jun 1998 | United Nations Security Council establishes an observer mission to Sierra Leone. Fighting continues a rebel alliance control 50 per cent of the country. Human rights abuses continue against civilians. |
| Jan 1999 | Rebel alliance over runs Freetown, loot, burn 'rape and pillage' leaving at least 5,000 dead. ECOMOG retake Freetown and re-install the civilian government. |
| July 1999 | All parties sign the Lomé Accord ending hostilities and forming a government of national unity in which the rebels receive government posts. |
| Oct 1999 | United Nations Security Council establishes UNAMSIL to assist all parties to carry out the provision of the Lomé Accord. In particular disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration and to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance. |
| Feb 2000 | Parliamentary Act establishing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Anti-Corruption Commission and Governance Reform Secretariat established. |
| May 2000 | Rebels, once again close in on Freetown. RUF take 500 peacekeepers hostage. 800 British paratroopers sent to Freetown. Sankoh's bodyguards shoot dead civilian demonstrators, he is arrested and the RUF expelled from the Government. |
| Aug 2000 | Eleven British soldiers taken hostage by a renegade militia called the West Side Boys. British forces later mount a rescue mission, which annihilates the West Side Boys. |
| Nov 2000 | Abuja Peace Accord. |
| May 2001 | UN troops deploy peacefully in rebel-held territory. Disarmament of rebels begins and British-trained SLA deploys to rebel held areas. |
| Late 2001 | Government and UNAMSIL take control of eastern diamond mining areas. |
| Jan 2002 | WAR DECLARED OVER. United Nations Mission reports the disarmament of 45,000 fighters. The Government and United Nations agree to establish a war crimes court. |
| May 2002 | President Kabbah wins a landslide election victory and his Sierra Leone People's Party secures a majority in Parliament. |
| June 2002 | Chieftaincy elections. |
| Mar 2003 | Special Court for Sierra Leone issues first indictments. |
| Apr 2003 | Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings begin |
| July 2003 | Rebel leader, Foday Sankoh, dies of natural causes while in custody. |
| Aug 2003 | President Kabbah testifies to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that he had no control over the Kamajors during the war. |
| Feb 2004 | Disarmament and rehabilitation of 70,000 combatants officially complete. |

Chronology of the Civil War and Concomitant Peace Building continued:

- Mar 2004** UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone opens courthouse to try senior militia leaders from both sides of the civil war.
- May 2004** First local elections in more than three decades.
- Sept 2004** UNAMSIL passes responsibility for national security to the Sierra Leone Government.
- Oct 2004** Government receives the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report (but copies not available nationwide until August 2005).
- Feb 2005** Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper completed.
- Dec 2005** End of UNAMSIL mandate.
- Apr 2006** Charles Taylor, former president of Liberia, makes initial appearance before the Special Court for Sierra Leone (sitting in The Hague).
- Aug 2006** Date for elections set for July 2007.
- Dec 2006** President Kabbah says international creditors have written off 90 percent of the country's £ 815 million debt

APPENDIX D

EXAMPLES OF FOCUS GROUPS' TIME LINES AND CONFLICT TREES. These have been removed for copyright reasons.

Benducha Time Line

Tongo Conflict Tree

Benducha Conflict Tree

Mafokie Conflict Tree