



**WEAK STATES AND VIOLENT CONFLICTS: THE CASE OF SIERRA
LEONE: 1991-2002**

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Dedication

To my family and all peace lovers

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The grain of debts I owe in the completion of this work is far more diverse than the strain of thoughts with which the materials have been processed.

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Abstract

My first experience with violent conflict started when I first heard of a rebel attack in the neighbouring country of Liberia, 1989, where a group of armed men began an assault on the regime of the former dictator, Samuel K. Doe. To quote Reinhold Niebuhr: 'All human sin seems so much worse in its consequences than in its intentions', in other words, what started in Liberia as an isolated incident soon turned out to be a catastrophic quagmire. It led to the mass execution of people; the wanton destruction of infrastructure and the massive wave of refugees fleeing to the neighbouring states including Sierra Leone. Ironically, the armed group, which called itself the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), stated that their objective was to oust the corrupt and oppressive regime of the then leadership. Significantly, the leadership of Sierra Leone was no exception to this kind of socio-economic and political problems but the APC government did not think that a similar fate lurked in its path. Two years later a similar group of armed men, who were termed marauders, attacked Sierra Leone in the eastern district of Kailahun, 23rd March 1991. This mist, which at first seemed like a man's fist, blew and turned out to be a tempestuous wind that greatly struck Sierra Leone for a decade. This wave of violent conflict became one of the darkest spots in the history of West Africa at the time; it began spreading like a cancer, and took many political pundits by surprise. Like many people then, and may be future generations, I became interested in why and how such madness was unleashed on Sierra Leone during 1991-2002.

Key words: basic needs, weak states, violent conflicts, post-colonial African state

Abbreviations

AFRC: Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
APC: All People Congress
CDF: Civil Defence Forces
ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States
ECOMOG: Economic Community Military Observer Group
E.O: Executive Outcomes
FBC: Fourah Bay College
NPFL: National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NPRC: National Provisional Ruling Council
OAU: Organisation of African Unity
RUF: Revolutionary United Front
S/L: Sierra Leone
SLPP: Sierra Leone People's Party
UNAMSIL: United Nations Armed Mission in Sierra Leone
UK: United Kingdom
ULIMO: United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia
UN: United Nations
WSB: West Side Boys

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1 General Introduction

During the decolonization process in Africa, many leaders were much optimistic¹ about their newly won political freedom and their task ahead of nation building. They promised their citizens a prosperous future with the rule of law, equal political participation and representation, economic wealth and development. But many of these newly independent nation-states faced difficult challenges in their quest for socio-economic development; alarmingly, they did not deliver on these promises. As some scholars put it, regardless of regime type or ideology, these states confronted three general challenges of economic development in this post-colonial era: poverty, structural transformation and dependence (Chazan et al, 1999:239). In other words, these states were economically poor to provide the revenues needed for economic development; they also suffered from the limited structural institutions like infrastructure and the few industries left behind by the colonial states, which eventually made them dependent on their former colonial state for revenue. Thus, as Ayooob argues, they experienced problem of legitimacy, general inability to organize their material and human resources, mobilize their citizens and implement policies for societal growth (1995:11), nor did some of leaders truly realize that the key responsibility of states was to deliver political goods(basic need)² like security, health, education, economic opportunities and good governance (Potter, 2004:2). This was a snapshot of Sierra Leone(S/L) following its independence in 1961.

The inability of a state to provide these basic needs, and exercise monopoly over the legitimate use of physical force in its territory could amount to a lack of strength. The terms weak, failed, collapsed and strong states became new concepts in some social science academia in the early 90s, particularly after the end of the cold war. However, this is not to say that the conditions characterizing these concepts are new phenomena. The debates in this new school of thought have developed many hypotheses in determining weak, failed, collapsed and strong states. In determining these states, the ability and capability of its leaders to provide the basic needs of their citizens are very important because politics is all about governance and performance in that regard. The variable to determine whether X is strong, weak, failed and collapsed has to do with the ability, capability, efficiency and willingness of the state institutions to

¹ These post-colonial leaders referred to the 1st set of African leaders immediately after independence.

² Basic needs will be used interchangeably with political goods to mean provision of the core functions of state: law and order, security of life and property , socio-economic services, the rule of law like political rights to vote, protection of citizens rights.et.c

deliver the basic needs of its citizens. In S/L from 1961 to 1990, the situation was that the state was incapacitated to effectively provide its citizens with their basic needs. In 1991, violent conflict broke out and this work will examine if this was a result of the state weakness or incapacity.

1.1 An overview of the violent conflict in Sierra Leone

Any analysis of the state weakness in Sierra Leone (S/L) must involve a brief historical past. The country witnessed political upheaval after its independence in 1961 with the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) as the dominant political institution to produce the country's first two heads of state, Sir Milton Margai and his brother Sir Albert Margai (Ero, 2003:234). The SLPP later lost power in the general election of 1967 to the All People's Congress (APC) because it alienated the other ethnic groups. But the transition process took a nosedive as the sordid political shenanigans of power struggle arose among the country's leading ethnic groups. It was an early sign of the post-colonial state weakness as the SLPP politicians instigated the military to overthrow the APC (Ero, 2003: 234). The military chief of staff said he stepped in on the grounds of irregularities and the imminence of ethnic conflict. He arrested and later sent the opposition leader to exile. Significantly, his action had a smoking gun; he was an in-law to the Prime Minister and being a Mende from the southeastern part of the country, it was seen as a mask to keep the SLPP in power. He was immediately overthrown by a group of junior personnel from the northern and western area, who were opposed to the southern dominated SLPP. When the APC leader, Siaka Stevens was reinstated in 1968, most of the key institutions responsible for good governance: the economy, the parliament, the judiciary were paralyzed (Ero, 2003:234). In the process, President Stevens governed the state on the basis of patrimony, exploited and manipulated the access to the country's resources (Reno, 1995; Ero, 2003). This resulted in bad governance, especially the inadequate provisions of basic needs, which is the key indicator of a weak state. The inadequate basic needs included massive unemployment, poor educational, health and infrastructural facilities. Consequently, it created massive economic inequalities, which led to an insatiable demand and struggle for a share of the state resources that sowed the seeds for violent conflict when the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) attacked S/L in 1991 from Liberia (Keen, 1998; Reno, 1995) and lasted until 2002.

1.2 Objective

- To investigate how the inability of a weak state to provide the basic needs of its people could lead to violent conflict.

1.3 Hypothesis

- A weak state is ineffective in providing the basic needs of its citizens and this ineffectiveness could have the potential for violent conflict.

1.4 Research Questions

- How and why could the weak state political and socio-economic structures have contributed to and escalated the violent conflict from 1991 to 2000?
- What role can international actors play in escalating or solving internal violent conflicts?

1.5 Significance of the research to peace studies

In modern states, the duty of governments is to provide the basic needs of their citizens. From the French Revolution of 1789 to the Iranian Revolution of 1979, among a catalogue of violent conflict we see the phenomena of weak states and violent conflicts. These events could highlight the assumption that when a state is unable to address the welfare of its citizen's, there is the likelihood for an outbreak of mass political violence. The internal consequences of the French and Iranian revolution were their severity and effect on other neighbouring states. For instance, the French revolution of 1789 led to European wars and the Napoleonic wars between France, Britain, Russia, and Austria. The Iranian revolution of 1979 saw the rise of an Islamic fundamentalist regime that threatened the security of the Middle East as well as western security and. This historical silhouette, as it were, is to show the likely threat weak states could pose to both national and international security.

The significance of this work is to examine the dynamic relationship between weak state and violent conflict in the case of S/L, and not across the broader spectrum of violent conflict. It is important to note that the outbreak of the violent conflict in Liberia, which was a weak state, had the destabilizing effect of a decade long civil war in S/L from 1991 to 2002.

Methodology: This study employed the qualitative method of case study. It was adopted because it is a useful mechanism to get an in-depth examination of a research problem, which included the use of questionnaires and interviews. This was to involve

a segment of the general population, since a research does not necessarily need to have a hundred percent representation in order to explain a body of knowledge.

Outline : This work is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 is a the general introduction; Chaper 2 is the Theoretical discussion; Chapter 3 is about Methodology,Chapter 4 is Data presentation and Analysis and Chapter 5 is the conclusion.

2 Theoretical Perspectives on the State and Post-Colonial State

Scientific evidence is always couched in theory; in other words, an evidence or data is produced with a theory. A theory tries to explain a body of knowledge in a particular discipline. It is something provisional, tentative and in need of testing (Gilbert, 2003:2). There are some theories that have been observed, put to accurate experimental tests to verify their validity and thus, have become facts to explain the phenomena in certain discourses. For example, Einstein's theory of relativity proved that gravity or massive objects could warp space. Hence, a strong theory must 'be able to make predictions that are consistent with observable facts already acquired or to be acquired by doing further experiments' (Lurquin & Stone, 2007:7).

However, there is a difference when it comes to social science about the theories of some social phenomena. There is hardly any real hard evidence to observe and experiment, which can be validated with the rigors of pure scientific procedures; though, we can still explain the daily phenomenon of people and their societies. Thus, in political science, one such phenomenon is the theory of state, which is about state formation and nation building. The theory of state has to do with governance: the structures of power and economic allocation of resources, stability, progress and development. Political institutions have always existed because where there is man, there is a society; where there is a society, there are economic and political structures. But how did the notion of political institutions, which we know as states start?

The idea and reality of statehood is 'markedly a time-and condition-bound concept' (Dusza1989:78) and has been one of the cornerstones of western civilization. It spanned both the ancient philosophy of Socrates, Plato, to modern thinkers such as Machiavelli, Locke, Hobbes, Marx and Weber³ (Nelson, 1982). The contributions of these pioneers see the notion of the state as the most intricate structure of human societies, which therefore gives it superior qualities than the other social organizations like the family or people that preceded it. According to Rousseau, it is the state that provides the greatest opportunity for the highest satisfaction and expression of human interactions and implanting of virtues. Weber sees the state as a joint human action,

³ Socrates and Plato idealized the state (i.e. philosopher kings) meaning the ruler should be seen as a philosopher; Hobbes, Machiavelli and Weber talk about absolute power (the Leviathan); Rousseau and Locke speak about the idea of social contract (restricting the state).

where power and struggle are the intrinsic elements of social life; the very substance of which politics is made (Weber, 1968:55).

The ascendancy of the state and its influence has not been without debate because the very notion of state has often been contested of what it is and should be. Some thinkers like Hobbes argued that it should be absolute, while Locke argued it should be restricted, which he called a social contract. Marxists see the state as class in the political superstructure as an organized instrument of oppression by the ruling elite through the economic substructure. In other words, the capitalist structures are there to serve the interests of the owners of production, capitalist class (Nelson, 1982). Some neo-Marxists look at the inequalities that exist among states, i.e. the developed and less developed countries. Power is institutionalized in the framework of which it is contested. But there is more to politics than the struggle for power; mostly, the economic resources are allocated to the society through the institutional structures of power (Dusza, 1989:73).

In this chapter, the theoretical perspectives on the post-colonial state will begin with the various postulations of state; we will conceptualize state variations and the problems with these variations. The theories of conflict and violence will be discussed and the African state will be contextualized within the political economy framework. Thus, this political economy approach will be used to examine the violent conflict in S/L.

2.1 Modes of State Conceptualization

As discussed earlier, there are many notions about the intricate phenomenon of the state. The following notions are one among many modes of conceptualizing the state (Hintze in Dusza, 1989:74): (a) the sovereign power-state in the framework of the European state system (b) the relatively closed economic state based on the capitalist mode of production (c) the liberal legal-constitutional state with its emphasis on individual rights and liberties (d) the democratic nation-state. We will try to subsume these modes under two concepts: traditional (i.e. list a&b) and modern (i.e. list c&d).

2.1.1 Traditional State Concept

In common parlance, the word state is understood as a territory with political institutions. However, the first problem arises with the various academic dispute of what the term should refer to. Most of the conceptualization comes from the perspectives of political science and sociology (Buzan 1991:59). The ascendancy and

centrality of the modern state means that its definition is always a subject of controversy (Francis, 2006: 34). From the sociology perspective, Weber defines a state as: ‘a corporate group that has compulsory jurisdiction, exercises continuous organization, and claims a monopoly of force over a territory and its population, including all action taking place in the area of its jurisdiction’ (Weber, ed. Parson, 1964:156). The juridical aspect defines the state as a legal person, recognize by international law with the following attributes: (a) a defined territory, (b) a permanent population, (c) an effective government, and (d) independence, or the right “to enter into relations with other states” (Brownlie, 1979:73-76).

Although Hobbes conceptualizes the state as a ‘leviathan’, it does not mean that people are not protected against its power. Such controls include separation of power, which regulates the legal norms and functions of specific state institutions, aiming not only at efficiency but limiting their authority. Besides the separation of power, there are other modern conceptualizations of protection against the state’s domination.

2.1.2 Modern State Concepts

These concepts will be subsumed under the following: pluralism, instrumentalism and structuralism.

Pluralism: It is based on certain assumptions, recognizing that in a state there are many groups and interests striving to influence the government’s decision in their favour. Pluralists believe that in a liberal democracy, where there is an open and fair process of decision making, no particular groups or individuals will benefit more than the other. It is assumed also that all these social units have, more or less, equal chance to influence their government through the electoral process or lobbying activity.

One such example is the civil society, which is defined as ‘that set of diverse non-governmental institutions which is strong enough to counterbalance the state and, while not preventing the state from fulfilling its role of keeper of the peace and arbitrator between major interests, can nevertheless prevent it from dominating and atomizing the rest of society’ (Gellner, 1994:5).

Instrumentalism: This is a neo-Marxist analysis of the state, which argues the owners of production are able to control and direct the state because those who control it are either directly from the economic elite or share their values or ideologies

(Milliband, 1969:49-56; Weatherly, 2005). The state thus, becomes an instrument of this class to direct state policies.

Structuralism: It is also a neo-Marxist view of the state critical of the instrumentalist approach (Poulantzas, 1969). It assumes that the state's key role is to prevent conflicts and contradictions from breaking the institutions, that is to put simply, where governance should be guided by the values of the structures and not the interests of those in control or any particular group. Others have argued that the legitimacy of modern states must be based on the idea of political rights of autonomous individual subjects (Habermas, 1996).

As the notion of statehood continues to change and contested, so are the variations of statehood.

2.2 State Categorizations

The categorization of states about their socio-economic and political development became the new genre of social science in the 90s, where states are put into different categories of strong, weak, failed and collapsed on the basis of certain variables. But such categorizations as a 'failed or collapsed state is characterized by what it is not' (Clapham, 2000), because 'the concepts of state failure and state collapse have been victims of conceptual ambiguity of our times as these terms are interchangeably used' (Akude, 2007:2). We now attempt a brief discussion of these various categorizations.

2.2.1 Strong States

Rotberg's point of departure in state variation is that contemporary states exist to provide what he calls 'political goods'⁴ to their citizens (Rotberg, 2004:10). It is according to their performance, i.e. the effective delivery of the most basic needs that strong states are differed from weak, fragile and failed states. His hierarchy of political goods (basic needs) include: state and human security, free and fair political participation, proper health care, education and infrastructural facilities. In short, this is a shopping list of what is meant by good governance. In terms of their performance level, strong states function well across a wide variety, although with slight variations. A strong state is like the Mount Everest in state relations; it is the quintessential hallmark of achievement. Examples of strong states include the G8 among others (France, US, UK, Germany, Italy, Japan, Canada and Russia). However, the litmus

⁴ Though Rotberg calls it thus, for consistency sake the term will be used interchangeably with basic needs.

test is whether every unit of its body politic is willing, fully engaged and benefiting from its success or development. The antithesis of a strong state is a weak state.

2.2.2 Weak States

Weak states, as the name suggests exist as the opposite of strong states. They are unable to effectively deliver the most basic needs Rotberg calls ‘political goods’: state and human security, adequate socio-economic services as health, education and infrastructural facilities. They are characterized by lack of good governance and problems of legitimacy (Jackson, 2002:38). In such states, basically, legitimacy is expressed by the level of political participation, use of force to ensure obedience, political instability (coups, riots, and revolts), ethnic tensions and the centralization of power in the leader, a party or regime, e.g. Burma, Syria, Zimbabwe and Iraq under President Saddam Hussein. As in most states, where political power has always been contested, in weak states, the ruling elite practice an effective patronage system to broker power by co-opting political rivals to compensate or ostracized them. But patronage system does not always follow institutional incapacity because some of these institutions could be very effective in performing their respective functions; e.g. the Burmese military had been very effective in maintaining the authoritarian rule against the democratic movement of Aung San Suu Kyi and others.

For others, weak states refer to strength and not scope, meaning a lack of institutional capacity and competence to implement effective policies (Fukuyama, 2004:130; Byman& Evera, 1998:37). Since some weak states cannot effectively protect their borders, they are vulnerable to external threats like states and individuals; some even face problems of arms smuggling and criminal activities across their borders. For example, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Zaire were all weak states that later cascaded into violent conflict and became failed states where mercenaries and predatory activities run amok with weapon smuggling and looting of resources.

2.2.3 Failed States

Helmen and Ratner, 1993, first initiated the term state failure, later taken up by Tetzlaff, 1999 and Rotberg, 2004. State failure is seen as a long term and multifaceted development where state collapsed is the accretion and worst form of the process (Tetzlaff, 1999:34-37). Tetzlaff classified two aspects to state failure: the loss of legitimacy, which is the slow decline of public support and lack of obedience for the

government where it cannot provide the basic needs of its citizens, and the rising dysfunction of state institutions; either due to lack of resources or fiscal mismanagement. A state is said to be failing if no attempt is made to stop the deterioration in institutional governance and provision of political goods (Rotberg, 2004:5). It is typified by declining and shattered infrastructures, thriving corruption, and low gross domestic product, indebtedness to international financial institutions, devalued local currency, low legitimacy (Rotberg, 2004:5). For example, Nigeria is one of the leading oil producing OPEC countries, yet was heavily indebted that the Paris Club had to cancel \$ 18 billion of its staggering \$30 billion debt owed to creditors, but it had to comply with certain conditions of good governance and crack down on corruption. A failed state is also characterized by violence; however, as Rotberg says, 'it is not the absolute intensity that identifies a failed state. Rather, it is the enduring character of that violence', which results in further weakening of the state. Thus, 'a failed state is a polity that is no longer able or willing to perform the fundamental tasks of a nation-state in the modern world' (Rotberg, 2004:7).

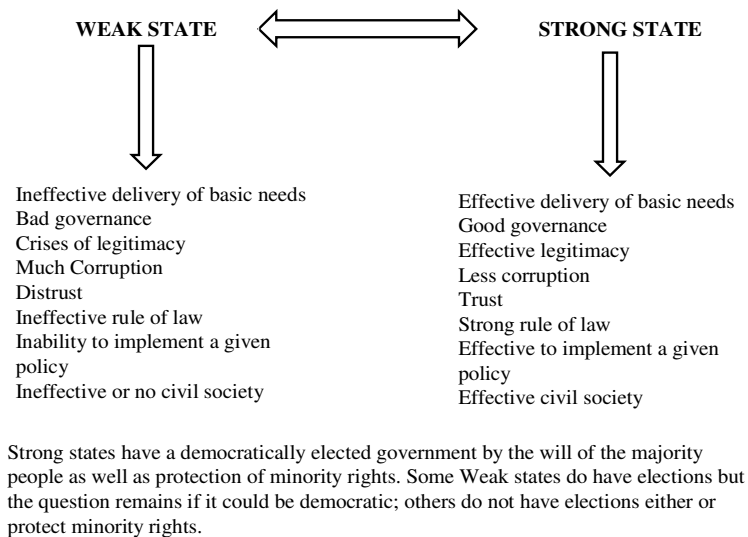
2.2.4 Collapsed States

Zartman was first to introduce the term state collapse (Zartman, 1995). For Rotberg, state collapse is the progression of decrepit governance that starts with institutional dysfunction (state weakness), failing and failure until it struck rock bottom. The process is not a mechanical one since it could be averted through good governance (Rotberg, 2004). State collapse is also perceived within the scaffold of a state's inability to perform its traditional functions. The state should be responsible for its sovereign authority, decision-making and securing its territory and subjects (Zartman, 1995:5); thus, where this is lacking it signifies the start of collapse. He did not attempt to make a prediction of the process that Rotberg's similar outline suggests, he sees state collapse as 'a situation whereby the structure, authority, laws and political order have fallen apart and must be reconstructed in some form, new or old' (Zartman, 1995:7). Rotberg sees state collapse as 'a rare and extreme version of a failed state. Political goods are obtained through private or ad hoc means. A collapse state exhibits a vacuum of authority; it is 'a mere geographical expression, a black hole into which a failed polity is fallen' (Rotberg, 2004:10). But it is utopian to have a complete vacuum in any state.

Having looked at these state variations, let us now see the intrinsic problems of conceptualizing them.

2.3 Problem of Conceptualizing State Variations

In this section, I endeavour to delineate the disorder in state variations, including a brief introduction about the difficulties of conceptualizing basic needs, which we discuss later. The question is what constitutes a weak state: is it corruption, low legitimacy and lack of political participation (democracy) or nepotism? Are strong states the opposite of weak states, and what constitutes a strong state? Are democratic states capable of achieving what they pledge in their campaign manifesto to the electorate? If no, what are the effects? Does a strong state represent good governance and promote minority rights? Analyzing the relationship between state and citizens raises the question of what kinds of rights citizens have in their political process and how the resources are allocated. For some, the political process is about the autonomy of their cities, communes, provinces to govern rather than being governed from the center. One cannot answer all these questions here; but, we can attempt to list some of the key variables in these state variations.



And as we will discuss later basic needs is related to space and time. Given this, we will start with a brief discussion of basic needs; but we shall deal with this further in the next section. Basic needs imply some claims about what humans naturally should have or interpreted as how people are able to manage and secure their livelihoods. It

is what we could agree on as being basic or it could also be essentialist, meaning as humans for instance, we need food to survive. In some states, especially the west, the case could be made for democracy as a basic need where the people are able to elect their own leaders in a free and fair elections. Locke tries to unite basic needs into two concepts: protection of life and property. He presupposes a social contract where the government is accountable to the people in securing their livelihoods in all its forms, including the protection of their citizens or human rights⁵. Citizens' rights are spatial, while human rights attempts to be universal. Let me clarify this; the right to vote is spatial and not universal because citizens can only vote in their own countries and not in other countries. There is an idea where basic needs could be understood in protection of citizens and human rights.

No doubt, there seems to be many conceptions about basic needs and state responsibilities; however, some things stand out as the standard functions of state: monopoly over the use of force and protection of its citizens from attacks, legitimate institutions for governance and absolute control of their territory, which are expected of states under international law. Given this premise, we will nuance some of the problems of state variations with some contemporary international relations issues.

The variations of states into weak, failed, collapsed and strong states are frustratingly imprecise (Eizenstat, Porter, Weinstein, 2005:136) because states can perform differently, either better or poor on various variables. It is imprecise because the variables tend to overlap or blur the variations. For example, let us compare Norway, Sweden and the USA. Without doubt, the USA is the world's most strong and richest economy; even the states of New York and California have an economy richer than the combined GNP of Norway and Sweden. Geographically, Norway and Sweden are smaller than the USA, yet economically both have the highest Human Development Index in the world⁶. Both are able to protect their borders effectively, equally distribute their wealth and provide their citizens with their basic needs. They have enjoyed the top spot in the UN Human Development Index (UNDP 2007/2008). The USA has the strongest military in the world and yet it has not effectively provided its citizens with their basic needs. She has a population of about 300 million, of which, there are close to 30 million uneducated and about 38 million people live below the

⁵ The distinction is important because there are those who see human rights as a western value imposition, while citizens' rights could be the spatial or local conceptualisations of rights.

⁶ http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/country_fact_sheets/ 2007/ 2008 UN Development Programme. But the high HDI of Scandinavia even goes as far back 1990 to date.

poverty line⁷. Despite its abundance of food resources, there are over countless pounds of wasted food every year in the USA. Based on the state variations indicators the USA is considered stronger to Sweden and Norway; however, according to providing the basic human needs and equal resource allocation, both are stronger than the USA; thereby explaining the paucity of sharply argued, instructive, and well-delineated cases (Rotberg, 2002:2). In the US, there are stronger mechanisms of legal recourse for the protection of citizen's right against the federal government partly because of the constitutional provisions like separation of powers and the judiciary's independence. Citizens in Norway and Sweden like the rest of EU countries can take their governments to the European Court of Human Rights if their rights are violated.

Again, the question is how one argues about the recent presidential elections in the former Soviet republics, including Russia. For instance, in March 2008, the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, now called the last dictator in Europe, had a fraudulent election and then authorized his security to arrest and beat hundreds of peaceful protesters. President Putin of Russia was among the few world leaders to congratulate his electoral victory. It was not a surprise since Putin himself had deftly removed any checks and balances within the state, weakened political and legal transparency, and made it impossible for independent media, political parties or nongovernmental groups to prosper. Even the Bush administration and EU has acknowledged that the recent development lamentably point toward a declining commitment to democratic freedoms and institutions in Russia. The argument here is that Russia is considered a strong state but such politics shows the vagueness of categorizing states, where the basic rights of the Russian electorate is held at ransom. Interestingly, Russia has enjoyed an unfettered diplomatic pass or embrace unlike some other states, which have faced the pressure to democratize or have been made pariah states, e.g. Cuba and South Africa during its Apartheid era.

The problem with these categorizations is about not being able to clearly define than explain what is actually meant. There are weak states that are not failed or collapsed since they have not had violent conflict. According to the spatial correlation of war, this presupposes that if a country is at war, there is a tendency for the neighbouring

⁷ http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/income_wealth/002484.html published by the US Census Bureau News, 2003

state to experience it (Most& Star). This was borne out in the case of Liberia and Sierra Leone(S/L), where the civil war that broke out in Liberia, 1989, easily spread to S/L in 1991. Later some insurgents started to invade Guinea from S/L; though Guinea is a weak state, yet it was able to survive because it has strong institutional capacity like the military unlike S/L and Liberia. Yet there are neighbouring states with violent conflicts, which have not been affected with what happens in the other state; e.g. the protracted battle between the Ugandan government and the Lord Resistance Army (LRA) has not affected neighbouring states like Kenya or Tanzania. In addition, let us look at Rotberg's words of states being 'able' and 'willing'. The inability to deliver basic economic goods does not limit the ability and capacity of a state to use force, e.g. North Korea is a nuclear power but is economically weak, because its economy is in decline; there is little investment and revenue generating capacity. Ironically, it cannot adequately feed its population and instead uses its nuclear weapon program as a negotiating tool (carrot) to influence the west, especially the USA to provide it with food and economic aid to help sustain it. India and Pakistan is another case. Both are strong enough as nuclear states, able to provide billion of dollars to run such nuclear programs, yet there is massive poverty and disparity in their countries. The point is that some states are able to provide security in their borders, strong in suppressing their citizens and show lack of good governance, which could be argued are weak states.

Other states could be willing to deliver their core functions but some face circumstances beyond their control, which prevent them from doing it. It is no secret that the EU, USA and Japan have continued to increase agricultural subsidies for their farmers so as to undercut competition of cheaper prices of the developing countries. The unfavourable conditions of aid and free trade by the international financial institutions have left many developing states no options but to accept these conditions of trade liberalization (Mkandawire, 1990; Magbaily Fyle, 1993). For instance, the African state has been asked to liberalize its foreign trade while the developed countries still have strong protection of their industries, especially agriculture. The developed countries protection against the developing countries agricultural exports is seven times higher than that of the developed than the developing countries⁸.

⁸ Global Economic Prospects, 2004:xvi-vii

The distinction of scope and strength provides a framework to look at the different aspects of governance to determine whether a state is strong or weak. Fukuyama (2004:6-23) categorizes three aspects of statehood: enforcement, the monopoly on and lawful use of physical force; scope, the functions carried out by government; and strength or capacity, the ability of a government to determine and execute its policies. Using the World Bank's (1997) paradigm, he divides the catalog of potential state doings into minimal, intermediate and activist functions. For instance minimal functions are restricted to providing basic public goods such as defence, law and order, public health, property rights and protection of the poor, beside anti-poverty programmes. Intermediate functions would enlarge this catalog to comprise providing education, environmental protection, social insurance and the regulation of services and commerce. Lastly, activist functions would cover the organization of private activity and asset redistribution. It is relevant that the World Bank recognizes the protection of the poor through anti-poverty programmes as a role of even a minimalist state. The post-colonial African state is not only minimalist in terms of scope, but also weak with reference to enforcement and capacity, which as we will discuss later is attributed to several factors, both historic and modern.

Though the distinction between scope and strength of states is about governance, somehow the semantics between them is rather controversial. For Fukuyama, the state's strength should not be against economic growth. At best it should be 'relatively modest in scope, but strong in ability to carry out its state functions such as the maintenance of law and the protection of property' ⁹(2004:15); in other words, it emphasises power over good governance.

Also, the concept of states scope and strength is about power or real politic. Some states want to see other states' scope and strength reduced or increased, which could have tremendous effects. For instance, the US supported the Mujahedeen against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1980. After the Soviet's withdrawal in 1989, Pakistan supported the breakaway Mujahedeen faction, which calls itself the Taliban against other factions; the effect was seen years later with the 9/11 terrorists attacks.

⁹ To some extent this latter reflects Locke's concept of social contract; the state protects the life and property of the citizens but it is not something it naturally enjoys and exercises at the expense of its people.

But for others, ‘the 9/11 attacks underlined the fact that the lack of governance in poor and troubled parts of the world like Afghanistan could have profound security consequences for the developed world’ (Fukuyama, 2004:125). This is but an embodiment of those who perceive weak state in terms of biased security concerns for the developed world and not the underdeveloped societies caught up in the untold morass of poor governance or violent conflict. It is ironic that very powerful states and empires caused the great wars of the 20th and 21st century, and the weak states in the developing world are now causing the many problems of poverty, refugees, and human rights violations.

What is missing in this state variations debate is the historical process. The empirical element of time could help us understand how state institutions developed from their incapacities to being effective or progressing. The bottom line of these state variations is the encompassing term of good governance, which, however, took many tortuous paths, especially in the developed world, for it to be fully realized. This should not be an extenuation for the present predicament of governance in many developing states but is worth considering.

The main preoccupation with the above variations is about conflict and violence, peace and development in state-society relations. Next, it is important to make a distinction between conflict and violence.

2.4 Conceptualizing Conflict and Violence

In every human society, there is the daily goal seeking activities among individuals and states over values and interests. In peace studies, such daily goal seeking activities, Galtung considers incompatible and refers to as contradiction or conflict (1996:70-71).

However, if so, conflict should not be seen as these daily goal seeking activities among individuals and states, which are incompatible. Goal seeking activities do not necessarily have to be incompatible because people may want the same goals in life like a good education, health care and employment, without conflict to others. There are also daily compatible goal seeking activities among individuals and states that are cooperative. We have many examples of such cooperation among individuals and states like we see in the international non-governmental organizations as the UN, the EU and NGOs like human rights and environmental groups as Green Peace, e.t.c. In a

way, cooperation is imperative in almost all human institutions and societies as a way to realize our self-interests, which do not necessarily mean selfish.

Galtung refers to conflict as dispute and dilemma; a thing standing in the way of something else (1996:70). Dispute is related to a situation when individuals or states pursue the same scarce goals or needs and are not willing to cooperate. The same could be said of dilemma when individuals or states are faced with two incompatible goals involving choice and decision (Galtung, 1996:71-72). Such conflicts do not inevitably lead to actual violence but since our goals as individuals and states are incompatible, we inevitably face challenges in achieving these goals. These challenges could be real or apparent perceived as a threat or obstacle imposed by a known actor. The worse form of this conflict could be direct violence, in which the aims of opponents struggling over the values, claims to scarce resources, status and power is to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals (Coser, 1956:8). We saw this clearly when the USA and UK invaded Iraq in 2003 over the arguable claims of WMD (weapons of mass destruction), which inevitably led to the killing of thousands of Iraqi including President Saddam Hussein and his two sons.

The violence concept involves a lot of issues that in many ways affect people. SIDA defines violent conflict as “incompatibilities or differences between groups of people that result in organized violence” ¹⁰(2005:4). For Galtung, there are three kinds of violence: direct, structural and cultural (1996:196).

Direct violence involves the outright use of force on people in every society. Structural violence on the other hand is equated with indirect violence, which refers to the violence that emanates from the social structure itself between class, race, and sex. Galtung is clear about structural violence, which may not be deliberate; that people may do massive damage to others without intending it; they just do their routine defined by the structures or society institutions (1985:145). But what Galtung is saying about structural violence may not fit the conventional view of violence. It is inequality because violence involves real physical pain or hurt to people. Cultural violence involves the symbolic use of imposing one set of particular cultural values on another group with a different cultural values or identity. An example is the radical

¹⁰ Swedish Development Agency

Islamic terrorist group of Al Qaeda, which has been waging both cultural and direct violence on innocent civilians in the name of jihad. Cultural violence functions to legitimize direct and structural violence (Galtung, 1996:196).

In a similar vein, conflicts can occur at interstate level over ideology and policies like trade, human rights or issues of national security. This is the most common political spar within international relations; it tends to get hot when the stakes are high but not necessarily lead to outright violence like war. An example was the recent violent protest in the streets of Athens, London, Paris and San Francisco in March 2008 against China's Olympic Torch Relay over its human rights violations in Tibet. Of course, we saw the diplomatic punches that were thrown in this fiasco, where the British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown and the French President, Nicolas Sarkozy, decided to boycott the Beijing Olympic Opening Ceremony in the summer of 2008. But the US President, George Bush, refused to weigh in on China and said sport is not associated with politics. Also, the quagmire over Iran's use of nuclear energy, some wary states like the US and its allies consider it a threat to international security; since Iran is a supporter of terrorist organizations and its President had declared the annihilation of Israel. In the present ideological struggle, there is no cooling of the steam between radicalism and conservatism of certain religious faiths. For example, the diatribe and even overt violence between the Middle East Islamic fundamentalist and their far right Christian counterparts in the USA, the neoconservatives, got worse after 9/11. In addition, the ideological divide between the Sunni and Shiite is one of great debate in countries like Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Iraq that has resulted in violent conflict and near absolute anarchy in Iraq. In Lebanon, May 2008, clashes between the Sunni supporting the government and Shiite supporting Hezbollah (a controversial nationalist or terrorist organization) have turned the country into a war zone.

We have seen how conflict and violence seems to overlap and differ. There are many explanations why violent conflicts occur in state-society relations. We will now briefly discuss a few of these.

2.4.1 Theories of Conflict

After the end of the cold war, the number of violent conflicts defined as armed conflict between groups within a state of which there are at least 200 casualties

increased, especially in Africa (Reagan, 2000; Adedeji, 1999; Elbadawi & Sambanis, 2002). Of about 108 worldwide conflicts between 1989 and 1998, only seven were interstate and the rest were internal (Wallenstein & Sollernberg, 1999). Africa was divided into 3 categories (Adedeji, 1999): countries with severe internal armed conflicts, those with protracted political crises, and those with a relative stable political system.

The 1990s saw an unprecedented level of violence, economic decline and turbulence (Sambanis, 2002; Adedeji, 1999) as most states grappled with the challenges of peace, security and prosperity. The following literatures have tried to explain why violent conflicts break out in Africa. Some of these tend to focus on the legacies of colonialism (Rodney, 1977), neo-colonialism (Parenti, 1989), economic decline and effects of international financial institutions (Adedeji, 1995; Mkandawire, 1994), natural resources (Collier, 2000; de Soysa, 2000), bad governance and corruption (Reno, 1995; Herbst, 2000; La Billion, 2001).

But the idea that people are prone to war because something is wrong with them (see Kaplan, 1994) is a denied reality, because many places like Latin America, including Europe in the early 18th century has experienced violent conflicts in the 1830s and 1840s, which some historians referred to as the 'era of revolutions'. People do not fight due to some intrinsic pathology but because they do not want to be beggars; they want a sense of their own independence and livelihood. When this is absent, there is no theory that can predict whether people will react or not.

The following paradigms nevertheless explain some of the reasons behind these violent conflicts in the post-colonial African state.

- **The grievance theories:** This theory identifies the factors of frustration, opportunity and identity as the core variables in violent conflict (Ellingsen, 2000). The following conflict types are subsumed under the grievance paradigm.
- **Horizontal and Vertical inequality** is the organized disparity among culturally defined ethnic groups that favours one or some above the rest (Stewart 2002:3); it is what Galtung refers to as 'cultural violence' (Galtung, 1996). These violent conflicts are often the product of groups' perceptions of 'horizontal inequality', which could lead to organize violence for political

purposes, particularly securing or retaining state power (Stewart, 2002:105-136). Vertical inequality refers to the normal kind of inequalities that exist among individuals. However, it is important that horizontal inequalities do not automatically lead to political violence in multi-ethnic states but could be susceptible to violent outbursts along these ethnic lines.

- **Protracted Social Conflict** is about group identity, which may be constructed in the form of religion, class, region or ethnicity (Azar, 1990). In S/L, the construction of class and regional identity was salient in the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) membership. It had a good number of the unemployed, school dropouts and the marginalized educated few (Richards, 1996). It was not surprising that most of the RUF's membership came from the provinces, especially the southeastern part of the country, where the All People's Congress (APC) government was hardly popular.
- **Greed theory:** In the greed theory, the very question of grievance is unimportant. It argues what matters most are whether the warring faction can sustain itself financially. The theory denies grievance is the main cause of violent conflict and puts economic profit in its place (Collier, 1998; 2001). The presence of 'lootable natural resources' is a likely cause for violent conflicts and the lure of profit and wealth 'is likely to recruit young men into rebellion' (Smilie, Gberie, & Hazelton 2000). However, the problem with this theory is that it cannot clearly define what is meant by greed. One study finds no evidence that suggests natural resources, especially the presence of diamonds, is generally related to civil war, because the empirical literature gave less attention to the question whether the rebels are actually able to exploit this resource (Lujala, Gleditsch & Gilmore, 2005). For example, using the violent conflict in Sierra Leone; at the start, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) did not have access to the diamond resources. It was only later they were able to exploit it. The intensity and duration of the war turned out to be a profit for many actors, including neighbouring states and security firms hired by the warring factions but its origin lies elsewhere, which we shall discuss more fully in Chapter 4.
- **Relative Deprivation:** In addition, greed and grievance theories could be synthesized with relative deprivation theory, which is another explanation of

political violence. The basis of the theory is that when people in a society become dissatisfied with their socio-economic and political condition, they desire change. In other words, the deprivation develops from the discrepancy between the norm and the reality of collective value satisfaction that disposes men to violence (Gurr, 1970: 23). The problem with this concept is that there is a discrepancy in what people may feel as deprived when in fact they are not. For social discontent to translate into social movement, like the RUF in S/L where there was perceived injustice, people must feel they deserve, or are rightly entitled to more wealth, power or status than they already have. The RUF dissatisfied group came to the conclusion that they could not obtain their goal by the usual democratic means.

According to the relative deprivation theory, the group will translate itself into a social movement only if it feels that the collective action of violence would help its cause (Gurr, 1970:23). Although this seems to be the RUF situation as they waged a violent conflict in S/L, yet it remains unclear whether the RUF thought it would succeed to use violence to achieve its objectives. The criticism of relative deprivation is that the feelings of deprivation do not necessarily lead people into violence, nor do people need to feel deprived before acting. It does not address why perceptions of personal or communal deprivation move some people to change society, and why other perceptions do not.

To synthesise the above, the grievance theory helps us understand why some conflicts start, and the greed theory explains why some escalate. Thus, a bit of both try to explain the nature of violent conflict but it could be wrong to say that people fight because they are greedy or motivated by it. In any case, we are all motivated to achieve something we want in life, which do not have to be seen as greed. We now discuss the forms of conflict that these theories try to explain.

2.4.2 Forms of Conflict

There are many forms of violent conflict but this study will restrict itself to the four kinds discussed below¹¹.

Internal conflict occurs within a country such as civil war over the control of natural resources; e.g. Sudan, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The

¹¹ <http://www.libraryindex.com/pages/2698/Poverty-Violent-Conflict-CATEGORIES-VIOLENT-CONFLICT.html> . The contents from this website are from highly –quality, licensed material from published forms.

potential for such collective violence could depend on the extent and intensity of shared discontents among members of a society; it functions as the degree to how such discontents are blamed on the political system and its agents.

Internationalized internal conflict occurs when foreign powers intervene in the bloody dispute within a country between warring parties. E.g. NATO in the Bosnia and Kosovo Wars of the 1990s, Nigeria in S/L from 1998 to 2001.

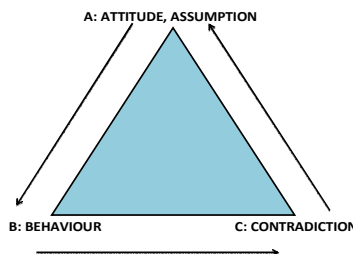
Interstate violent conflict occurs in the form of war between or among states; e.g. the 1st and 2nd world wars; the Balkan wars 1992 -1997; Ethiopia-Eritrean War 1998.

Extra systemic violent conflict occurs between the government of a state against a non-government group in another state. E.g. On March 1 2008, the Columbian army intervened in Ecuador against the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) guerrilla movement that led to the death of sixteen guerrillas including its 2nd in command, Raul Reyes. Both Ecuador and Venezuela were annoyed by the incident and amassed large military forces near the Colombian border. Also, after the 9/11 attack, both the US and coalition forces invaded Afghanistan and defeated the Taliban authority in 2001, who many western commentators denied were not a government even though they were in control of most part of the country.

The question is how these forms of conflict gravitate toward direct violence. One way of looking at this is Galtung's conflict triangle.

2.4.3 A Model of Conflict – Violence Formation

Galtung's conflict triangle



It is important to note that Galtung's triangle depicts the systemic pattern of conflict and violence formation. The 1st of these three basic concepts he calls

attitudes/assumptions (A). Attitudes and assumptions (A) form part of knowledge acquisition that develops inside the parties involved. These often create the stereotypes or part of the narratives that can influence people's behaviour. Disagreement starts when the positions or interests of the parties involved are incompatible. These attitudes affect the way individuals behave (B). Often our assumptions/perceptions of life are based on ideas and feelings we use to process our actions and reactions through our values, cultural beliefs, information, experience and identity. These perceptions are normally strong that we often call them conviction. In most cases, when there is disagreement each party sees the other as a threat to its needs or interests. These include the physical goods and comforts of life that directly relate to our physical wellbeing and self-fulfilment. Together they form part of people's values or aspirations. These can be classed into three categories: welfare, power and interpersonal (Gurr, 1970:24). Welfare values are what contribute directly to our physical well being; power values determine the extent to which we can influence the actions of others and avoid unwanted interference of others in our lives. It also includes the desire to participate in collective decision-making for self-determination and security. Interpersonal values are the psychological satisfactions people seek in non-authoritative interactions with others (Gurr, 1970:24). Finally, a conflict formation occurs when these attitudes (A) and behaviours (B) become overt as each party behaves with tension to the other where they cannot resolve their differences; it could lead to (C). Thus, conflict: A-B-C. We can illustrate this model with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

For example, **Attitudes/Assumptions:** The heart of the problem is land, which both the Jews and Palestinians claim as theirs; saying it was given to them by God. Thus, each perceives the other as having a disingenuous claim. The Jews see the Palestinians as intruders and the Palestinians see the Jews as occupiers. Each expresses hatred for the other and both have extremist groups that do not want to co-exist with the other on the same land. **Behaviours:** The Jews and Palestinians live in different communities, separated by barbed wire fences, each teaches its own history condemning the other; they hardly intermarry and each group heavily protects its turf. **Conflicts:** Without saying much, these two groups have not known peace over the last 50 years but waves of violence Tsunami like Palestinian suicide bombings of Israelis and Israeli air bombings of Palestinians.

These forms of conflict, violence and the model of its formation are an intrinsic part of every society. Africa has also seen waves of these conflict and violence formations, and thus, it would be important that the African state be conceptualized in order to understand how its conflict and violence has occurred.

2.5 Conceptualizing the State in Africa

It is important to peer through the lens of history to conceptualize the process and problems of development in the African state; it is like when a patient sees a doctor his or her medical history is checked before a prescription is made. Africa is one vast and diverse continent of 53 independent states; with few exceptions, many had their independence in the 1960s. However, 'to lump these states together and talk about a common 'African politics' is misleading because there are many important cultural differences among them; for instance, there is a wide cultural differences among the North African states and the states south of the Sahara, who are mainly black Africans' (Tordoof, 2002:1; see Doornbos, 2005:50). The demographic and geographic variations are striking; e.g. Sudan and Congo Democratic Republic are the largest; Burundi, Sierra Leone, Gambia and Swaziland are among the smallest. Nigeria, situated in West Africa, is richly endowed with oil deposit and the highest black population of almost 124 million. Despite these variations, they have many things shared in common: plenty natural resources but low human and capital resources, low technological innovation and cash crop economies. Significantly, after independence the African state became synonymous with political instability, perennial violence, mass poverty and humanitarian catastrophes. Dire situations like these made some to pejoratively say that 'Africa is a pessimist's paradise, a place where the Hobbesian hypothesis, that in the absence of a political Leviathan, life for individuals will be nasty, brutish, and short seems to be widely manifest in everyday life' (Buzan & Waeaver, 2003:219).

The above scenario in the post-colonial African state raises the questions about its power and capacity, national identity and unity (Doornbos, 2006:49). If this has formed the lens of seeing the post colonial African state, how does one contextualize these problems? To answer this question, the early process and development of statehood in Africa should be looked at.

2.5.1 Early Statehood

It is easy for some to assume the birth of the African state to colonialism; however, the notion of statehood had existed in Africa's early history. It is useful to stress that both the pre and post-colonial statehood are different. During its pre-colonial era, there were two broad kinds of political institutions: the stateless societies (Acephalous) and states with centralized authority (traditional rulers) with administrative instruments and judicial institutions (Ayyitey, 1991). Both societies foreshadowed a form of communal existence whereby people's interests were catered for. However, it could be wrong to construe this form of communal existence as a classless society (i.e. no rich or poor) because 'there is no historical or anthropological evidence for any such society' (Nkrumah, 1967:2). Also, since most pre-colonial political institutions depended on a strong family unit, the society was set up on the basis of this lineage that connected the family to the state (Oluwu, 1994:6) It meant the state had strong legitimacy because the society was usually based on this family network of clan as a way to ensure effective communication of its policies. The strong dislike for centralized power was responsible for the existence of stateless societies. According to Ayyitey, a conscious effort was made in stateless societies that each unit was big enough to protect itself but small enough to have internal unity. There was also a *raison d'être* in stateless societies for a centralized power because it could be vital for protection against outside attack. But they were also established to prevent against the possibility of despotism, which these states could represent. Even in states with a central authority there were checks against autocracy, which included the practice of consensus than autocracy; supernatural or religious practices like asking the ruler to drink poison; institutionalized sanctions like threats of deposition, prohibitions and revolt (Oluwu, 1994: 6). The significant point is that power and authority in the pre-colonial African state was based on consensus more than autocracy. The next phase of African statehood is associated with occupation, domination and exploitation of colonialism.

2.5.2 The Colonial African State

One of the greatest impacts of European industrial revolution was the era of imperialism. The industrial revolution was a success in Europe in terms of economic profit, the growth of towns, cities as a result of population expansion and surplus

productions. This success meant that these nations could not effectively trade among themselves as free trade hardly existed. Thus, there was need for these European industrial states to find markets where to sell the surplus production and make profit. This gave rise to imperialism, which ushered in the mad scramble for territorial markets and the birth of colonialism in waves unknown on the African continent around 1800 to 1945. The European powers carved out vast chunks of colonies in the areas they conquered and each colony was maintained by force. The pre-colonial institutions were extirpated in place of the new colonial policy. There is no simple answer as to why this was done except that it depended on the European powers involved. Basically, it was done for two reasons.

First, it had to do with the theory of racial superiority prevalent at the time; that all conquered territories were considered to have inferior institutions, which should be changed. The next had to do with logistical inhibitions as each colonial power was short of the manpower needed to exert control. To overcome this, the British introduced the system of indirect rule where African traditional rulers were co-opted to maintain law and order. The French, Portuguese, Belgians and Germans directly controlled these colonies with their own personnel. In short, the colonial state was 'elitist, centrist and absolutist' (Wunsch, 1990:23). The most significant trait of the colonial state was that decisions were taken, which were far removed from the indigenes and it was the duty of the chiefs imposed to implement them or would be dethroned. The bequest of the colonial state was the creation of horizontal and vertical inequalities. A cohesive social integration was weakened vertically by the vast inequality created among individuals and horizontally by the inequalities among the various ethnic groups. In the case of Sierra Leone(S/L), the British empowered some of the interior ethnic groups against the krios; descendants of freed African slaves living in the city, who eventually took over the reins of power after independence. The colonial Africa state was marked with mass exploitation, vandalism and corruption, which the postcolonial African state came to embody. Political control was not by consensus; in other words, the legacy of the colonial state was the continuation and strengthening of autocracy.

2.5.3 The Post-Colonial African State

The post-colonial African state was the by-product of colonialism. But as we shall now see; to start with, there is often a fight within the state and it has been

disconnected from its pre-colonial past because it was established on a different philosophy, structure and organization (Oluwu, 1994:6-7). Francis argues that the debate of post colonial African state formation is that its “state system to a large extent is different from what the conventional study of international relations assumes the state to be; the state in Africa is in a state of flux” (2006:33).

Weber and Brownlie’s definitions of state give a useful point of departure for examining the empirical and juridical aspects of this post-colonial African state (Jackson & Rosberg, 1982:5, Francis, 2006:34). For Weber, the state is about ‘compulsory jurisdiction’, (1964:156), and for Brownlie, it is about an ‘effective government’ (1979:75). Both state definitions are similarly echoed by Zartman, who sees the state as the sovereign authority, the recognized and accepted source of authority to organize decision making; secondly, it is an institution vested with the authority for decision making and, hence, an intangible symbol of identity; and has the primary security responsibility for a populated society (1995:5).

Brownlie’s legal definition of the state include a ‘permanent population’ and an ‘effective government’ (1979:73-76). To reconcile Zartman’s ‘unquestionable authority’ and ‘intangible symbol of identity’ in the post colonial African state raises a question. In political sociology, societies are seen as culturally homogeneous or heterogeneous. Thus, if we take ‘a stable community’ to mean an integrated political community founded on a common culture and values, then few African states are seen to possess this attribute (Jackson & Rosberg, 1982:5) because the population of many these states comprised several different ethnic groups and religions.

As Clapham argues, the rudiments given to states by the Westphalia legacy do not reflect the reality of statehood in Africa (1996:12). Every aspect of the state has been challenged, or weakened by the diverse locations of power within it, which has led to a wide gap between its exercise of international and internal sovereignty (Francis, 2006:36). Ayoob argues it was the chequered legacy of colonialism, which laid the foundation for a weak post colonial state that ‘led to arbitrary and cavalier construction of political boundaries across ethnic, linguistic and religious ties and bound them into an uneasy political union’ (1995). The creation of nation-states were non-existent could have impacted the gradual state building process, which as Francis says, the post-colonial African state cannot effectively control its citizens because this Westphalia system slowed its strong nation building (2006:33). Well, if this was an unwanted inheritance, then as Mazuri argues, the problem of dealing with the various

ethnic groups made it impossible to consolidate its authority after independence, because in some societies the many ethnic groups maintained their separate identities by being ruled partly through their own native institutions (1986:122), and in some societies, where traditional rulers lost their power, they refused to accept the political change.

Having the many different cultures or ethnic groups is less the problem than how social constructions like ethnicity, are used as a means of getting and maintaining power at the expense of other social groups in the post-colonial African state. The post-colonial African state's ability to exercise control over these many social groups raises the question of means. Such means are considered in terms of legitimacy and the ability to govern (Jackson & Rosberg, 1982:6). This ability to exercise control could depend on certain internal factors of power distribution, resource allocation and the sense of one national identity. But as we discussed above, these boundaries were for the convenience of the colonial powers, which was to force the indigenous people to be homogenous by creating nation-states in places it did not exist. But people will always find ways to make their differences more visible. As we now see, the latter has been a problem due to several concerns, namely ethnicity.

Cohen defines ethnicity as "a series of nesting dichotomizations of inclusiveness and exclusiveness"(1978:373). In this post-colonial state, other groups are excluded from political power and economic resources. In some parts of the state, ethnicity is not static; it constantly evolves often as a strategy of the ruling elite to consolidate their hold on power and the ordinary people use it as a way to survive. But where ethnicity has been used a deliberate ploy to deprived other groups, civil wars have occurred. For example: Sudan (1956 to date); Rwanda (1959-1964; 1994); Chad (1966 to date); Nigeria (1967-1970) and Angola (1957 to 1997).

Thus, conceptualisations of the post-colonial African state reveal a discrepancy between its juridical and empirical sovereignty. It has enjoyed the status of state created on the basis of international law but it lacks empirical sovereignty in real term of resources and governance, which could explain why it is in a continuous flop to command a huge stock of and prudently manage its resources for the people.

In the immediate post-independence period, the notion of what the state should be is subsumed under two main development approaches: the statist approach and the neo-liberal approach (i.e. structural adjustment programs). There were two aspects of the

statist approach: the collectivization of economic power; concentration of political power in the state. The collectivization of economic power was to monopolize the economic bread baskets either by a policy of socialization or nationalization of all its key primary industries (Wunsch&Oluwu, 1990) as a way to boost development because it was faced with economic problems and few industries. Many leaders of this post-colonial state turned to the east, like China, as an alternative to capitalism and were influenced by socialist ideas, especially with regard to agriculture. Some leaders believed this socialism, as it were, would pave the way to economic development. For instance, in Tanzania, President Nyeyere wanted to construct a socialist state from the country's million peasants through village cooperatives, named Ujamas, which was similar to the collectivisation of small farms in the former USSR. Initially, the Tanzanian peasants massively resisted the programme but they were forcefully moved into other villages and their traditional customs destroyed. It was the creation of violence unknown to the African peoples and a wide distrust between them (Wunsch & Oluwu, 1990) and it was dictatorial because the consent of the people was not required.

In terms of scope, there was concentration of political power in the state as it broadly expanded its responsibilities, which as Laski says, was a problem because it tried to provide all the agenda for every institution within its authority (1982). There were two problems involved here. First, it was not about the lack of resources per se: human or natural than institutional and procedural failures (Olaitan, 2005:1). The other was the human agency. Since it seemed that many of these leaders were foremost in the struggle for independence, they saw the state as their own private space. Hence, many went on to present their people with no choice in so-called referenda to declare them leaders for life, e.g. Kamuzu Banda (Malawi); Jomo Kenyatta (Kenya); Siaka Stevens (Sierra Leone); Leopold Senghor (Senegal). It came at a price, where political opposition, free speech was quelled; power was instead centralized in the hands of few, a contradiction to pre-colonial societies where power was by consensus than imposition (Ayyitey, 1991:99). There was disengagement between the leadership and the critical mass of its population. For example, the state conducts its official activities in the language of the colonial power while most of the population are uneducated, who only understand their mother tongue, meaning that actions are not taken in the interests of their people nor do these leaders follow public opinion. It is a

maxim in governance that all state officials understand that their office is expected to give results, of which they should give account to the citizens whose interest they serve. Inevitably, this iron curtain as it were, has entrenched the pathology of unaccountable leadership and bankruptcy, where the post colonial state became reminiscent of the centralized and criminalized colonial state. Also, the state was dysfunctional by its inability to exert an effective control over its territory and raise tax (Herbst, 1990, Jackson& Rosberg, 1982; Clapham, 1996 and Hyden, 1980). As its scope of action expanded modestly on key public infrastructure, there were some internal limitations, which as Doornbos says, it faced the question how could it establish and strengthen its link with the different social locations of power and the extent of autonomy it has granted them (Doornbos, 2006:50).

Interestingly, what is slipping under the radar of this statist approach in the post-colonial state is the cold war politics. During the cold war, the state was caught in a somewhat ideological limbo of the East-West divide of capitalist or socialist doctrines. Theoretically, the post-colonial state was non-aligned; yet practically, many had a hybrid of socialism or capitalism. One has to understand the official and practical agenda behind the aid given to the post colonial African state by the cold war rivals. The official line was normative about development but empirically, it was strengthening the state. It supported political dictatorship and not the democratization of state institutions. It was evident that political power went with economic wealth as a result of such foreign aids. For instance, in the case of Sierra Leone(S/L), the APC government of President Siaka Stevens benefitted greatly by receiving enough aid and other resources from these powers. However, these were not used to deliver the political goods than paying key political figures in return for their obedience and loyalty from their supporters (Reno, 1995; Ayoob, 1995).

The neo-liberal approach at the end of the 70s brought a new debate about the role of the state in development. In this debate, the state was seen as an obstacle to efficient market, repressive and dependent on foreign powers for support (Mkandawire, 2004). It was this quagmire and financial mismanagement of the post-colonial state, which made the international financial institutions to pull the strings out of its sail, leading to a change of fortune or the beginning of its end I would say. Its inability in terms of capacity and performance to catch up with the other continents made it the most

vilified object of the 90s (Doornbos, 2006; Mkandawire, 1990). It has been given many epithets: rentier, over extended, patrimonial and kleptocratic. But why is it so?

The effect of the world market prices for its raw material resources in the early 70s affected the state's revenue generating capacity. With little revenue the state could not adequately provide the basic needs of its citizens. Arguably, since the leaders did not want to abandon their power, the state became rentier, patrimonial and kleptocratic to compensate their supporters and oppositions. Such epithets are meant to depict the abnormal political and socio-economic conditions of this post colonial state, which cannot do anything on its own but dependent on the international community for its survival. The international financial institutions came up with policies that were considered the panacea of its economic and political development. The state was asked to reduce itself from its state-centric responsibilities, to stabilize and privatize its economy, and instructed to engage in democratization and creating an enabling environment for private sector investment. It resulted in what became known as the rolling back of the state (Doornbos, 2006; Mkandawire, 1994) when the international financial institutions 'decided to reverse their appreciation for it and opted out for what 'appear, an almost anarchic route' (Doornbos,2006:56). The impact was a state completely left out in the cold, with NGOs, private sectors and local communities attempting to implement policies of poverty reduction and development, which was its traditional burden of responsibility. This consequently led to the weakening of the post-colonial state, e.g. Ghana and S/L in the early 80s.

The statist approach was notorious for its corruption and embezzling of resources by government officials without being accountable to anyone. The power game resulted in the struggle over control of its resources and possibilities (Braathen et al.2000: 10). And where political power has always complement economic wealth, acquisition of state power has been a key source of conflict (Osman, 2007:19). The state has been ungovernable because it exists as an institution severed from its people and is struggling to justify its existence. For e.g. are the recent clashes in Nigeria, where from 1998 to date, the federal government has been facing an uphill battle with the local Ijaw youths of the Niger Delta state; one of the country's oil-rich producing states, over the problem of adequately allocating or investing the oil resources in the state. These Ijaw youths, an ethnic militia group, have been abducting foreign oil companies' executives in return for huge ransom prices. The scramble for the oil

resources has seen hundreds of local people killed in oil pipe explosions as they destroyed these pipes to steal and pour fuel into their plastic gallons. In other areas, the competition for the oil has increased violent conflicts among the many ethnic groups, leading to near militarization of entire areas by ethnic militias or the state security personnel. This is a clear sign where the post-colonial African state's legitimacy is generally contested with violent conflicts, and has struggled to maintain control over such contested areas; since it has become not a state for all but those few who are fortunate to be at the power center (Ake, 1989). This is an attribute of its own internal cause of state weakness.

Summarizing the above, both the statist and neo-liberalist approaches did not work to make the post-colonial state strong as was intended. The statist approach instituted an expanded scope beyond its ability to cope. For Fukuyama (2004:39–40), the neo-liberal approach helped in sinking the competence of the African state. It was done by using external specialists or economic influence to control strategic and policy-making functions in a hurry to provide services to consumers as opposed to strengthening state institutions to deliver these public goods. The neo-liberal approach of rolling back the state in the early 1980s did not create a strong, democratic and prosperous economic state as was intended. Instead, it added an extra weight on the state weakness, which eventually bent it beyond recovery. This destroyed the development of human capital as people did not get better social services like education and health. Ironically, there has been a change of fortune; others in the past, who saw the state as ineffective, are now calling for its return to take up the burden of development, which many of the neo-liberal institutions like NGOs have been unable to replace.

We have seen from the above how political power in the post-colonial state has been constantly and highly contested. Since political power has always been the key to economic wealth in the post-colonial state, the 'capturing and maintaining of state power has been a key source of conflict and political violence across the continent' (Osman, 2007:19). In this regard, I now look at how this political economy of the post-colonial state feeds into the violent conflict of Sierra Leone.

2.6 Contextualizing the political economy of the violent conflict in Sierra Leone

What is political economy and does it have any relationship with weak states and violent conflict? Political economy has to do with power structures and economic relations, combined to strengthen a nation and provide for the citizens. In every political society, the general basic needs are applied to judge whether a state is good (strong) or bad (weak). As every society consists of the haves and have-nots, it becomes the state's responsibility that all its social units are catered for. However, it does not necessarily follow that the policies are always equitable. In essence, what political economy does is to analyze how these institutions operate within any state, how the scarce resources are allocated through the economic system and how the citizens react to their government. This approach seeks to explain if a political institution is able to effectively control people if it negates its responsibility to them. Concepts like obedience and patriotism on the part of citizens are only valid if their liberty and basic needs are satisfied by the state. In short, it is both a normative and empirical claim that some governments can earn, especially in western liberal democracies, their legitimacy when they attend to their people's basic needs. For instance, in these western liberal democracies, people give their consent to be governed where the leadership is expected to fulfil their expectation but when nothing is done, there is a tendency for them to ask something else of their government, including a call for a new election. Unlike non-western countries where there are no liberal democratic governments, this normative and empirical claim is hardly seen.

Considering this, Sierra Leone's (S/L) weak state was characterized by lack of good governance and problems of legitimacy (Jackson, 2002:38), which was a continuation of the colonial state's exploitative and divisive politics. It was incapable to foster stable and accountable state institutions to meet the citizens' needs, empowering them to improve their lives through the rule of law. Weak states also show signs of 'mono economies'¹², economic underdevelopment, heavy debts burdens, and low growth rates, high level of inflation and unemployment' (Jackson 2002:39). It is against this backdrop, where the key responsibility of states is to deliver political goods: security, health, education and economic opportunities (Potter, 2004:2), S/L was a weak state.

¹² Countries whose economic dependence is on one particular kind of industry, which could be agricultural products like cocoa, coffee, phosphate, e.t.c, whose world market prices are too small to make a difference in revenue gains.

The deficiency of these state functions is the foundation of bad governance and the key question here is whether the government was able, willing or not to perform its functions.

As in some states popular legitimacy is partly based on performance and the provision of basic needs. Thus, in S/L, the government's capacity to address these concerns became painful and punishingly slow to realize, leading to its legitimacy crises (Magbaily Fyle, 1993:17). Although this might seem a questionable claim, legitimacy could be determined by the right and free participation of citizens to elect their government in any election; however, the first thing the All Peoples Congress (APC) did was to fine tune the country into a one party state in 1978. I say fine tune because this was an idea initiated by the ruling SLPP government, which Stevens opposed when he was opposition leader.

This meant political exclusion and limited participation except to those who were party supporters. Since the government could not guarantee itself wide support, it resorted to many violent means. Its poor legitimacy became evident with very low level of citizens political participation, a reliance on force to ensure compliance, unstable politics like coups and the centralization of power that was focused on the ruling elite (Jackson 2002, p 38). In addition, the problem of governance and economic decline was worsened by the impact of globalization and the poor prices of primary exports (Jackson 1990; Reno 1995; Ayoob 1995).

It is significant that the policies of international financial institutions in rolling back the state in the early 1980s added an extra weight on the state weakness. It was unable to effectively provide the basic socio-economic needs and there was a massive inequality between the rich and poor. It is this growing inequality of income and wealth between the rich and poor, absence of necessary material goods, and the often decomposition from conflict to violence that has characterized the post-colonial African state, thus the lack of state capabilities for effective governance from both the administrations of President Stevens and Momoh created the seedbed of state and economic decline that contributed to the RUF's insurgency in 1991 (Reno, 1995; Magbaily Fyle 1993; Alie, 2001; Gberie 2004).

We have seen from this political economy approach how S/L experienced the pathology of state weakness. The weak state pathology does not automatically transcend to mass political violence but when violent conflicts break out in some post-

colonial state they become endemic and escalate. So, one approach that could help us to understand the nature of this mass political violence in S/L is protracted social conflict.

2.6.1 The Protracted Social Conflict in Sierra Leone

A protracted social conflict has to do with the issues of identity, inequalities and frustrations, which could lead to organized violence. Thus, it represents "...the prolonged and often violent struggle by communal groups for such basic needs as security, recognition and acceptance, fair access to political institutions and economic participation"(Azar, 1990:93). Azar defines four clusters or variables as preconditions for PSC: communal discontent of a society, human needs, the state's role and international linkages (Azar, 1990: 7-12). In Sierra Leone, the communal discontent of the society was very important in the violent conflict; the communal discontent from the political domination of a single ethnic group caused largely by colonial policy. Thus, the British colonial policy of divide and rule directly influenced an ethnic and regional rivalry in the country (Azar, 1990: 7; Migdal, 1988). In some areas, strong traditional rulers were replaced with those sympathetic to British interest; particular ethnic groups had right to rule at the expense of others (Migdal, 1988). Those traditional rulers who had lost their power refused to cooperate, and some ethnic groups refused to pay local tax to traditional rulers belonging to another ethnic group.

After independence, there emerged three leading ethnic groups vying for dominance. However, a single ethnic group; the Mendes, came to dominate the other ethnic groups since they had more educated people. The Mendes benefitted from education due to several factors. First, the early Christian missionary penetration in the southern part took with them education, while the northern ethnic groups were influence by Islam and even though they had limited access to missionary activities, they were suspicious. Also, when the British were facing a constant pressure from the educated Freetown Krio elite, the British deliberately established the 1st interior secondary school in the southern district of Bo, called the Bo school in 1906 for the sons of traditional rulers as a way to weaken this educated Krio elite. Arguably, over the years the Mendes benefitted greatly from this. They became the dominant group during the independence struggle, who inevitably took over from the departing British. But the problem started when they tried to exclude and ignore the needs of the other social

groups, thereby breeding frustration and polarization, which led to the formation of the opposition APC party; an amalgamation of all the various ethnic groups in the northern and western region of the country (Magbaily Fyle, 1993:4).

In terms of human needs, just as Azar argued, all individuals aim at fulfilling their collective needs through their collective group identity. Thus, when people's basic needs are deprived it leads to increasing grievances, which individuals could express collectively (Azar, 1990: 7-10). There are different forms of needs: such as political access, security and acceptance or integration, which may refer to people's religious and cultural expression of identity. In Sierra Leone, the security needs was the material concerns for physical safety, nutrition and housing among the population. It is important that Azar's concept of human needs explicitly takes up the idea of power inequalities. The dominant social group satisfies its interests to political access and security at the expense of the other ethnic groups needs.

In S/L, after the political turmoil of the late 60s, the dominant group was no longer a single ethnic group. If Cohen's definition of ethnicity is "a series of nesting dichotomizations of inclusiveness and exclusiveness"(Cohen, 1978:373), then what happened in S/L was not about the exclusion of different ethnic groups but the inclusion of class. The political institution became a group of individuals from among the leading ethnic groups. To start with, the President who was Limba (the 3rd largest northern ethnic group) was married to a Mende (the 1st largest ethnic group from the southeast); his 1st Vice President was a Limba and was also married to a Mende; his 2nd Vice President was a Temne (the 2nd largest northern ethnic group) was married to a Susu (another northern ethnic group). The Chief Justice happened to be a Mende as well; the Bank Governor happened to be a Temne and later a Krio as well (the descendants of the freed slaves). In addition, when it came to parliamentary representations, almost all the eighteen ethnic groups were represented; most of the ministerial positions were also held by members of the southeast (i.e. the Mendes) since they had more educated people than the other ethnic groups. Thus, it was understandable why the other classes became frustrated, felt bitterly discriminated and excluded from the socio-economic and political participation of the country. The state as power broker was not capable of mediating a level of need satisfaction for the other classes. The result was a growing disarticulation between the state and society; where

the APC government state increasingly pursued policies that were contradictory to the general needs of its people (Azar, 1990:11; Gberie, 2004:34-35).

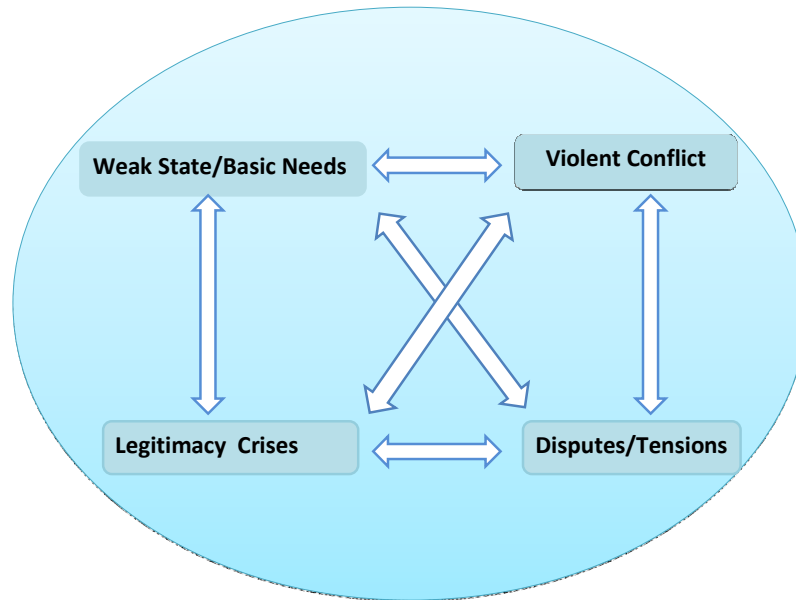
The question of governance or the state's role is pivotal in the delivery of group needs. Azar believes that most states going through protracted social conflicts are governed by 'incompetent, parochial, fragile, authoritarian regimes' (Azar, 1990: 10). In Sierra Leone, given the rather fragile structures of authority, the power capacity and economic access needs were limited to the dominant APC elite at the expense of all other groups. The monopolization of power by the APC resulted in "crises of legitimacy" as the state was no longer able to meet the political access, security and economic needs of the excluded groups. Finally, as Azar says, the leadership of the state in most protracted social conflicts is increasingly dependent on international linkages; that is, the state is politically and economically compromised by both economic and military dependency on richer and stronger states for survival (Azar, 1990: 11). During the cold war, the APC government received enough aid and other resources from the G7 powers and the former USSR. However, these were not used to deliver the political goods than paying key political figures in return for their obedience and loyalty to the APC (Reno, 1995; Ayoob, 1995).

2.7 Towards a Conceptual Model

A conceptual model is a general method used to describe an idea about some topic in a pictorial form¹³, or having the concepts often within shapes and the relationship between the concepts shown by a connecting line linking the concepts¹⁴. The conceptual model of weak states will be illustrated with the following diagram below.

¹³ <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/>

¹⁴ <http://cmap.ihmc.us/Publications/ResearchPapers/TheoryCmaps/TheoryUnderlyingConceptMaps.htm>



In order to explain the relationships, the weak state indicators of Rotberg under the four concepts will be used.

2.7.1 Weak States and Basic Needs

The categorization of a state is determined by basic needs. Let me be clear about the arrows. Initially, violent conflict does not lead to weak state; it is the weak state that could lead to violent conflict. But as the arrows show, there is feed back, where violent conflict could also further weaken a state. It is the duration and intensity of it that could lead to the scenario postulated by Rotberg and Zartman, i.e. failed or collapsed state; that is, if the latter is a possibility. The limitation of this conceptual model is that it cannot explain what a strong state is, what are the relationships of a strong state (in terms of what), it does not answer the question of whether a weak state automatically transcend into violent conflict, or is it not possible for a weak state to become strong. Instead, what I have tried to do is to explain what happens in one case, which is S/L.

Weak States: A state is the political institution of any political defined territory, whose key task includes the four core functions of statehood: providing security; maintaining legitimate political institutions; fostering economic growth; and meeting its people's basic needs. Weak states provide a poor delivery of basic needs, which could erode their legitimacy or a potential for violent conflict. This was borne out in

S/L where the government's inability to provide these needs lead to many legitimacy crises, disputes and the inevitable violent conflict. But this will be analyzed further in Chapter 4.

Basic needs are the daily human concerns in all societies: right to life (security), liberty (freedom), and the pursuit of happiness (welfare and property). Gross inequalities may be an indicator of basic needs not provided by the state. It could also be to the absence of physical or political discrimination on the basis of identity (i.e. age, sex, race, belief, and language) or it could also mean the political representation of people within a state. In other words, since it is impossible to have the Athens form of democracy where everyone can have a voice, representation has to do with the election of politicians on behalf of their constituencies. In the developed countries, democracy is complemented by the role of civil societies and social capital.

Though basic needs are normally about food, shelter, protection of life and property, it is important to note that it is subject to space and time, meaning it is not static but could be relative¹⁵. In the US, for instance, it is about paying bills, health care, education and making ends meet¹⁶; in the UK, it is about education. In Africa, it is about things taken for granted in the developed countries like food, health and clean drinking water¹⁷. Let us reflect, in the mid 17th and 18th centuries, the concept of democracy (political participation) was not an important issue in many states, including the western countries; however, with the passing of time, it has become the foundation toward good governance, peace, and security within and among nation-states. In fact, women's right to vote was first granted in New Zealand 1893, followed by Australia and the Scandinavian countries before the rest of Western Europe and the USA.

It is without dispute that democracy has also led to violent conflicts in some states; although some can argue to the contrary it is not democracy. We take S/L for instance, its first post independence general elections in 1967, led to disputes with the incumbent Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) government to instigate the military to overthrow the All Peoples Congress (APC) from assuming office. Also, the decision of the ethnic Albanian population in Kosovo to declare its independence from Serbia

¹⁵ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2005/jul/05/socialexclusion.politics>- The Guardian Newspaper

¹⁶ <http://www.census.gov/prod/> -US Census Demographic Data

¹⁷ http://www.unesco.org/water/wwap/facts_figures/basic_needs.shtml

is another example. Some countries within the EU and the US recognised it but Russia, Spain and Greece opposed it. Some elections by voting could be a sign of but is not democracy, e.g. the recent election frauds of 2002 & 2008 in Zimbabwe where the ZANUPF has rendered the opposition powerless. Nor is the act of some democracy synonymous with good governance, as in the case of Russia, where President Yeltsin handpicked his successor, Putin, in 1999, who later won the presidential elections in 2000. President Putin also chose his successor, Dmitry Medvedev, in 2008, because he had reached his presidential term limits. After the contested Presidential election, which Medvedev won, President Putin handed power and was sworn in as Russia's Prime Minister.

Or should one mention the recent electoral victory of Hamas in Palestine, which the US and Israel did not accept as a legitimate government because it is seen as a terrorist organization? It was interesting that President Bush's focus on democracy in the Middle East is one of double standards. Hamas was strengthened because the U.S. insisted that democratic elections be held in the Palestinian Authority. Thus, these are some of the problems in contextualizing political participation (democracy) as a basic need. I could go on with many examples to explain the controversies or relativity of the concept of basic needs. Can the separatist movements in Chechnya (Russia), Basque (Spain), the PKK (Turkey) and the IRA (Ireland) be seen as the denial of basic needs, of which the right of self-determination could be seen as constituent part of basic needs? But the great problem is who can decide or whose right of self determination. It shows the difficulty to talk about self-determination as basic need. We could see this clearly in some of the countries just mentioned, where the denial of the right of self determination has led to violent conflict. In the post-colonial African state, there have been few crises of groups claiming right of self determination, except those of Biafra civil war in Nigeria (1967-70), the Eritreans in Ethiopia (1988-91).

We can also take the issue of slavery. It was not seen by the slave trading nations as the denial of people's basic needs and the rebellion of slaves; especially in Haiti, 1804 that saw the independence of a first slave state, was against the denial of their freedom (basic need). In addition, one could also say that the Anti-slavery movement was a civil society in the true sense of the word; though it was localised and not internationalized like some of the human rights organizations we now have. This is why in my own estimation, the concept of human rights is still a problem in some

states; we rightly or wrongly call weak, failed and collapsed states, being accepted as an element of basic needs. In short, these states see human rights as a western cultural value, which is being imposed on them. But one could say that basic needs is about good governance and human security; though it could be related or restricted to space and time as we have discussed. Normatively, 'if human development is freedom from want (a process widening the range of people's choices), human security can be understood as the ability to pursue those choices in a safe and equitable environment'¹⁸.

2.7.2 Legitimacy Crises

As illustrated on the conceptual model, when a weak state cannot adequately provide its citizens basic needs, there is a tendency for it to experience legitimacy crises. This is a critical and often troublesome concept in politics because of the many ways it is used; thus an accepted definition is often elusive (Weber, 1947; Lipset, 1963; Beetham, 1991). Somewhat, the most basic distinction is between its normative and empirical meaning. The normative aspect concerns itself with values by which a regime or action is said to be legitimate, or why citizens should obey a government and under what conditions its authority is legitimate. The empirical aspect explains why or when citizens do obey or revolt against any political institution. In short, it concerns more about whether the normative values people hold are met rather than debating which values should hold.

Lipset makes a useful distinction between legitimacy and effectiveness. Legitimacy he says is 'the capacity of the system to engender and maintain belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for the society'. Effectiveness, in contrast, 'means actual performance, the extent to which the system satisfies the basic functions of government as most of the population and such powerful groups within it as big business or the armed forces see them (Lipset, 1963:4). We now discuss the likelihood of how this conceptual model fit into S/L and other states legitimacy crises.

In S/L, this legitimacy question was indicated in rigged elections and poor electoral turn out, which as seen from the conceptual model led to disputes, tensions in some parts of the country (this is discussed fully in chapter 4). However, one has to be cautious with poor electoral turnouts to determine legitimacy. In some western

¹⁸ <http://www.iss.co.za/>.Institute for Security Studies in South Africa

countries like Australia, the UK, France and the US, often elections have had less than 55% turn out, yet these governments legitimacy are beyond doubt.

The normative aspect of legitimacy against the violent overthrow of a government raises the question of when and why a government is considered to have support. Let me briefly clarify the difference between support and legitimacy with *de jure* and *de facto* sovereignty. In international law, sovereignty is the exclusive political authority of states as opposed to individuals. *De jure* sovereignty is the legal right conferred on a state by the constitution to exert its authority (i.e. by law) and *de facto* is the practical working of sovereignty in terms of the people's support for a government (a synonym for popular legitimacy). For instance, it is possible for a military coup, which are normally considered unconstitutional, to have initial support but its legitimacy could wane in the long run if it does not live up to the people's expectations. To measure something that is intangible like expectations might seem vague, but we could use the recent political turmoil in Pakistan to explain it. In 1999, the Pakistani military General, Pervez Musharaff, seized power. Later in 2001, he was elected President but then came under fire in 2007 for dismissing some Supreme Court judges opposed to his politics. In S/L, when the NPRC military regime seized power in 1992 it had wide support but lost its legitimacy by 1996 when it was obvious they too were corrupt and undemocratic like the APC government they ousted.

2.7.3 Disputes / Tensions

Politics defines what people care enough about to fight about. In real terms, people have irreconcilable differences, conflict of opposing ideas, attitudes or goals. Often it is an unfortunate difference between two opinions or situations. In some states, the issue of legitimacy has led to disputes and tensions. For example, in S/L, the imposition of one party rule by the All Peoples Congress (APC) government, 1978, led to several disputes and tensions, as people opposed the APC. Also, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, 2004, was witnessed by many acts of civil disobedience and public protests organized by the opposition, over the alleged rigging of votes for the incumbent President, Viktor Yushchenko. The public protests succeeded when the Ukrainian Supreme Court annulled the result and ordered a run-off, which was eventually won by the opposition, Viktor Yanukovich. Pakistan offers another example where legitimacy and support ' continues to be one of despotic regimes using

religious extremists and external support to keep the secular democratic forces at bay; and when these forces do assert themselves, to tie them down in legal constraints that are designed to ensure their failure'¹⁹. In other words, though seemingly strong, yet is weak as it shares authority with the tribal areas that have not known central authority for many decades after independence in 1949.

2.7.4 Violent Conflict

It is defined as the systematic breakdown of the social order resulting from and/or leading to changes in social norms, which involve mass violence instigated through collective action (see SIDA, 2005:4; Gurr, 1970:23; Stewart, 2000). This notion includes violent protests, riots, coups, revolutions, civil wars, genocide, international wars and terrorism. In some states, poor legitimacy could lead to violent conflict. For example, in S/L, as we shall see later, the weak state crises led to an outbreak of a violent conflict that lasted for over a decade. Other example was the recent violent ethnic clashes in Kenya over the alleged rigged 2007 presidential and parliamentary elections. In a similar vein, the early process of state formation was not an easy construction in many states; it was one filled incomprehensible savagery and destruction. In recent times, it is the attempt of breaking up the state what some called nationalist wars, e.g. the Balkan Wars of the 90s, including Kosovo, 1997-1999, Chechnya in Russia, the Kurds in Turkey and the Basques in Spain.

Still, the question is weak state a 21st century phenomenon or is there a relationship between weak states and violent conflicts? As we see next, the weak state phenomenon is not a novelty in international politics.

2.7.5 Historical examples of weak states and violent conflicts

The notion behind the famous quote of the American Declaration of Independence, 1776, mirrors the relationship between a weak state and violent conflict:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness; when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably ... a design to reduce them (i.e. the people) under absolute

¹⁹ http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6940148.stm

Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.

From this excerpt it could be argued that states exist to provide and protect these basic needs and they owe their legitimacy from the people and the rule of law. And where a government fails and becomes unhelpful to achieve these ends, it is the right of the people to change it with a new one to meet these needs. And one of the main reason the American colonists revolted against the British crown was the creed ‘no taxation without representation’, which was a clear call for legitimacy. In other words, they were not going to pay taxes to a crown that resided in Britain, while they had no representation in the British parliament. A closer look at the American declaration has or was a reflection of Locke’s idea of the state created not for itself but for the general welfare of the society; that men have a social contract with their government to secure their life and property, in which men are free to break what he called the bond of servitude. Locke’s idea was the pioneering work of human rights based on two key tenets: liberty and property. Like Hobbes, Locke shed light on human nature and the dangers posed to all in a lawless society. In his Second Treatise of Government, his first premise was the equality of all humanity, and said, God created all men naturally equal, each man was free “to order their action and dispose their possessions and persons, as they think fit, within the bounds of the law of nature, without asking leave, or depending on the will of other men”²⁰.

Let us again see how this played a few years later in France, 1789. The French Revolution as the conflict between a influential, growing middle class and an unshakable upper crust protecting its privileges has great bearing in summarizing this weak state and violent conflict phenomenon. The fact that France practiced feudalism in the 18th century: its society was stratified and the nobles and clergy enjoyed special privileges that did not have to pay taxes; the common people did not have power and freedom in politics; worked hard and had to pay heavy taxes typified a weak state. The people’s basic need was not adequately provided by the monarchy. The nobles and clergy made up the first and second group in the country. The common people i.e. the middle class -bourgeoisie, peasants and artisans- made up the third group. The

²⁰ Locke , Second Treatise of Government Ch 2:4

nobles and clergy could outvote the common people easily in a so-called parliament that was hardly called by the king, who ruled as an absolute monarch. The common people became discontented with the privileged classes. In short, the problem remained and worsened because of the monarchy's inability to tap the wealth of the nation by taxation; France was a great paradox of being rich with a government in poverty. The deteriorating finances of the government and the prolonged differences of inequality between this middle class and the nobility triggered the violent conflict of 1789. The rationale of this argument is to show that a bunch of greedy leadership-a reflection of bad governance and mass exploitation-, which wanted power and money at the mainstream society's expense, caused this turmoil. As usually said, it seems this problem of history repeats itself; even in many third world states today, these are the problems that eventually lead and are still leading to violent conflict in the future.

2.8 Summary of the theoretical discussion

The outbreak of the violent conflict in Sierra Leone that has been stressed on its unique post-modern nature or by reducing it to irrational outbursts of 'ancient ethnic hatred' or a "primitive instinct for violence" (Kaplan, 1994) was totally misleading. What was required is a reconstruction of the historical development and epoch, taking into account the structural dynamics, which conditioned the emergence and behaviour of the actors (Gantzel, 1997:139). Although the violent conflict in S/L was rooted in this historical weak state framework, it cannot claim to be a formal causal model but could be a useful tool in understanding these kinds of conflicts (Jackson, 2002:37), such as economic crisis, identity politics, authoritarian and exclusionary political structures, power struggles, and legitimacy crises, which are often interconnected in important ways (Byman & Van Evera 1998:44).

3 Methodology

In the last chapter, I attempted to examine the relationship between weak states and violent conflicts. This chapter proceeds to describe the method that used to explore the research questions. It was a qualitative empirical methodology and was chosen because the focus and collection of the data was based on a single case study process. A case study is ideal when the researcher intends to answer ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions, when the researcher has little control over the events; unlike methods of experiment, which deals with existing events within a real-life context (Yin in Swanstrom, 2002:67).

3.1 Case Study and Process Tracing

The method of process tracing (or triangulation) is adopted because it is defined as the method where multiple types of evidence are employed for the verification of a single inference or case (Gerring, 2007:173). The question of doing a case study is what we can learn from it. A case is either simple or complex; it is one among many and is purposive, and thus, it ‘is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied. By whatever methods, we choose to study the case’ (Stake, 2003:134). It could provide an effective medium to fully investigate the particular among the general.

A case study serves three purposes: identity, explanation, or control (White 1992, in Stake, 2003: 138). Now, how does this relate to my research? Since process tracing usually involves long causal links (Gerring, 2007), the explanatory approach is adopted. As a deductive study, I intend to test the theory by finding evidence from this single case of the relationship between weak states and violent conflicts. However, the limitation is that it is difficult to make generalization from a single case.

3.2 Data collection

Data are not inherently qualitative or quantitative but could be piece of almost anything. They do not necessarily have to be expressed in numbers; they can take the form of words, images, and impressions, which represent reality of the people involved (Lofland, 1984). In doing research, there is no standard way of choosing methods than what is most relevant to achieve at the time, depending on space and one’s interaction with respondents.

3.2.1 Setting

Sierra Leone has 12 districts divided into four regional headquarters: West, East, North and South, for administrative purposes. These areas of investigation were chosen because it was important to have inputs from a cross section of the population. However, since it was impossible to cover the 12 districts, the respective regional headquarter districts was where the research was conducted. The Western area was chosen because it is the capital.

In the Eastern region, the three districts of Kailahun, Kono and Kenema were significant during the violent conflict. It was strategic to all the warring factions. There the conflict heightened as each faction struggled to gain control of the rich diamond fields of Kono; it was the entry and exit points from Kailahun where the violent conflict started in March 1991. Kailahun was the RUF's headquarter in 1991 until after the peace and disarmament process in 2001. Kenema is the districts headquarter for the eastern region and has the military's largest 2nd barrack. Many Liberian refugees lived and it was there another Liberian ethnic faction was formed (ULIMO), which attacked the Charles Taylor's NPFL, in Liberia. In Kono, I wanted to find out the link between the diamonds and the violent conflict. Since it was also very close to the Liberian and Guinean borders, it became the RUF's main entry and exit point in its war efforts with logistics and the illegal trade of goods.

For the southern region, the district headquarter of Bo was chosen. The town of Bo was significant for many reasons. Firstly, it has the country's 4th largest military barracks and it was where the large scale civil resistance against the RUF started. There the civil-military relations took a twist for the worse between the CDF (Civil Defense Forces) known as the Kamajors and the Army after the return to democratic rule in 1996. As discussed later, this somehow led to another military coup in 1997. The northern region districts headquarter of Makeni was the last area of research. This region did not experience the large-scale violent conflict until 1998 after the removal of the military junta by the Nigerian military forces. Thus, because Makeni had a large military barrack and a strategic location linking the main roads to the capital city, the rebel army occupied it as their other base until the disarmament process in 2001.

3.3 Methods

- **Documentation:** It was realized that interviews and questionnaires alone would not provide an adequate and independent source of data collection. Thus, extra information was sourced from published materials: books, journals, newspapers, magazines and the Internet to corroborate the empirical findings. I enjoyed the privilege of access to tens of academic materials from the University of Tromsø's library; including an enviable and innumerable time on the Internet. However, though it was a great amount of Internet sources, some of the theories about weak states and violent conflicts, including my case study, were a challenge to grapple with; while others greatly help me as well.
- **Direct observation:** In this sense, the question was what I wanted to know that I should observe. Of course, there were plenty things out there, which would have made it impossible to observe everything. But as field notes were taken on the spot, there were some physical evidences of lack of socio-economic services. Without doubt, some had been destroyed by the violent conflict but most had been like that prior to the conflict. In Freetown (capital), there was hardly any supply of electricity and clean drinking water for many people. In the 2nd city of Bo, about 98 % of the inhabitants use water well as their source of clean drinking water; electricity is provided during the rains by the hydro plant in Kenema. Kenema inhabitants do enjoy relatively good electricity from their hydro dam and a ration supply of pipe borne water in addition to the wells. In Kono, Kailahun, Makeni, the presence of electricity and clean drinking water are but a luxury, not accessible to all. The old damaged road network before the war linking Freetown and other towns was clearly seen.
- **Survey:** This referred to a combination of two procedures that were used-questionnaires and interviews (Kjell & Newton, 2001). In designing the questionnaires, I began by piloting them on a small sample of people characteristic in the survey. After a rough draft was created, the related key theoretical variables contain in the research questions and hypotheses were analyzed. Care was taken to ensure that the questions cover every concept and there was no duplication or undue treatment of any issue. Terminology was

important at this point to avoid jargons and simple English was used instead. The respondents themselves administered the questionnaire. The latter comprised of twenty short answer questions with open-ended responses. Some of these questions were dichotomous, meaning they had two possible responses like Yes/No, which required the respondent to explain with why or how to the respective answer.

- **Interview:** It was a semi-structured, which restricted certain kinds of communications but allowed spontaneous dialogue in the key issues. This helped in several ways depending on the time, space and background of the respondent. Each interview was conducted with a fairly open framework, allowing a focused dialogue and was audio taped. During these interviews, the relevant issues about the conflict were identified, and other interesting issues were encountered that would have been followed. Most participants were willing to give more information than was bargained for; some of which was not worth chasing while a few rewarded my investigation but it was time consuming.
- **Focus groups:** Initially, most respondents were chosen among the educated class but later it became apparent of bias where the uneducated ones, who made about 60% of the population, were not targeted. To make up for this bias, an equal focus group interview was held with youths, some of whom contacts had been established with before.

3.4 Reflections

The thought of doing research always carries with it the excitement, inspiration, ambition and belief that one is going to make a breakthrough and contribute greatly to academia. Not least, being caught up in this euphoria, the field experience revealed a different reality to me. Prior this, I had never traveled beyond the capital to the provincial regions. The thought of being there the first time was greatly relished; it was both work and fun to see new places. There was no experience of any security problem since it was my country and the local field assistants were nice. However, things took a twist in making arrangements for the interviews and administering of questionnaires. It was evident that there is a difference between the perception and reality of doing research.

The first problem was that many of the respondents did not return their questionnaire, and some who returned it, did not even answer all the questions. The focus group interview was very stressful for most of the time. To say the least, often my concentration was scattered and my confidence decreased as one continuously received response from all sides. It was more difficult to read the reactions to responses the way I could in one-on-one interviews.

My other experience had to do with the question of ethics and independence; the norm of research. My daily concern was to get the cooperation of some participants. This common problem and limited cooperation affected some of these research norms. The countryside is extremely poor, and for most people, the concern of meeting their daily needs was more important than talking to me. Some who knew the purpose of my visit asked for money. Often a drink was bought or token given to get their participation. Interestingly, since this research was funded by one of world's richest countries, Norway, and as a poor research student in his own country, considered the world's least poor, it was very difficult to ignore some of these ethical concerns.

Ideally, it is also believed that a research has to be independent. However, it is not always the case due to situational dynamics. For instance, some of those interviewed like ex-combatants and focus groups had different ways of understanding the questions. Since the vocabulary was somehow different among us, often attempt was made to explain the question, which could have influenced their contributions. Some had got a bad experience with other researchers, making it hard to get their cooperation. A striking observation was that some of the informers saw themselves as reliable sources in the field. It was evident that some of their responses seemed a recycling of the same source of information for future researchers, and knowing the problem of oral sources, these could lose their authenticity and accuracy.

In the end, it was clear that there was a great difference in behaviour of the various warring factions. It showed a striking consistency of the causes of the violent conflict but an inconsistency in the demographic and ethnic profiles of ex-combatants. Contrary to common perception, differences among the fighting groups like ethnic, regional, religious or political support were small. Most of them had individual

reasons for joining the various factions. To say the least, many were uneducated, poor and they had a shared demand for increase access to basic social services like education, food, health, clean drinking water, employment and justice. It was again clear that the violent conflict was not openly between the rebels and the state forces. Often the rebels and some members of the state forces systemically targeted the civilians and there were also violent attacks among civilians who had old disputes over land and chieftaincy issues. But in the next chapter we shall see how some of these factors played a part in the violent conflict.

4 Data Presentation and Analysis

In conducting this research, there were a significant number of fewer female respondents. Perhaps, the reason for my few female respondents had to do with the chores of their family activities. It was also not a deliberate attempt to ignore them. In this analysis, it is clear that it is not a narration about the violent conflict than to address how the weak state framework could have ignited it.

4.1 Data presentation

The data is presented in chart, which is summarized below. The focus group was chosen from among the unemployed rural youths. The population of those unemployed in S/L is about 65% and thus the aim was to find if there was/is any link between unemployment and violence. Since many of them might have suffered the brunt of the conflict, it was necessary to get their own opinion.

A. Personal interviews	Places (regions)	No. of people	Sex distribution		Educational Level	Occupation
			Male	Female		
Age distribution (23-89)	Freetown/West	5	5	0	Tertiary	Lecturers - PhD/ Masters
	Bo/South	1	0	1	Tertiary	Politician
	Kono/East	7	7	0	Secondary& Tertiary	Chiefs, Professionals, Locals
	Kailahun/East	7	7	0	Secondary& Tertiary	Chiefs, Ex-RUF
	Kenema/East	5	5	0	Tertiary	Chiefs, Lecturer, NGO staff
	Makeni/North	8	6	2	Secondary& Tertiary	Professionals, Politicians, Ex-RUF, Locals
	Total	33	30	3		

B. Focus group interviews	Places (areas)	No. of people	Sex distribution		Educational level	Occupation
			Male	Female		
Age distribution: (23-35)	Bo	10	10	0	Primary	Unemployed
	Kono	10	10	0	Primary	Unemployed
	Kailahun	10	10	0	Primary	Unemployed
	Kenema	10	10	0	Primary	Unemployed
	Makeni	10	10	0	Primary	Unemployed
	Total	50	50	50		

C. Questionnaires	Places (areas)	No. of people	Sex distribution		Educational level	Occupation
			Male	Female		
Age distribution: (23-40)	Freetown	20	19	1	Tertiary	Employed
	Bo	12	20	0	Tertiary	Employed
	Kono	12	12	0	Tertiary	Employed
	Kailahun	12	12	0	Tertiary	Employed
	Kenema	12	12	0	Tertiary	Employed
	Makeni	12	12	0	Tertiary	Employed
	Total	80	79	1		

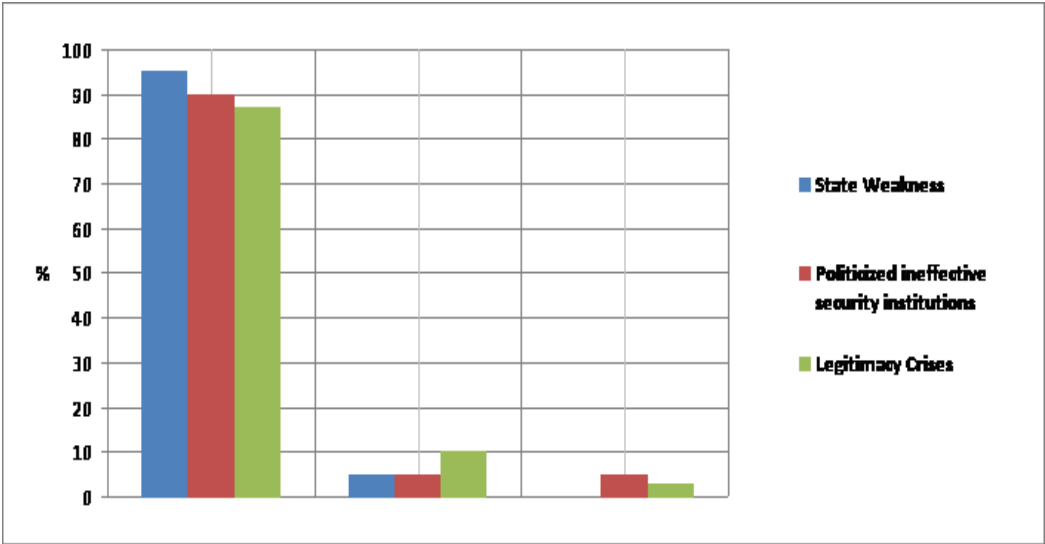
Figure 1: Basic Needs

Fig. 1. My respondents in the questionnaire were asked ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ questions and then explain the reason for their choice i.e. ‘How’ or ‘Why’. **Question 5** reads: Has the State adequately provided essential services like food, water, road, electricity, jobs and security? If yes, how, if no, why? The responses make up the variables.

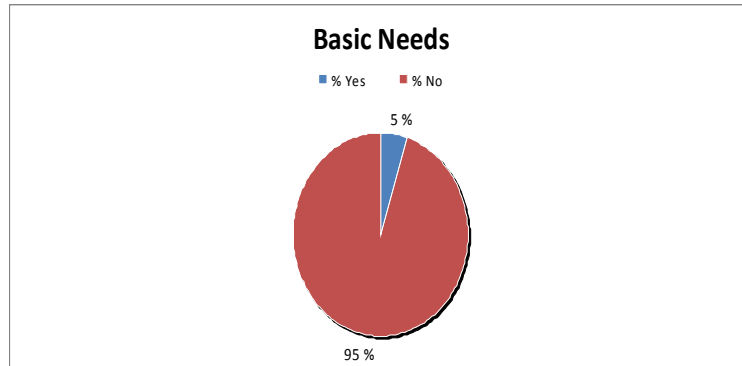
Total Number is 80(100 %) for all variables

Variables:	% Yes	% No	%Undecided
State Weakness	95	5	0
Politicized ineffective security institutions	90	5	5
Legitimacy Crises	87	10	3
Total Percentage	100	100	100

Basic Needs	% Yes	% No	%Undecided
	5	95	0



These responses are graphically presented below:

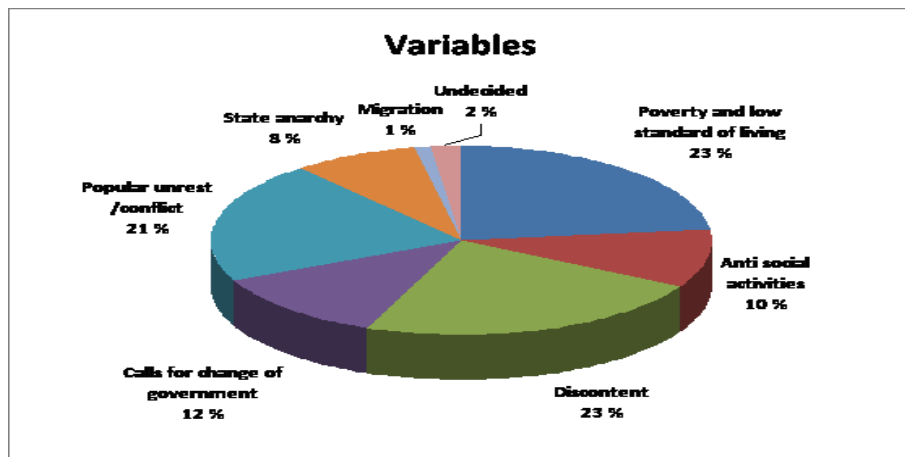


Legitimacy Crises

My aim was to see if there was a logic or connection between weak states and violent conflict, which the respondents were unaware of. **Question 8 reads:** What do you think can happen if the state inadequately fails to provide these basic needs for the people? These were the responses I got.

Responses: Disputes/ Tensions	100 %	Total
Poverty and low standard of living	23	34
Anti social activities	10	14
Discontent	23	34
Calls for change of government	12	19
Popular unrest/conflict	21	31
State anarchy	8	13
Migration	1	2
Undecided	2	3
Total	100 %	150

The responses or variables are presented in pie chart below



4.2 Weak State Indicators found in data

This section is basically descriptive. It tries to examine the first part of the research question; how the weak state socio-economic and political structures could have contributed to the violent conflict. Now the pathology or historical aspect of the weak state foundation and process is analyzed in all the key aspects of governance, namely: Poor economy, Politicized and Ineffective State Institutions (PISS), Centralization of Power, Inadequate provision of Socio-Economic Services, Institutional Incapacity and Corruption. From the findings of my data, some of the weak state indicators (Jackson, 2002; Reno, 1995 and Rotberg, 2004) in the theoretical chapter were confirmed.

4.2.1 Poor economy

The economy is my starting point because it is the life-giving unit of any state system. S/L, like other African state is richly endowed with natural resources including marine, iron ore, diamonds, gold, bauxite, rutile and an environment suitable to grow a variety of crops. It was one of Britain's most lucrative African colonies in the 19th century but became the world's poorest and least developed countries of the 21st century (Binns&Binns 1992). And like most of its post-colonial counterparts, the economy was basically producing raw materials like agricultural and mineral resources. It was heavily dependent on minerals, which accounted for over 50% and agricultural produce about 42% of total export (Magbaily Fyle, 1993:2, Dunn, 1978: 193-195). However, the diamond boom before independence saw a massive influx of young men who left their agricultural activities in search of quick fortune from the diamond mines. This affected the local food production, which led to importation of large volumes of its staple food-rice and other cash crops: coffee, cocoa, palm oil was also affected thereby reducing the state's revenue (Dunn, 1978:195). The effect by this huge diversion of labour had to do with the system of corruption and informal economy, as the institutions were not strong or effective to ensure a level playing field to allocate the resources of the state.

The limited means of raising revenues did not dampen the APC's resolve to find alternatives. It adopted other means to pay more for local food production of rice to eliminate rice importation but the effect was a huge loss in foreign exchange. In addition, the government embarked on massive infrastructural constructions but had no capital to finish them. It resorted to external borrowing thereby increasing its foreign debts (Dunn, 1978:195). Still, the economy was hit by the rapid decline of

world market prices for agricultural cash crops, and being heavily dependent on a wide variety of imports, it meant a continual loss of foreign exchange and an unfavourable trade balance. However, it did not mean that the reason for the poor economy should be levelled squarely at international forces. This had to do with the state's political system of patrimony and corruption. For instance, the marine resources dominated by the powerful ally of President Stevens, an Afro-Lebanese businessman, Jamil Sahid Mohammed was smuggling millions of dollars worth of marine products abroad; thus under the watchful eye of the state he was evading government tariffs (Magbaily Fyle, 1993:13, Dunn 1978:196, Meredith, 2005:562). It was serious for a country rich in natural resources to be broke. It showed what we have been saying of how weak states are run. When President Stevens retired in 1985, he had amassed a huge fortune of about \$500 million and left the country weak and broke (Meredith, 2005:562). As we will later discuss, it reflected a state with general political incompetence; it was unable to organize its material and human resources, mobilize its citizens, implement policies for societal growth, and there was politicized pattern of social differentiation, inevitably eroding its legitimacy (Ayoob, 1995:11). In other words, the government was unable to effectively and prudently use the state resources, which were controlled by the elite and benefactors.

- **Financial mismanagement and impacts of foreign aid conditions**

Most weak states are unable to sustain themselves financially and since they cannot generate enough revenues, they are heavily dependent on foreign aid to fill the gap and S/L was no exception. When the economy was about to decline in the late 70s, foreign aid flooded the country. Sad to say, the situation was worsened by the failed fiscal policy and corrupt leadership. For instance, the international monetary fund (IMF) loaned the government about \$50million, which was wasted on hosting the OAU Summit (Magbaily Fyle, 1993:14). The aid conditions imposed by international financial institutions (IFIs) on developing nations in the early 1980s had an adverse effect on the state's capacity to perform²¹. In 1984, the IMF initiated its structural adjustment programmes, including 'the repayment of previous loans, devaluation of the currency and removal of subsidies on fuel and rice' (Magbaily Fyle, 1993:14). Since the government had seen the effects of aid conditions in other countries, it was unwilling to accept such conditions. Thus, the IMF stopped its negotiations and the

²¹ Interviews (Freetown, June-July 2007) See also: Magbaily Fyle 1993:14-15,

one year standby agreement it had with the government. The government became handicapped as it had a huge loan it had not withdrawn from the IMF. The rule was that other IFIs could not work with a defaulting state (Magbaily Fyle, 1993:14). The APC had to accept the IMF conditions and it devalued the Leones over the dollar, removed subsidies on fuel and rice, and cut back about 50,000 workers in key sectors; the effect was an astronomical increase in prices²².

The heavy dependence on foreign aid and the conditions of the International Financial Institutions became the straw that broke the camel's back. No doubt, it marked the beginning of turbulent years ahead, as one respondent states, "if democracy is linked with the development of a country, then one could say that there was a discrepancy between the IMF aid and the conditions imposed on the state, which heavily depended on the IFI for revenue, when it had huge lapses in its economy and an inadequate social delivery service"²³. Like many respondents, he had a different opinion about the state's heavy reliance on foreign aid. Some even argued that simply if a state receives foreign aid does not transfer to it being weak, because a good number of countries, for e.g. Israel, Egypt receive aid and are considered strong states. Another concludes; "the downturn in socio-economic development and in livelihoods was visible as most people were unemployed. Many became anti-system and unsupportive to a government they saw as not working in their interests. The state's inability to deliver the basic political goods made people feel deprive and the existing structural violence made people helpless"²⁴. The structural violence was equated with indirect violence, which refers to the inequality that emanated from the social structure itself between the various classes of people in the community. But as we discussed in the theoretical chapter, these aid conditions had a negative effect of igniting mass violence; we shall look at this later.

4.2.2 Politicized and Ineffective State Institutions (PISS)

In weak states, the institutions responsible for national security are politicized; recruitment and promotion are done on the basis of ethnic loyalty (Magbaily Fyle,

²² Interview, Freetown June 2007; Questionnaire

²³ Dr Kargbo, Professor of Political Science, Njala University College, University of S/L.

²⁴ J.A.D Alie- Professor of History, Fourah Bay College, University of S/L Interviews, Freetown, June 2007

1993:5). The bedrock of realism in international relations is a state's ability to protect its citizens and territory against internal and external armed attacks or violence of any kind. This was not the case in S/L, where 'the politicization of the military started when the SLPP instigated it to overthrow the APC from being sworn into power after losing the 1967 general elections' (Ero, 2003:239). This early machination laid the foundation for the military's involvement in politics. After the APC leader, Siaka Stevens, was reinstated by another coup in 1968, he never trusted the military. Stevens started what Migdal calls the 'politics of survival' (Migdal, 1988:227-229). To ensure his own safety, he established two loyal paramilitary units within the police force; namely the Internal Security Unit and the Special Security Division (Ero, 2003:235; Magbaily Fyle, 1993:6). The recruits were mainly from the APC stronghold, acting as private security to terrorize and use violence against political opponents and citizens in general elections and demonstrations²⁵. The unflinching loyalty of these units made people to derogatorily term them, 'I Shoot You' (ISU) and 'Siaka Steven Dogs' (SSD). Stevens also promoted both members of his own Limba ethnic group as head of the army and police; he also made them members of parliament. His successor, President Momoh continued this process of recruitment and promotion. Recruitment was commercialized; each leading politician and the military top brass were allocated a share, which was sold or given to people closely connected with them.

The army and police were provided with huge subsidies, loans to build houses, lower rice price and a fair monthly rice quota to the senior personnel. One military personnel says, "the government was afraid to provide us with the necessary and adequate logistics for fear of being overthrown"²⁶ (also Magbaily Fyle, 1993:5). This made the military a gold mine for the senior personnel and the politically connected, enriching themselves at other ranks expense. The effect was a military whose loyalty was to these officials and the recruitment of a good number of ill disciplined, ill equipped, divided and poorly trained. This created the security dilemma and cracks the RUF was soon to expose.

²⁵ Questionnaires, Interviews, June-July 2007; Magbaily Fyle, 1993:5; Ero, 2003:225.

²⁶ Interview, June 2007, Kenema military headquarter

4.2.3 Centralization of power

The centralization of power in the hand of a ruling elite or a single party is another indicator of weak state with significant ramifications in its governance and economic development. In S/L, the centralization of power was a colonial legacy and it continued even after independence. The effect was gradual decline in effective engagement with the people; as one respondent says, “this over centralization of state machinery removed the government far from its people to the point that people see government institutions as exclusive of their daily lives”²⁷. One chief also says, “when it came to decision-making or consultation, the state machinery functioned from top-down and not from bottom-up. The state did what it wanted without our people’s consent; irrespective of whether they supported a policy or not”. In the rural areas, local functionaries were appointed by the central government, which meant that people had to be members of the APC or connected with those in authority before they could get the job. The system of local government was so flawed that there was no election to elect district and provincial leaders. There was only one central radio station situated in the capital responsible for news broadcast, which could have been used for both propaganda and limited information. Since some key institutions were far removed from the main regional centers, workers had to move to Freetown to get things done. According to King, scarcity of services like good roads and electricity were not too important for the conflict (King, 2007:19). This was an interesting finding; however, an ex-RUF chief in Kailahun says one reason the APC was hated because of the bad road network. As we see next, the concentration of power in weak states could affect the provision of socio-economic services, which for the most part are insufficient, limited or unaffordable.

4.2.4 Inadequate provision of socio-economic services

During the fieldwork, the horrible extent of how the state’s incompetence affected the entire country was seen. For instance, there were scanty provision of essential services like health, clean drinking water and electricity in places like Makeni, Bo, Kenema, Kono and Kailahun where people only had access to clean drinking water during the rains. In the dry season, there was and is no water supply except dug out wells; some

²⁷ Interview June 2007, Kono, Gbondo, Director for Foundation for Environmental Security and Sustainability

untreated, which exposed people to many hazards²⁸. The dynamics of resentment was different in each province. In Kenema, respondents say they had to run behind vehicles for food as everything was rationed. They had to queue for several days or in some cases have links with the resident minister just to get a dozen cup of rice, a gallon of petrol, kerosene, which was unbearable²⁹. In Kailahun, one of the chiefs installed by the RUF says they were angry with the APC since most of them are farmers, they suffered huge loss of revenue as they were unable to have vehicles to transport their goods on time; most of which perished as there was no effective storage facility. The roads became worse in the rainy season, making it impossible for trucks to move in and transport their produce. It was during such moment that Foday Sankoh appeared and said that the APC had failed them³⁰. Since Kailahun is a traditional stronghold of the opposition SLPP party, another chief says, “Sankoh compared what life was like under the SLPP leadership of both Margai brothers, Sir Milton and Sir Albert Margai respectively. Thus, some people began to take note and buy his ideas; they were willing to listen to whosoever could take the risk of removing the government”³¹. In Makeni, resentment against the APC was not too wide. It was clear of the APC’s incapacity to provide the basic needs; services like electricity and water supply were provided to those in authority and people queuing to purchase their essential food items. It was stunning when many said that they were economically viable during the economic malaise, since they are farmers they were able to supply and afford their needs. One could easily surmise since this was the APC’s stronghold, they could not be that discontent; however, another respondent says, “popular resentment against the APC was not regional but national”³².

Kono was known to be one of the wealthiest places in the country, providing about 70% of the revenue³³, yet underdeveloped. During the fieldwork, it was evident that the state of the infrastructure was bad; no good roads. One school principal says, there

²⁸ Interviews June-July 2007

²⁹ Questionnaires, Interviews June-July 2007. These primary data were useful as some truly reflect the situation.

³⁰ Interview, June 2007, Freetown, Dr Abdullah, Professor of History at University of S/L and the author of ‘RUF’s bush path to destruction’.

³¹ Interview, June 2007 with Chief Gbenya in Kenema

³² Mr Augustine Conteh, teacher, Interview, July 2007, Makeni.

³³ Government of S/L, Ministry of Finance, The 1975/76 Budget Speech, Freetown, Government Printing Department, 1975.

were five main secondary schools for over 150, 000 inhabitants. There was only one small dam that was responsible for supplying water during the rainy seasons.

The local resentment had to do with the economy being controlled by President Stevens and the ethnic Lebanese minority. A brief note of the country's cultural profile is useful here to understand how this Lebanese economic hegemony was laid and the grievance it spawned. S/L is multi-cultural; about 80% are indigenous Africans; the 20% comprised Asian descendants from Lebanon, Pakistan, Indian and Sri Lankan. About 60% of this population are Sunni Muslims; 30% Christians, few practice indigenous religions and the rest are Shiite of Lebanese descent (Farah, 2004:23), which became a haven for Middle East Islamic extremist groups during the early 80s (this is discussed later). The Lebanese minority became influential due to their strong link with President Stevens' key economic advisor, a Lebanese businessman, Jamil Mohamed. Together they shared control of the diamond mines and owned sixty percent of the business (Meredith, 2005:564). Stevens even favoured this Lebanese minority with mining licenses and discriminated against the Kono locals. Thus, one Kono chief says, "when people saw this, they became not only frustrated but sought whatever ways of removing the government"³⁴.

However, there is an interesting note to add here that seems amiss. One is uncertain whether the frustration expressed had anything to do with the prejudice that existed (as it still does), between the Lebanese community and the indigenous population or the social mores of the former. Lebanese men can marry or date the indigenous women without any stricture; however, the Lebanese women are not allowed to do the same with the indigenous men, regardless of status (education or wealth). Even it happened; the community will disown the women. One could somehow say that the frustration expressed was and is about the resources of the Lebanese. Marriage is one medium of resources sharing in Africa, especially Sierra Leone and the prohibition of such marriages is the denial of sharing these resources. In a way, intermarriage could be equated to social capital (Coleman, 1988; 1994) thus, it is possible that if inter marriage is allowed in both ways, may be the simmering resentment would blow out. One also learnt that 80% of the population are engaged in mining activities and when asked why, the reason they gave fell back at the state's feet; that there were limited economic or educational opportunities to involve in.

³⁴ Interview, June 2007, section Chief in Kono

Education was mostly provided at a limited scale in the urban areas, but in the rural areas, it was not prioritized and thus, the widespread level of illiteracy affected people's ability to make effective judgment about the government's activities. However, another respondent said that "those who were able to succeed in attaining education in the urban areas did so out of their own personal drive than the help of the state"³⁵. It was common for people to work without salaries; especially teachers would go to school and harass the pupils to give them money. It was difficult for the government to have employed more people when it could not pay its workers.

Health facilities were also in stint supply and so appalling that patients had to provide their own bedding and food in the government hospitals. In the Freetown central hospital, doctors had to provide their own power supply before a surgery; drugs were scarce and expensive. The situation was so rife that some patients ran away from the hospital in preference for self medication.

4.2.5 Institutional Incapacity

As postulated, various levels of institutional incapacity and regular inability to implement policies characterize weak states (Byman & Van Evera, 1998:37). In S/L, the effect of these was the accretion of political grievances, where the state institutions became incapable at a minimal level to operate (Jackson, 2002:39) because the institutions responsible for good governance were paralysed. President Stevens was adept at weakening the state's most important institutions for good governance: the parliament, the judiciary, the civil service and an independent press (Ero, 2003; Magbaily Fyle, 1993; Bangura, 1997). In most states, it is imperative that an independent judiciary could ensure the rule of law. In S/L, the judiciary was both corrupt and ineffective where many people; especially the poor could not enjoy their basic human rights. One section chief in Tiama says, "the system was so handicapped that it took a long time to settle disputes; many others were never settled. Some land disputes between chiefdoms were never addressed by the state. For instance, in old boundary disputes between villages and chiefdoms, there were decisions taken that did not go down well with the chiefdom concerned. In some chiefdoms, powerful chiefs meted out injustice against other rival political families; it was common for people to lose a local dispute as well as the lands they owned for many generations".

³⁵ Din Gabisi, Electoral Officer, Bombali District, Interview, July 2007, Makeni

For example, one ex-combatant in Kailahun told me that there were hardly any protections of their basic human rights. He said that as a boy he heard from his many relatives, who complained of injustices and said if things continued as it were, civil violence was inevitable. Another said most of his relatives were poor farmers, who were not paid well by the Lebanese and local merchants for their produce. Often they needed permit to see their debtors before they could get paid. The money was received in bits; a loss of revenue that made it hard to expand their business. Some said that they were faced with a situation where the court and the police could not help; they wanted to oppose but were brutally suppressed, and thus, the opposition went underground, which exactly happened with the RUF. The APC made things worse when some people were detained for several weeks or months without trial and during elections any attempt to oppose the government was met with reprisal³⁶.

A weak state cannot guarantee the rule of law; it was the privilege of the powers-that-be to get away with some things done against the poor or those without influence. The APC government created the situation where people took the law into their hands to redress injustice. When the RUF first initiated its brutal attacks in Kailahun, it said it had come to liberate the country from years of nepotism, violence and political exclusion (Ero, 2003:237). The latter was somehow grounded in the post-colonial framework (Atiku-Abubakarr&Shaw-Taylor, 2000:71), where political power became a secured path to wealth. The impact of this disequilibrium was great; many people were unable to share the wealth of the resources; instead they were marginalized from economic opportunities and social welfare services (Ero, 2003:234). It follows that a weak state is not only about the inadequate provision of basic needs but creating the conditions where those felt marginalized are more likely to resort to violent means to survive. The marginalization of the urban and rural poor youths forced many to seek gains from the diamond mines; others acted as armed gangs or provided private protection to those involved in business (Ero, 2003:234). The evidence of poor conditions, youth marginalization, violence and the use of child combatants are addressed later.

³⁶ Questionnaires, Interviews; June-July 2007

4.2.6 Corruption

Another confirming indicator of weak state was corruption. From the questionnaires, almost 90% of respondents said corruption was a key problem of governance. But why was it so? A summary of S/L society could give us an insight about the reason behind this corruption. The society is based on strong extended family relationships, where existing social codes require successful members to help family and friends. The Krio society centres on nuclear family, based on personal endeavour and success, and there is no obligation to one's relatives (Thompson & Potter, 1997:140). The norm for success to political, public service is that one's status is measured by affluence. Those who did not own an expensive car or house were hardly respected by relatives or others. It was significant that the indigenous groups, whose social network is based on strong external family relationship, came to dominate politics after independence. Many had to be accommodated by the government to create new areas of wealth and institutions with great potential for siphoning state resources within the public service.

Thus, it could be argued that the pervasive corruption was rooted in this extended family relationship, because many public officials by norm had to help their extended family members with resources. The custom among this extended family system of the provincial people is that often members contribute to educate other children. Those ones, who were able to finish university and get a good job, had to return the investment in other family members. The income received was too small to cater for the needs of immediate and extended families.

As Jackson says, 'corruption in weak state politics are not simply the result of a breakdown in normal politics... but can be construed as class action necessitated by the fragility of the material conditions of the ruling elites' (2002:43). The burden of these state officials, who were also family members, was too much, that corruption was seen as an alternative source to meet these commitments. Ironically, it was majority of the indigenous poor classes, who suffered the effect of corruption, as not every family had a member within the informal network.

President Steven's patronage system ensured that only the political elite were given access to the nation's wealth. It was a strategy used for political support, co-option or repression (Dunn, 1978:198). Riley's four classifications of corruption: incidental, systematic, systemic and personal (1993) could be applied here. Incidental corruption

was shown by public servants, who in the course of duty had to seek a bribe or favour; systematic corruption was orchestrated by government departments, involving in fraud and embezzling state resources; systemic corruption typified the pervasive pathology of wrong doing as a norm to achieve personal objectives (Caiden & Caiden, 1977).

As Stevens justified corruption, he gave a Krio proverb, whose English translation reads thus, “where a cow is tied is where it should graze”. In other words, it was a necessity for all public servants to make the best use of every given opportunity, as lost opportunity would not be regained (Thompson & Potter, 1997: 151). One Kono chief strongly says, “whatever was in the state coffers they shared among themselves and displeased the people”³⁷. None was more obvious, as mentioned earlier, than the minority of the local and Lebanese business people, who were involved in many economic activities like transport, diamond and rice import (Dunn, 1978:198). In order to protect their business, they made extensive bribes to governmental officials, including the police, chiefs and judicial personnel, making it difficult to bring any case against them³⁸. Government contracts were awarded to the lowest bidders for kick backs or commissions. One respondent said that “under President Momoh’s rule, the government was not only performing badly, that there was hardly anything done to curb, limit, or remove corruption”³⁹. Others said that the country had two laws: one for the rich and poor respectively. As the judiciary became politicized, it was weak in prosecuting corrupt officials. Corruption became endemic, which spawned the worm of hatred for the elites by the urban and rural poor.

Summarizing this section, the data has confirmed the weak state indicators. We now analyzed how the effect of this weakness on the society.

4.3 Section 2: Data analysis – State Weakness as a Catalyst to Legitimacy Crises and Escalation of the Violent Conflict

In this section, the 2nd part of the research question will be analysed; i.e., why the state weakness contributed to the violence escalation. It was indicated in Chapters 2&3 that the analytic method will be process tracing because it ‘is convincing insofar as the multiple links in a causal chain can be formalized, that is, diagrammed in an explicit

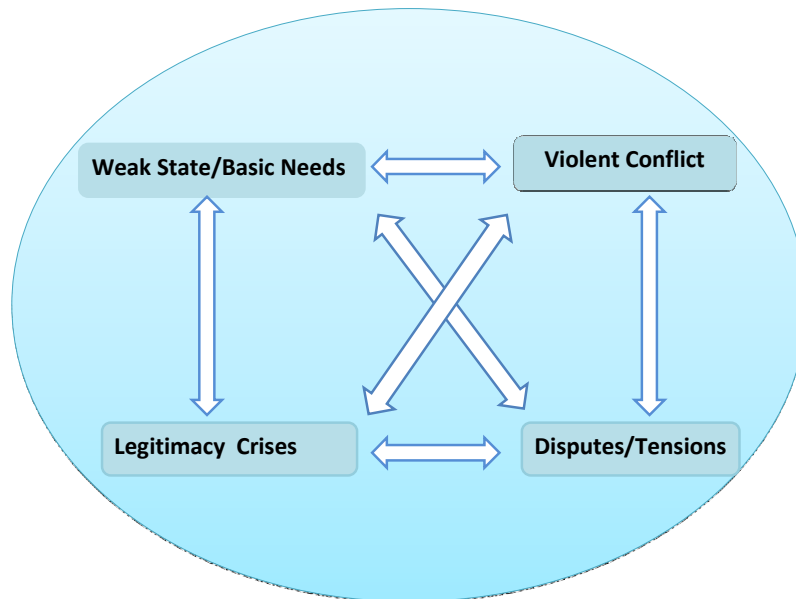
³⁷ Interview, Section Chief in Kono ,June 2007

³⁸ Interview, July 2007, Freetown; see Dunn, 1978

³⁹ Interview, July 2007, Din Gabisi, Electoral officer for Bombali district

way (as a visual depiction and / or mathematical model), and insofar as each micro-mechanism can be proven' (Gerring, 2007:181). Since this is a qualitative study and if the causal relationship can be described in prose, then it ought to be explained with a diagram (Geering, 2007:181).

Figure 1



Thus, this process tracing is used with the conceptual model to explain the mutual links of state weakness and violent conflict. Using the model, the state weakness led to several legitimacy crises; the people lost confidence and support of the government. As illustrated in this conceptual model, the government's legitimacy crises had a rebound effect of further weakening the state. One definitive aspect of weak states is the lack of good governance and problems of legitimacy. If democracy is understood as a means to achieve transparent, accountable and legitimate government, where is it the majority of the citizens who have chosen it in free and fair elections (i.e. the will of the people), then the key potential cause of violent conflict lies in the centralization of power and political exclusion (Jackson, 2002:47). The latter was the case in S/L and some of my data confirmed what many scholars say are factors of legitimacy crises in weak state. It will be analysed in two phases: a) pre 1990 and b) post 1990. The reason I choose these periods is for us to understand the process behind the weak state foundation and the consequences of its consolidation.

We have touched on them briefly in the previous section and though it may seem a repetition, the key theme under each period will be discussed.

4.3.1 Legitimacy crises: 1967-1990

Legitimacy has to do with citizens' support as one of the basis of a government to rule, why it should be obeyed and under what condition it can claim authority. In S/L, the political history soon after independence saw the initiation of undemocratic politics by the first post-colonial government of the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP). It started with including traditional rulers in the undemocratic process to consolidate political support in the interior as we now see.

- **Machinations of local chieftaincy and national politics**

Chieftaincy has been the cornerstone of local interior politics of Sierra Leone even before colonial rule, and has continued even after colonialism. It is so important that it is enshrined in the constitutional provisions of 1991. Chiefs are the foundation of power in the rural areas where the visible presence of the central government is absent. The political support of traditional rulers in S/L has been very crucial to any government, thus, they have always been included in the central government's politics.

The independence constitution of 1961 ensured multi-party elections after every five years. In 1962, the SLPP Prime Minister, Sir Milton Margai, initiated exclusionary policies assisted by the chiefs. Although the 1962 Electoral Act had restricted the chiefs from involving in any election campaigns, they supported the SLPP; they banned other candidates from contesting in their chiefdoms and charged many with incitement for undermining their authority (Dunn, 1978:200-1). In compensation, the SLPP did not question these chiefs traditional authority and provided them with financial rewards. This resulted in a tense competition in chieftaincy politics as well as a bitter resentment for chiefs, who abused their power against rivals. The chiefs had power over the control of lands used for diamond mining and farming, and those not in their good books were left out of the informal economy (Reno, 1995). Hence, it was obvious that chiefs whose power was under threat looked to the SLPP for support, while their rivals joined the opposition parties hoping their victory in a general election would mean their own political ascendancy (Dunn, 1978:201).

The effect was a divided nation and a government whose legitimacy was greatly weakened. In the general election of 1967, the opposition All Peoples Congress (APC) party defeated the SLPP; the first in postcolonial Africa where the opposition democratically removed a ruling government. But the transition process took a nose dive as the sordid political shenanigans of power struggle arose among the country's leading ethnic groups. The military chief of staff said he stepped in on the grounds of irregularities and the imminence of ethnic conflict; he arrested and later sent the opposition leader to exile. Significantly, his action had a smoking gun; he was an in-law to the Prime Minister and being a Mende from the southeastern part of the country, was seen as a mask to keep the SLPP in power; and as Ero says, the SLPP instigated the military to stage a coup, preventing the APC from taking office (Ero, 2003:239); officers from the western and northern part of the country also removed him the same year.

When the APC opposition leader, Siaka Stevens was reinstated a year later by another coup as Prime Minister, he initiated a series of legal manipulation that saw the removal of the SLPP's twenty-three MPs. The APC supporters who had experienced the repression of these chiefs began to invoke hostility against them and all the chiefs supporting the SLPP were replaced with party stalwarts. This strengthened his informal economy even in the rural areas, which created the situation for political grievances among those who could not have access to the lands for either diamond or agricultural purposes. As some respondents note, Stevens also orchestrated a series of widespread violence against the SLPP supporters in successive elections.⁴⁰ There was an ominous situation for the government when another political party emerged from the north, which the APC considered its bastion. This new political party, the United Democratic Party, was established by former APC members, who were the most outspoken critics belonging to the Temne; the country's 2nd largest ethnic group. Predictably, in 1970, Stevens was quick to ban this party from participating in the next electoral process (Dunn, 1978:202).

⁴⁰ This was the interview with Dr Alie (Freetown) and Mbayo (Kenema), both of whom are lecturers.

In the elections of 1973 and 1977, there were numerous incidents where the SLPP candidates were brutally prevented from entering the nomination centers to verify their candidacy as required by law. At the end of the elections, half of the 85 constituencies saw the APC's candidates elected unopposed and the SLPP candidates had to withdraw (Dunn, 1978:202). As some respondents said, this thuggery and intimidation was followed by arrest and detention of the opposition under the Public Emergency Act of 1977. These blatant acts and electoral violence made the APC to lose whatever little support it had in the south-eastern parts of the country; the opposition SLPP stronghold. In 1978, the APC introduced a Republican Constitution, which outlawed multi party elections and changed the office of the Prime Minister to that of a President. The constitution required all MPs to join the APC or face expulsion from parliament. One key provision ruled that only members of the APC could have the right to contest for the presidency or nominate a candidate in a national delegate conference. Ironically, the eleven opposition SLPP MPs agreed, meaning it was expedient for their political survival than the principles of good governance. This act removed and destroyed any chance of free and fair democratic process in S/L; a process that further weakened the government's legitimacy.

The constitution gave the President more power to appoint and dismiss the Electoral Commission on the grounds of inability to discharge its responsibility or misbehaviour, meaning that the members were only responsible to him. Inevitably, the Commission became biased since it employed party stalwarts; the opposition was deprived of registering its candidates in areas the APC had no support. In other parts, the APC's own candidates were elected unopposed; in other areas, the SLPP and independent candidates were allowed to register but the government would send thugs to disrupt the polling. One eye witness said that those who did not have a red clothes; the APC symbol, were never allowed near the polling booth and that in the one party referendum of 1978, in Kono West constituency, only one voter was allowed to pour all ballot items in the box⁴¹.

As illustrated on the conceptual model diagram, the legitimacy crises of a government could lead to disputes and tensions. This was borne out by the many challenges against the APC's illegal and forceful possession of power.

⁴¹ Interview, June 2007, Kenema, Lecturer

- **Disputes and Tensions**

Although the APC had sponsored violence in many elections, the one of 1982 was striking because there was more exclusion, violence, rigging, and hostility among some ethnic groups. Having turned the country to a one party state, the APC central committee was responsible to approve those who should run for election. Many of those who were distrusted or unpopular in the central committee were not allowed to contest or their supporters were prevented from voting. The outcome was a wave of violence across many parts of the country. For instance, in the northern district of Bombali, violence occurred between the supporters of two local politicians; mainly the Fullah and Temne ethnic groups, contesting for the parliamentary seat within the APC. Also, in the southern district of Pujehun, violence broke out between the supporters of two local politicians of the Mende ethnic group. Ironically, some people in this district started a guerrilla movement to resist what they saw was the APC's heavy handedness and use of state sponsored violence, though, it was brutally suppressed. In Moyamba district, the local APC politician, Harry Will, unleashed violence against his opponents and in the western area, the thuggery in one of the constituencies, West One, led to a cancellation of the election⁴². There was a wide practice of drug using youths prepared to engage in the thuggery and violence of the election. These youths who were manipulated by these politicians foreshadowed the atrocious activities of youths that later emerged during the violent conflict of 1991 to 2001.

The thinning of political participation did not stop when President Stevens transferred power to General J.S Momoh in 1985. Instead, it revealed the can of worms found in the broader political process, where within the party's hierarchy, dubious legal means were adopted to prevent the 1st VP from succeeding Stevens (Magbaily Fyle, 1993:11; Zack Williams, 1999:145). The national delegate of the party nominated Momoh and sworn him as the new President. This was not a surprise to many who, however, saw Momoh's reign as a continuation of Steven's rule where flawed political participation was twisted under the guise of legitimacy familiar with dictators. In 1987, there was a failed coup attempt against President Momoh and all the accused were tried and sentenced to death. It was a continuation of the ethnic crisis since most of the accused

⁴² Interview June-July 2007

belonged to the Mende ethnic group, and the 1st accused was President Momoh' 1st VP, who happened to be one. Thus, it was seen by many people from the southeast as a conspiracy to exterminate their leading political figure. Under Momoh's government, there was a coterie of the President's ethnic Limba group and few politicians from the other ethnic groups, which came to dominate the activities of governance and finance. Unlike Stevens, there was no kind of local election during Momoh's reign, thereby continuing the political exclusion of many people.

To reiterate, the above process tracing analysis confirmed the conceptual model of a weak state being weakened further and worsening its legitimacy crises. The rebound or boomerang effect was the outbreak of violent conflict.

4.3.2 The Violent Conflict 1991-1998

The end of the 80s saw a state that was inadequately providing its people's basic needs. The population became hopeless, blaming the government for their troubles and were ready as Fyle said, 'to jump onto the streets to express their frustration' (1993: 5-11), and this started gradually. The end of the cold war in the 90s sent a clear signal from Washington that democracy should be the new political lexicon for all authoritarian Africa governments. It started when the British High Commissioner for S/L, Derek Partridge, gave a keynote speech at a conference held by the Bar Association, 1990, criticizing the one party government in the constitution and called for a multi party democracy.⁴³ The Bar Association and the National Students Unions stepped up the pressure and the government finally caved in by deciding to have a national consultative conference, where they arranged that elections be held in 1991. Ironically, it was never held as the first open sign of violent conflict began against the APC in 1991 with the RUF. The outbreak of the violent conflict fascinatingly revealed the reality of weak states that people are liable to resolve their grievances without recourse to the state. The poor provision of social services created the general economic desperation and conditions for an organized armed opposition. The RUF controversially justified on its pamphlet that the violent conflict was 'about the problems of social fragmentation, the exclusion of youths and the exploitation of diamonds'⁴⁴. The first attacks in Kailahun targeted the existing state structures and

⁴³ Interview, June 2007,FBC; Magbaily Fyle,1993:9

⁴⁴ Footpaths to Democracy: Towards a New Sierra Leone, 1995,www.sierra-Leone.org/footpaths.html

individuals associated with it; captured and beheaded chiefs, village heads and other government workers (Meredith, 2005:563).

Initially, the RUF had a few rebels but later recruited many locals due to several factors. To start with, though the RUF initiated brutal attacks- burnt down houses, raped and killed people in sight, some took up arms, especially the young, to settle old scores of political and economic grievances. You had a situation where some young people were ostracized from their society long before the war. Some of them had problems with traditional rulers and the punishment meted against them was so serious that many were forced to leave their villages. So when they joined the RUF and went back to their villages they used all sort of violence against these traditional rulers. In Kailahun, some respondents said that they joined to protect themselves and their relatives as the RUF easily bullied people or took their wives from them. It was usually said that ‘civilians had no blood’, in other words they were not important⁴⁵.

However, the question raised was if the reason for the violent conflict had to do with the lack of their basic needs, why many people not associated with politics were targeted. Interestingly, the answer was that it happened, within the same family, two brothers; an elder and younger, joined together to make a cocoa farm. After the younger brother’s death, the elder was supposed to be responsible for the welfare of his family. But it happened that the elder brother neglected the deceased brother’s family, leaving them to suffer. Thus, when the RUF came many of the children of the dead brother took up arms in search of their uncle, killed him and destroyed his house. On the other hand, his own family would also hunt, kill and burn down the house of the perpetrators⁴⁶. In short, this was how conflict developed, which indicates the general points I have been making about state weakness. The general situation of want becomes extremely important that the poor provisions of socio-economic services by the state torn family members apart. There was no effective legal recourse to address disputes nor was the state in place to help these family feuds. This was how or why the level of violence escalated within these towns and villages, where people were targeted due to family feuds.

⁴⁵ Interview; Section Chief, June 2007, Kailahun,

⁴⁶ Interview; ex-RUF communications officer and military planner, June 2007, Kailahun,

4.3.3 Politicized Security Institutions (PSI)

The effects of politicized state institutions like the security could be devastating in weak states, especially in the wake of violent conflicts. The security apparatus; especially the military, was used as an institution to protect the ruling government. The establishment was structured to maintain the APC in power to the point that civil control of the military was non-existent since the government was not willing to probe into their activities for fear of being overthrown. Thus, to keep the military in its barracks, the APC created a kind of huge wall shielded from the prying public eyes. It was a strategy of containment or safety pin against the military's trigger of coups frequent in Africa. Ironically, as the military was insulated against control, it became a problem the state failed to address. The military became ill trained and ill equipped to fight; since what was meant to maintain a professional army was shared by the top brass. One of the respondents says that the APC gave more preference to a particular group than others as the top brass in the military and the police. Though the respondent did not mention the group, it was evident that he was referring to the northern ethnic groups, which was the APC's stronghold.

The size of the security force was another problem; as a section chief said, "it was important to note that the number of the security force was very small. In a population of about 4 million then, the police force numbered 6000". There are 12 districts, including Freetown, meaning every district had about 500 personnel. He says that where each district had over 16 chiefdoms it was hard to deploy them evenly. The military was less than 5000 before the RUF attacked the country⁴⁷ and they were sparsely deployed countrywide. During my fieldwork in Kailahun, which borders Guinea and Liberia, with over fifty six crossing points there are just five points that have border guards. One of the guards says that even before 1991 most of these crossing points were unmanned, which explained a state security that was dangerously thin.

Thus, the APC was bitten by its own serpent of state weakness, and given the poor condition of the roads, the military was unable to effectively supply the little logistics to the fronts and it suffered many setbacks in the initial RUF attacks: deaths, wounded,

⁴⁷ Mr Gbenya is the section chief of Taima in the southern district of Bo.

captives and defectors. In its attempt to contain the RUF, the APC increased its limited military size (Meredith, 2005:564). The problem was not the number per se rather than providing them with the necessary logistics and salaries, which unfortunately the government could not afford. It was reported that the APC spent \$ 2.4 million daily on the war (Magbaily Fyle, 1993:11); however, the senior army personnel siphoned whatever logistics was sent to the soldiers at the front. For instance, the salaries of junior personnel were not paid and their commanders without justification embezzled their rice supplies. Inevitably, on April 29, 1992, some of these personnel, whose previous intention was to protest the conditions at the war front, stormed Freetown and removed the APC without a fight, calling itself the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC). The regime received international and internal legitimacy, especially among the youths. It could be hard to make a claim of ethnicity; however, it was evident that the coup was orchestrated by personnel from the southeast (i.e. the SLPP's stronghold), who were loyal to the SLPP (Jorgel & Utas, 2008:8). The NPRC's average age was 26 years, many of who had grown under the 24 years of APC's bad governance and economic decline.

The NPRC inherited a few personnel, which forced it to massively increase the military's size to 14, 000, including young men with criminal records (Meredith, 2005:564). However, the political dynamic was that the NPRC had overthrown the APC, which had been in power for over 22 years. Most of the army's top brass commanding the troops at the fronts were a product of the APC⁴⁸. Significantly, as these officers did everything possible to frustrate the activities of the NPRC, the fight against the RUF became a massive business of corruption to make wealth. It became complicated when after the NPRC coup, two different groups; the tiger and cobra unit, emerged within the military. It was the 'tiger unit' that orchestrated the coup as many of them had fought against the initial RUF attacks. Thus, repeating the mistakes of the APC, the NPRC allocated the top positions and resources to this unit, and more so, many of them ceased to go to the war front. Instead, they tracked down and sent the 'cobra unit' soldiers to the warfront and thus, these rivalries led soldiers in each group

⁴⁸ Interview (Kono, June 2007); Ero 2003

to ambush and kill the other⁴⁹. This hierarchy undermined the war effort as prosecution of the war was not given the seriousness it deserved.

Given this background, the protracted nature of a violent conflict in weak states might lead to a situation, where anarchy and chaos becomes the sine qua nom of daily existence. In other words, as illustrated on the conceptual model; state weakness could lead to a vicious cycle or further state weakening where people used violence as a means to survive. For instance, there was strong evidence of citizens involved in illegal mining activities and arms smuggling (Keen, 2005:51). The lure of economic profit led to a level of violent collaboration between soldiers and the RUF; called the ‘sobel’ phenomenon. It was a compounded word; ‘so’ for soldiers and ‘bel’ for rebels; soldiers by day and rebels by night, when military personnel copied the RUF’s tactics of looting and killing civilians⁵⁰; some harassed poor farmers and took their bags of any produce they had harvested and blamed these attacks on the RUF. This predatory activity was inflicted on civilians regardless where their sympathies lay in the conflict (Ero, 2003:239).

What was responsible? One has to bear in mind the composition and background of the recruited personnel and the situation then. The NPRC had denounced the APC for inadequate provision of socio-economic services, corruption and gross mismanagement of state resources, which the NPRC promised to change. This dream was short lived as the regime’s key members began to amass huge fortunes of wealth, especially in the mineral areas⁵¹. This brought a reversal of progress against the RUF, where many soldiers began to sabotage the war effort with rapid succession of attacks against civilians. For instance, many of the soldiers neglected defending the state but joined the RUF in a spree of looting and diamond mining⁵². It was common to hear that very close to a military checkpoint civilians had been attacked⁵³. Some defected to the RUF because of low salary, low morale, sympathy for the old regime or simply the lure of looting and appearing to be in control (Conteh-Morgan& Dixon -Fyle, 1999:128). Many of the recruits were from poor family backgrounds with the hope of making their

⁴⁹ Questionnaires, Interviews, 2007

⁵⁰ Questionnaire, Interviews, June-July, 2007; Ero, 2000:239

⁵¹ Meredith 2005: 565; Ero 2003:239; Interviews, Questionnaires (June-July 2007)

⁵² Ero 2003:239; Meredith 2005: 565;Interviews, Questionnaires (June-July 2007)

⁵³ Questionnaire, Interviews June-July 2007

own ends. One respondent said that ‘many of them were vigilantes, who were not paid, thus they had to kill and loot the civilians, they claimed to protect’⁵⁴.

The level of violence was also related to the absence of effective legal conflict resolution institutions. In Kono, the level of violence had to do with the old diamond grievances related to the absence of a system to report any unfair diamond deals. What happened was that often a potential buyer provided these men with the mining materials and food, and the norm was that he had the right to buy the diamond from miners whenever they found one. It happened that the one providing the necessary logistics of food, shelter, and tools was in the habit of taking more money as a way of recovering their investment. They claimed 70% and the miners 30% of every carat sold. Sadly, since most of the miners were uneducated men and had no idea of the diamond’s real value, their financiers often cheated them. The Electoral Officer in Kono says, “often the diamonds were devalued by the agent to make exorbitant profits for the buyer to pay a cheaper rate. This agent took commissions from the buyer and the miners”⁵⁵. Thus, it happened that when the RUF attacked Kono, much of the violence were diamond related. Surprisingly, there were some areas protected by the RUF, self-styled General Mosquito and his surrogates against looting or arson because when Mosquito was a miner, he was treated fairly by the diamond dealers residing in the area⁵⁶.

The escalation of the violence among these young men was ‘an opportunity to exact revenge against the old order, to loot and to chase the resources unattainable during Steven’s reign’ (Ero, 2003: 239). Was there more to this than mere predatory and settling of old scores? Arguably, for any organized movement to swell, it must have a shared held belief among its adherents. This brings us to the issue of ideology.

4.3.4 The Questions of Ideology

What is ideology? Ideology is a concept that is used in many ways; however, it could be the basic shared beliefs by a group of people related to political order, which may be controversial, in line with mainstream or conventional wisdom. The point here is whether the RUF violent conflict had any ideology; political or economic. The

⁵⁴ Interview, June 2007 Kono

⁵⁵ Interview June 2007 Kono

⁵⁶ Interview (eye witness, Kono, June 2007)

outbreak of violent conflicts in weak states could be seen like the tip of an iceberg; there is more than is actually seen. As said, given the extreme corruption, economic decline and inequality, which dominated the country, the tendency of political violence was high (Keen, 2005:36; Reno, 1995; Jackson, 2002), whose emergence could provide income, authority and defence for the actors involved (Keen, 1998). The conflict had an economic motive, but that said it fit into an ideological context of political motive as well. This is where I disagree with scholars like Keen, who said, that the RUF had 'some expressions of ideology' but was not a political movement (Keen, 2005:36).

There was a general genuine concern of an illegitimate political order, where for instance, in the capital city and provinces, political power and economic wealth was enjoyed by the ruling elite, their ilk and traditional rulers respectively. Thus, that was why when the RUF first launched its attack in the provinces; chiefs were brutally murdered and replaced with RUF sympathizers. Whether it was their ideology or sheer savagery, the RUF committed gruesome attacks on civilians to cow them into fear and submission to attain power. The question is if the RUF had no political motive, why did they fight and later joined the unpopular and unsuccessful AFRC regime in 1997? Why did it sign the Lomé Accord in 1999? These are some of the misconceptions that have been proffered for the violent conflict; that it was all about economic wealth and diamonds. The latter could not have been the main reason; if that was the case, the millions of dollars made from the illegal diamond trade would have convinced them to stop but they continued to fight. Even one of my ex-RUF respondents said that they were planning a coup at the time of Foday Sankoh's arrest, the RUF leader, in Freetown. The predatory activities of both the RUF and military had one unique variable of youths and child combatants in the violent conflict.

4.3.5 Youth marginalization and use of Child combatants

One of the severe consequences of a weak state is both the psychological and physical destruction of its youths. After Sierra Leone's independence in 1961, the two main political parties had youth wings. These politicians commonly exploited them with drugs in preparation to engage in the thuggery and violence of an election. Ironically, these manipulations foreshadowed the atrocious activities of youths that emerged in the violent conflict. As arguably noted, 'war is social drama over the distribution of ideas, identities, resources, and social positions, which often forces the disadvantaged to

design alternative survival strategies' (Böås, 2007:40). Was this the rationale of youth's involvement in the violent conflict? Interestingly, as King said, youth was not an expression of age but an embrace of deprivation (King, 2007:13). In other words, most youths from the urban and rural poor class were circumstantial victims of their parents' inability to meet their daily needs, consequent of the state's informal economy and neglect. Some received no education 'not as a matter of choice but as a consequence of the economic malaise' (Böås, 2007:41). Consequently, some decided to work in the harrowing diamond mines of Kono or involve in crime. Thus, their later involvement in the war was borne out similar need, which King noted as deprivation and aspiration to survive (King, 2007:13). This similar identity was like social capitals, where each warring faction provided the security, income and recognition they craved.

International law of armed conflict defines child combatants as those under 18. Apart from boy soldiers, girl soldiers made up an estimated 25% of all the warring sides, and 16% of the RUF's total force (Mc Kay, 2005:390). The RUF abducted these girls like their boy counterparts; the Kamajors was not known to have used female nor girl soldiers, while the military only recruited female soldiers above 18. The girls within the RUF acted as fighters, cooks, wives, nurses for the sick, and wounded, spies and even as overseers in the diamond mines for their commanders or rebel husbands⁵⁷. This same ex-RUF said that "our girls threatened to kill those of similar age if they refused to join us whenever we attacked a village". One respondent also notes, "the rebel commanders drugged these boys to use violence in their society as a way to prevent or discourage desertion among its rank; it was a way of telling them they did not have to return to their villages where these violent crimes had been done"⁵⁸. The irony was that these youths and child combatants became both the victims and perpetrators of violence.

The RUF activities of destruction were tied to a third party of criminal network of states and individuals.

4.3.6 Creation and Crystallization of War Economy

A sign of weak states is that their 'fragile politics, by definition, are easily permeable; therefore, internal issues in the 3rd world societies... get transformed into interstate

⁵⁷ Interview June 2007, ex-RUF Kailahun

⁵⁸ Interview June 2007, Kono, Mr. Gbondo, Director for Foundation for Environmental Security and Sustainability

issues quite readily' (Ayoob, 1986:14). Indubitably, the outbreak of the violent conflict in S/L confirmed the permeability of weak states being drawn into interstate issues. Well, how did this play out? The link between the rebellion in Liberia and S/L could be traced back to the coup, which brought Samuel Doe to power in Liberia, 1980. The assassination of the ousted President, Tolbert, and his son led to a tense relationship between Doe and the Ivorian president. The latter, Houphouet Boigny, had an adopted daughter married to President Tolbert's son, Adolphous, who at the time of the coup sought refuge at the French embassy. His daughter then pleaded with him to intervene and President Doe assured him that the son would be spared. However, he was later abducted and executed. This explained why the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) later used Cote D'Ivoire as an entry point to invade Liberia and start the brutal civil war in 1989⁵⁹ (also Meredith, 2005:557).

Following the brutal events of the Liberian civil war, and the threat of regional insecurity, the West Africa Economic Community leaders (ECOWAS) decided to act decisively and resolve the civil war. The Nigerian military dictator, General Ibrahim Babangida, said that a rapid military intervention in Liberia was necessary (Meredith, 2005:557). Ironically, S/L as an ECOWAS member became the base of this military intervention force (ECOMOG). In 1990, ECOMOG intervened in Liberia and prevented Taylor's NPFL from taking control of the capital, Monrovia. In a radio interview, Taylor said S/L would taste the bitterness of war⁶⁰. The later RUF invasion from Liberia to S/L was initially thought of as retaliation by the NPFL. However, it was a camouflaged as both the NPFL of Liberia and the RUF had been trained, equipped and financed from Libya⁶¹. How and why the Libya involvement?

Libya began its relations in S/L by the 70s and quickly made an impact. Since 60 % of the population is Islamic believers, Libya offered grants for the annual Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca (Abdullah, 1998:211). During the APC one party rule, university students were its most articulate opposition group, calling for radical change. Libya then seized the opportunity to surreptitiously court these students and financed the promotion of its Green Book at the Fourah Bay College campus, as Abdullah says, to recruit local revolutionaries who would overthrow all western backed governments in

⁵⁹ Corroborated by the interviews June 2007 in Freetown, Kono & Kenema

⁶⁰ 'BBC Focus on Africa' is a daily radio current affairs program aired by the BBC to Africa (January, 1991).

⁶¹ Interview, Freetown, June 2007; Questionnaire; Meredith, 2005

West Africa(1998: 213-15). In brief, this relationship led to the training of S/L dissidents in Libya who started the RUF. Since the northern groups somehow dominated the APC (chiefly Limba and Temne), it was reasonable that the RUF was able to get support from the southeastern district of Kailahun closed to the Liberian border⁶². This confirmed Ayoob's view of 'fragile politics' and 'permeability of weak states'.

When the ECOMOG forces were sent to Liberia, 1990, many of the S/L military personnel returned home with looted goods: vehicles, refrigerators, tapes, TV and video sets. These looted goods were sold at high prices, and thus, many junior personnel within the military began to bribe their senior officers to send them in Liberia (King, 2007:12); some sacrificed their annual salaries, others had to make a deal with their seniors to share some booties if they return. Ominously, the war against the RUF was seen as a way of punishing other soldiers who were insubordinate to their seniors, thus increasing the animosity within the rank and file. The Nigerian forces within the ECOMOG were accused to have looted a 50\$million worth of goods in Liberia (Meredith, 2005:567). The port of Freetown was used, as a transit point to Nigeria with the massive looted cars and other valuables transported⁶³. The services of the Guinean military were their surreptitious activities or double game by providing the RUF with fighting logistics; a trademark of mercenary⁶⁴. This source claimed the RUF used to sell cocoa, coffee and diamonds to neighbouring Guinea in return for weapons and other food items, although the authority was not aware. After the RUF had established itself, the APC recruited United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO), which was a blend of Krahn and Mandingo refugee ethnic militia, fighting against Taylor's NPFL (Keen, 2005:86). These ULIMO forces started looting civilians (CRS, 1995 Report), and they soon became notorious for lawlessness without any control from the government (Keen, 2005:99).

The emergence of this rebel soldiers is linked to the ramifications of state weakness. It confirms the intrinsic predatory activities of warring factions in violent conflict in weak and failed states (Keen, 2005, Reno, 1995, Rotberg, 2004). The point is that some weak states are unable to control and protect their natural resources and territories

⁶² My personal interpretation; Questionnaires, Interviews June-July 2007; Conteh-Morgan & Dixon Fyle, 1999:128.

⁶³ These were events myself witnessed

⁶⁴ Interview, June 2007, Kailahun, ex-RUF

against illegal internal or external criminal networks. Since the state was weak, it created the condition for an organized group of opposition represented by the RUF and its foreign backers, who exploited this weakness to their advantage. Thus, foreign involvement became a serious problem and there was clear evidence that Liberia and Burkina Faso supported the RUF. The looted diamonds ‘provided it with \$300 million dollars and the arms were procured in Eastern Europe and moved through Burkina Faso to Liberia for eventual delivery to the RUF’⁶⁵.

It is important to note that it is very difficult to launch an insurgent campaign without external support. Concurrently, it is not easy for an insurgency to get external support because of some lofty ideals of democracy, human rights, and economic justice. It could get external support due to economic interests. The diamonds did just that, which explained why people like Taylor of Liberia were involved with the RUF. For instance, one ex- RUF combatant said when they began to suffer military setbacks; Taylor told them to defend their areas and made it known that they cannot return to Liberia. So the RUF leader said since this was the situation, retreat was never an option but to advance. Taylor also advised them to concentrate on the diamond rich areas⁶⁶. Significantly, the RUF was never able to effectively occupy these diamond areas until 1997, following the AFRC coup, which we shall discuss later.

4.4 The Boomerang Effect of State Weakness

The conceptual model has shown that the weak state has a spiral process. First, we have seen how it led to a series of legitimacy crises, disputes and tensions against the APC government. As the state became engulfed in disputes and tensions, it led to the violent conflict. As the various dynamics of space and time changed in the violent conflict, it had a rebounding effect of intensifying the disputes and tensions, which we now look at.

4.4.1 The Formation of Civil Defense Groups and Mercenary Activities

Another effect of weak state is the failure to maintain its fragile security, which could give rise to the formation of rival security forces to compete with it for control over territory and resources. The first of these civil defence forces (CDF) was the Tamaboros, a traditional group of local hunters from the northern district of Kabala,

⁶⁵ S/L: The Forgotten Crisis; David Pratt; 1999:3, <http://www.globalsecurity.org>

⁶⁶ Interview, Ex-RUF, Kailahun, June 2007

which assisted the NPRC in repelling the RUF from Kono in 1994⁶⁷. However, the Tamaboros were quickly discouraged and disarmed by the regime due to the suspicion that the Secretary of Defence, Lieutenant Komba Kambo, had recruited them, thus they feared the possibility of another coup. Later, it was obvious that the NPRC was incapacitated to contain the RUF; the ambush of civilian and military vehicles along the roads had become all too familiar and unclear. When it could not provide strong security everywhere, a system of selective security zones was initiated for the strategic towns of Kono, Makeni, Kenema, Bo and Freetown. People and NGO's became increasingly frustrated by the lack of road safety from Freetown to the towns where humanitarian aid was needed⁶⁸. In the southeast, where the attacks were common the people formed individual security called civil defence forces to protect their towns (Ero, 2003; Mauna, 1997). One of the focus groups interviewed in Bo says that they organized local security and divided their towns into quarters with quotas, which were patrolled by young men. The initial success of some CDF encouraged other traditional rulers to recruit more men to protect their towns and villages from both RUF and sobel attacks⁶⁹.

The emergence of these forces was linked with the security vacuum that resulted from the failure of consecutive governments and the security forces to protect the people against the RUF. The 'involvement of the CDF led to the in formalisation of violence; mistrust between the military and the civilian' (Ero, 2003:239). The Kamajor militia began to assume protection and security of their areas, while the NPRC made several attempts to bolster its security by contracting mercenaries. First, they brought the Gawkers from Nepal who did not stay long because their leader was killed⁷⁰. Since the NPRC could not guarantee itself enough protection in the diamond areas and it needed to continue to mine whatever diamonds it could get to finance its war with the RUF. The RUF's presence in these areas was something the NPRC could not afford to lose, thus, it hired the services of private security firms to provide security for mining companies, like Branch Energy, which would pay it in cash or in kind.

In early 1995, when the RUF was only miles from Freetown, the government was approached by the director of Branch Energy, based in Kono to hire the services of a

⁶⁷ Interviews, June-July 2007; Ero 2000; Muana, 1997

⁶⁸ This was what the people interviewed in all these districts told me.

⁶⁹ Questionnaire; Interviews 2007; Ero 2003

⁷⁰ Questionnaires; Interviews, 2007; Meredith, 2005

South African security firm, Executive Outcome (E.O) to stop the RUF⁷¹. Coupled with its superior air power, a small military unit and the civil Kamajor militia, the E.O mercenaries cleared the RUF from all diamond areas within a month. The presence of E.O brought in other mining and security firms, linked with several British, Canadian and US companies. Many of these diamond and security firms also had vital links with the major players in the conflict, which further obscured the tasks of these actors in settling the conflict (Hirsch, 2001:175).

But the initial support enjoyed by the NPRC evaporated due to the massive corruption and the perceived ploy of them escalating the conflict for their own gain.

4.4.2 Internal and International Demand for Change and a Return to Democratic Civilian Government

As things heated up, public opinion was galvanized both against the NPRC and RUF; people began to agitate a return to democratic rule. The NPRC made several attempts to botch the process, including beating, humiliating, arresting and detaining politicians and civil activists alike. Nonetheless, the NPRC leader came under intense international pressure to return to democratic governance. In August 1995, it summoned a national consultative conference, which overwhelmingly agreed to hold parliamentary and presidential elections scheduled for February 26 1996. The regime became divided over holding a general election; some believed it should end the war or postponed the elections until peace with the RUF was pursued. Some say that there was a power struggle inside the NPRC and on January 16 1996; the deputy chairman overthrew the chairman. This coup was considered by many as an attempt to remain in power, which in turn heightened popular fervour for the elections. On polling day, there was a burst of sporadic gunfire in the city that led to a two-hour break in voting. In the countryside, many voters who had voting ink on their hands or fingers were amputated. In Freetown, people came out in droves and show of desperation onto the streets; some had to chase the military personnel to vote. Prior the polls, one of the key opposition leaders on a BBC interview, said that if he became president, the RUF leader would only become 'an honorary paramount chief'. Interestingly, on another BBC interview, the RUF leader said that if this politician were elected president, there would be no peace. The first round of elections produced no outright winner and with the RUF

⁷¹ Interview, June 2007, Kono; Cornwell, Africa Security Review Vol7 No4, 1998

leader's interview, the other political parties decided to vote for the SLPP against Karefa Smart. The SLPP won and was sworn in as the first democratic elected government after 24 years of one party dictatorship and four years of military rule.

4.4.3 Ethnicity and Class

Ethnicity is often used by the ruling elite in weak states to shore up support (Jackson, 2002:41). This was discussed previously (i.e. 1990:1967-89) as an apt situation in S/L after 1961. To recap, after the SLPP lost the 1967 general elections to the APC, it instigated the military to overthrow the APC. Later, though the APC was dominated by the northern ethnic groups, yet it revealed thus, if ethnicity is "a series of nesting dichotomizations of inclusiveness and exclusiveness"(Cohen, 1978:373), then, in some ways, it could be argued that the APC's politics was more of class rather than ethnicity, which incites tensions among the various ethnic groups. The point is that ethnicity was used to get power, elite or class was a means of control and maintaining the power. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, the inclusion and exclusion of class was evident where the President who was Limba (the 3rd largest northern ethnic group) was married to a Mende (the 1st largest ethnic group from the southeast); his 1st Vice President was a Limba and was also married to a Mende; his 2nd Vice President was a Temne (the 2nd largest northern ethnic group) was married to a Susu (another northern ethnic group). The Chief Justice happened to be a Mende as well; the Bank Governor happened to be a Temne and later a Krio as well (the descendants of the freed slaves). In addition, when it came to parliamentary representations, almost all the eighteen ethnic groups were represented; most of the ministerial positions were also held by members of the southeast (i.e. the Mendes) since they had more educated people than the other ethnic groups. Thus, it was understandable why the other classes became frustrated, felt bitterly discriminated and excluded from the socio-economic and political participation of the country.

Ake defines ethnicity as institutionalizing "the divisions which exist by making ethnic identity the basis for political and economic participation and by striving to improve the competitive strength of the ethnic groups of the top leaders of the ruling faction" (1976:9). In weak states, ethnicity is the practical exclusion of other groups by the group in power, thereby eroding its legitimacy (Jackson, 2002; Ake, 1976). This was evident in escalating the violent conflict.

It is important to underscore the profile of the SLPP government and Kamajor militia. The SLPP was a Mende dominated government and the Kamajor militia was established as a local defence unit by the Mende people from the south eastern part of the country, who had had a tense relationship with the military. After the SLPP had been a month in office, the RUF initiated a cease fire and continued the peace negotiation began by the NPRC in Cote D'Ivoire. A peace deal was reached with the SLPP government but the RUF insisted that all foreign forces, including mercenaries be withdrawn before implementing the demobilization and disarmament process.

Arguably, as the state weakened further ethnicity re-emerged as a kind of security and trust. The SLPP government was distrustful of the military; especially their machinations to thwart the democratic process, and it intended on neither disarming the Kamajor nor sending the foreign troops home. Since effective security hinged on the presence of E.O, the government renewed their contract for 20 months at \$35.2 million (Shaw cross, 1999:38). Part of the contract included the right to mine the diamond areas, whose presence changed the balance of power in the government's favour without relying on the military. One military intelligent personnel says, "as the peace agreement with the RUF became doubtful, the government used its Kamajor militias to attack their positions, which was the turning point of escalating the violence"⁷². The resumption of violence and distrust of the military forced the government's dependence on the foreign forces for its security, which worsened their already fragile relationship. The SLPP decided to quietly stamp its authority by overhauling the military, which was a difficult situation as we see.

Since the military had been dominated by the northern ethnic groups during the APC and NPRC era, the government seemingly tried to do likewise. It started when the attorney general said that since the military chief of staff ailed from the northern groups, his loyalty was a liability to his government. He then recommended that the mercenary group, E.O, should restructure and retrain the military, absorb the Kamajor militia, who were Mende dominated, in the military, and both the military and E.O heads should report directly to the President (Musa& Fayemi, 2000:91). This policy only meant to anger the military, which wanted to protect the corporate interest it had enjoyed under the APC and NPRC. The President exacerbated the situation when he

⁷² Interview with an intelligence officer in the Sierra Leone Army, June 2007, Kailahun

visited the northern districts headquarter in Makeni, and told the people they owed an apology to the southeast because the RUF leader, Foday Sankoh, was from the region. Such a statement was meant to stir up hate in a state already at war⁷³.

Grippingly, the roots of a politicized and corrupt military had grown into a kind of dense forest that its actual size was unknown. The government was asked by international donors to reduce its expenditure on foreign troops. But they probed into the military's actual size and decided to downsize the unofficial 18,000 men to 3000 in order to save money. The idea itself was not bad than the timing; the intent of ethnicity had been made known to the military. And since the domination of the military by the northern group was the main concern, it went ahead and retired several senior and junior personnel without adequate compensation (Musa& Fayemi, 2000:91). Simultaneously, it increased the Kamajor militia's size to a standing force of 20,000 men, transformed into a private and their traditional hunting rifles were replaced with Kalashnikovs (Musa & Fayemi, 2000:91-93). Whether the government favoured the Kamajors over the military remained unclear; however, one thing was clear that the Deputy Defense Minister happened to be their leader. One personnel says, "the Kamajor was formed by the southeastern Mende people"⁷⁴. Their influence was a problem as another respondent notes, "the Kamajors began to rival the army, and fought against them for control of the rich diamond fields of Tongo. This led to further skirmishes and deaths between them; even some soldiers were imprisoned without trials for killing Kamajors"⁷⁵. By September 2006, some officers were arrested and detained for an alleged coup attempt on the government and this was the backdrop for the next legitimacy crises and violent conflict.

4.4.4 The AFRC Interregnum 1997-1998

As the tensions mounted, the military was further alienated; for instance, in radio talk shows, people lashed at them for what they considered their distrust; such programs were not censored. Whether this was a cause, the accusations became evident when the military staged another coup on May 25 1997 calling itself the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). The plotters released hundreds of prisoners from the

⁷³ Personal recollection. It was difficult to find local newspapers as source but some people interviewed in Kono and Makeni corroborated it.

⁷⁴ Interview; Kono, June 2007. He said he was a Mende as well but never supported them against the military.

⁷⁵ Interview focus group, June 2007 ,Kono

central prison, including the officers, who were supposed to face trial the next day for their alleged coup plot in September 2006. It is important to note again that the AFRC coup was a continuation of ethnicity, regional and class struggle. Most of the actors were from the northern and western parts of the country. The classes were exemplified by the rich and educated politicians, and the poor and half educated young men. These soldiers had been security to the NPRC officials. Having witnessed their lifestyles, they too wanted to enjoy the same privileges and corruption. Another military respondent says, “this coup was led by sons of some retired senior officers, who said that their fathers were not treated properly by the government”⁷⁶. Some key northern based politicians, who felt aggrieved at the SLPP’s victory in the 1996 general election, fearlessly tried to defend the junta in the media that their coup was justifiable. Notably, was the former ousted President; J.S Momoh, who came from Guinea where he had sought refuge since 1992, allegedly to negotiate a smooth restoration of the SLPP government. Others include Dr. Abass Bundu, who was the former ECOWAS Secretary General and later NPRC foreign minister, Dr. Karefa Smart, the opposition leader of the United National Peoples Party in parliament. Their status gave credence to the SLPP politicians, who saw the AFRC coup as a clandestine operation of their APC rivals bent on removing them from power.

The AFRC alleged that the Deputy Defence Minister, also the Kamajor chief, had collected Le 35 billion every month for his militia; they received late salaries and deprived of other facilities. It accused the SLPP of destroying the peace with the RUF, and thus, extended the olive branch to the RUF, asking them to leave the forest and come to the city. But the RUF initially refused and said until they heard from their detained leader in Nigeria. When he later spoke with them via radio the RUF entered the capital like drove of bees. Unlike the NPRC coup of 1992, the AFRC received massive internal and international condemnation; partly, it had no justification to overthrow a democratic government barely a year in power. There was massive civil disobedience; no state institution functioned; the bitter fight with the Kamajors continued. Many of those who opposed or supported the ousted SLPP were killed. Things worsened with an economic sanction imposed by the international community, forcing many to flee the country; few unfortunate ones died from road accident or

⁷⁶ Interview ,military personnel ,June 2007; Kenema military headquarter

boats as they tried to escape. This became the turning point for the internationalization of the conflict as we now discuss.

4.5 Internationalization of the conflict

As illustrated in the conceptual model, the outbreak of violent conflict in a weak state could have a boomerang effect, i.e. it could escalate further to weaken the state with more legitimacy crises, disputes and tensions. This was borne out in S/L during the AFRC coup with an escalation of the violence by an overt international involvement. Now we try to examine the 2nd research question: what role can international actors play in escalating or solving internal violent conflicts? Hence, the mix international response, the use of mercenaries to restore the government and how the international community helped in resolving the conflict will be considered.

4.5.1 The whirlpool of violent conflict in weak states

Arguably, another consequence of weak state embroiled in violent conflict is that if it cannot handle its security, it often gravitates toward a threat to regional instability. This often forces the international community to become involved (Jackson, 2002:30). The AFRC coup of 1997 was one such example and its outbreak coincided with the last OAU summit in Zimbabwe. Significantly, since this was the last summit, it appealed to the international community to not recognise the junta and urged ECOWAS countries to assist and restore the democratic government in S/L and the full implementation of the Abidjan Accord (OAU CM/DEC.356). In the face of this diplomatic stunt, the AFRC busily tried to get internal support as its illegitimacy continued to worsen. It was ironic also that the ousted government was negotiating with the junta through the ECOWAS and planning with mercenaries to remove it. The ousted President in a BBC radio interview said he knew about the coup three days before but did nothing to stop it. He then said the Nigerian military should bomb the capital and the indication was that all the civilians who were unable to seek refuge were junta collaborators⁷⁷. Later, 300 Nigerian soldiers were arrested on June 2, 1997, when they attempted in vain an invasion of the city.

⁷⁷ This was an interview he had with the BBC in Guinea days after his government had been overthrown, corroborated by the questionnaires, interviews in Freetown 2007.

Soon after, the foreign ministers of Nigeria, Guinea, Liberia, Ghana, and Ivory Coast established a five-man committee, with the OAU Secretary General, to start dialogue with the junta and report to the ECOWAS chairman, who happened to be the pariah Nigerian dictator, General Sani Abacha. After the meeting in Guinea, a communiqué was issued, which among other things called for ‘dialogue, unrecognition of the junta, economic sanctions and the use of force’. However, the junta did not adhere to this communiqué and since the national airport was occupied by the Nigerian contingent, what followed was a series of sustained air attacks by their military jets on specific targets, including the military headquarter. The sad irony was that many civilians were killed during such air campaigns.

These attacks increased popular opposition at the junta to negotiate than continue to risk people’s security and on October 3rd, 1997; the junta signed what was known as the Conakry Peace Plan. Though the agreement called for the cessation of hostilities; immunity of the junta; demobilization of all combatants by the Nigerian ECOMOG contingent; none was so controversial as the restoration of the ousted civilian government within nine months and the release of the RUF leader, who was held in detention by the Nigerian dictator. It was controversial because many people did not trust the RUF and it was uncertain that the junta was serious in their pledge peace agreement. The junta seemed poised to maintain power while the ousted regime was desperate and ready to risk all it had to return to power. Thus, it would have been difficult for the junta to see themselves disarmed by their Nigerian counterparts.

The twist in the tail during these talks was that the AFRC’s main supporter, President Taylor of Liberia, tried to throw spanner in the committee’s work. It was understood that the AFRC junta opposed the deployment of Nigerian troops to disarm the S/L military on Taylor’s backdoor advice. Since Taylor’s goal was to ensure free access and diamond supplies, he secretly brought in mercenaries and weapons for the junta from Ukraine; Israel and Eastern Europe (Pratt, 1999:3). In like manner, while in exile, the UK’s High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, Peter Penfold, proposed the services of Sandline; a British mercenary security firm to the government. Sandline International is closely related with E.O, an intricate mining firm, which provides

security to weak African states in exchange for their resources⁷⁸ (Musa& Fayemi 2000:91). Sandline became involved because the government still owed E.O an outstanding debt of \$19.5 million after terminating its contract in 1997 (Musa& Fayemi, 2000). The risk was there to take since there was no guarantee that the AFRC would repay the debt. A deal was reached for Sandline to train and equip about 40,000 Kamajors based in Guinea, provide arms, food and transportation for the 20,000 Nigerian ECOMOG soldiers based at the national airport (Meredith, 2005:570). On February 18 1998, these combined forces, including two hundred Sandline mercenaries launched a ground and air assault on Freetown, defeating the AFRC-RUF alliance, whose fighters fled the advancing forces. Many of the AFRC soldiers left behind were caught and set alight by angry mobs.

There was a significant twist in the Sandline connection. First, it had to do with Tony Blair's personal side of the story that he intervened because of his childhood days in Freetown when his father was a professor at FBC, the University of S/L (Gberie, 2004:3). The other had to do with the violation of UN arms embargo on S/L. When Tony Blair's new Labour government was sworn in 1997, it initiated a new 'ethical foreign policy', meaning his government would discourage the shipment of UK arms to rogue states. Thus, Sandline became a hot political issue in Britain, when the foreign minister, Robin Cook, came under attack from the press and political opposition that his government has knowingly violated the arms embargo.⁷⁹ The question was also raised of how the British government would explain its ethical policy with its cooperation with the Nigerian military government, which was suspended by the Commonwealth because of its poor human rights record and concerns of restoring democratic rule. An investigation was opened as to whether Sandline violated the embargo with the approval of the Foreign Ministry. The initial response from the British Foreign office was an angry denial, dismissing the allegation 'as irresponsible rubbish' (Cornwell, 1998:5). However, it later became clear that the senior officials and diplomats knew about the mission. Sandline's lawyers meticulously revealed the meetings it held with senior officials of the UK and US governments about their plans, which meant they enjoyed their tacit

⁷⁸ New York Times, May 13, 1998

⁷⁹ New York Times, May 13,1998

approval(Cornwell,1998:5). In short, the furore continued but Tony Blair's Labour government was able to survive the embarrassment.

As previously mentioned in brief, the RUF since it started the violent conflict in 1991 was never able to effectively occupy the diamond areas after the AFRC coup of 1997. The effective occupation of the diamond areas intensified the illegal mining of diamonds and the involvement of international criminal networks in what became known as 'blood diamonds'.

4.5.2 International Criminal Networks or Blood Diamonds Cartel

As S/L glaringly depicted it could not protect its resources and territories, the availability of getting cheap diamond turned it into a bazaar of limitless opportunities of wealth during the war (Meredith, 2005). Thus, it was not only the attraction of diamonds than the demographics and space the country offered for corrupt, clandestine business operated by criminal networks. The Lebanese business class has served as link and finance of Islamic extremists operating in Lebanon and the Middle East. The first to come were Hezbollah agents in 1986, when Yasser Arafat arrived and negotiated to have a PLO training base⁸⁰. This Lebanese community provided most of Hezbollah operatives with travelling documents and finance. In a later UN report, there was link between Al-Qaeda and the RUF, with Taylor providing the connection, exchanged money and weapons for diamonds. During the AFRC's nine months reign, one Lebanese diamond dealer, Ossaily, was introduced to the junta by his Freetown counterpart to supply them with four containers of combats and weapons in exchange for diamonds, which were channelled via Liberia (Gberie, 2002). It was reported that billions of dollars worth of diamonds were imported into Belgium from Liberia, even when it produced limited amount and of less quality (Gberie, 2002).

After the Lomé Peace Accord between the government and the RUF, the UN Security Council appointed a Panel of Experts, which produced its report in December, 2000, blaming the Liberian warlord, President Taylor, as the RUF's lifeline, with a looting motive than politics. The report estimated that the diamond trade was worth between \$25 million and \$125 million a year (UN Report 2000:19). It was reported that Al-Qaeda operatives visited RUF-held diamond areas many times and arranged diamonds

⁸⁰ My personal recollection; Farah, 2004:44-55

worth million of dollars⁸¹. The then interim RUF leader, General Issa Sesay, was said to have flown to Abidjan in late 2001 with 8, 000 carats of diamonds, which he sold to two dealers of undisclosed identity. The dealers used a Lebanese merchant who ran their deals between Abidjan and the Liberian capital, Monrovia (UN Security Council Resolution, 2002). In 1999, the UN Security Council imposed ban on S/L and Liberia exportation of diamonds until a UN monitored certificate system was introduced in September 2000. Without doubt, the great profit of this illegal diamond trade made the RUF and its supporters desperate to exploit the resources; thus, they stopped at nothing. For instance, in Kono the AFRC/RUF brought tractors and bulldozers from Liberia to mine. I saw evidence in Tongo and Kono where the AFRC/RUF nearly destroyed every infrastructure and subject it captive miners to incomprehensible savagery; some were killed for admitting they were tired. Under such brutality these people produced hundreds of millions dollars worth of diamonds. The predatory activities of these insurgents was not typical to S/L; it exists in state where the authority uses a calculated strategy of weakening the army (like the Zairean military under the former dictator of President Mobutu), the reduction in military expenditure or scarcity in logistics compel soldiers to engage in such criminal behaviour, e.g. Angola (see Kaldor, 1999:92-93). One respondent in Kono says it became worse when the local youths joined forces with the RUF to engage in criminal activities; even the Nigerian ECOMOG contingent deployed there, combined with these youths providing them security while they mined and later shared whatever diamond was found. I saw most houses that had been dug from the inside; some of which had fallen, roads and even the major streets; in and out of the town, were dug for diamonds during the RUF/AFRC occupation of the town in 1997-2001.

4.5. 3 Ending the violent conflict 1998-2002

The SLPP government was restored on March 10, 1998 and declared the entire military banned; except the few personnel who had fought with the invading mercenaries. The AFRC-RUF alliance fled to their base near the Liberian border. General Abacha, the Nigerian dictator, who was the strongest ally had warned the SLPP to negotiate with the rebel army. In its press briefings, the government's Information minister had nothing like dialogue in its political vocabulary. In other

⁸¹ The Washington Post, November 2001

words, they were hawkish and had no substitute for victory. It was the start of a beleaguered state as the conflict reached a new climax. It was a significant moment where the AFRC key members, including the former ousted APC President, J.S Momoh was arrested. Later, the RUF leader, Foday Sankoh, was sent back in July 2008 from Nigerian to Freetown and was put on trial together with the captured AFRC members. After the trial, the RUF leader and twenty-four of the AFRC members, including the former APC President, J.S Momoh, were sentenced to death. As some within the SLPP would have wanted, the former APC President, executed their own kin, Francis Minah, who was the 1st VP to Momoh, for what they thought was an alleged failed coup attempt, he was never part of. Thus, it was payback time for Momoh but the nation became divided between the SLPP government as the former President and condemned AFRC junta accused still had supporters; the RUF warned it would intensify its attacks unless their leader was released. President Taylor said it would be ‘foolish and disastrous’ to execute them⁸², and with the junta’s nine months experience still fresh in people’s mind, a strong public opinion convinced the government to execute the accused on October 30 1998, while the RUF leader waited on death row⁸³.

The AFRC did not continue its alliance with the RUF after their defeat from Freetown. One respondent says from what he saw in his district of Makeni, the people responsible for the amputations were the AFRC soldiers, which brought a division within the AFRC/RUF rank and file. He says the “RUF for its part saw that the AFRC had gone beyond its limit by indiscriminately harassing, looting, raping, amputating and killing the civilians whose support they needed; they started to write on the tarmac: ‘no raping, looting or harassing of civilians’”⁸⁴. But the AFRC did not heed the warning, thus, the RUF mobilised against them since they were numerically stronger and removed the AFRC soldiers from Makeni, as well as chasing them out of all the major towns in the northern district. According to him, since these soldiers were afraid of being killed by the RUF, some decided to surrender to the other government troops based in Kabala, while the others decided to storm Freetown.⁸⁵ The AFRC advanced from their northern stronghold in Kabala and went rampaging in the

⁸² BBC Radio broadcast ‘Talk about Africa’, October, 1998

⁸³ Interviews, 2007; Meredith 2005:571

⁸⁴ A. Conteh, Teacher, Interviews, Makeni July 2007.

⁸⁵ Eye Witness, Augustine Conteh, Teacher, Interview, July 2007, Makeni.

countryside; raping, killing, amputating people's hands and limbs. This time the rebel army re-supplied with arms captured from the Nigerian forces, occupied $\frac{3}{4}$ of the state and advanced to the capital. In its propaganda, the government played down the issue and assured the people of imminent victory⁸⁶. Those who agitated for negotiation with the rebels were called collaborators, which often meant death or incarceration.

In Kono, one respondent says that the Nigerian contingent was lured into diamond mining and caught off guard, by providing security for the local youths to mine for them. The heavy stockpile of military hardware left behind by the fleeing troops was captured by the AFRC soldiers⁸⁷. On January 6, 1999, the rebel army stormed Freetown and killed an estimated 5000 people; raped hundreds of women; burnt down half the city's eastern center, abducted hundreds of boys and girls and amputated tens of people⁸⁸. These amputations were not a form of punishment like the Islamic judicial system than to spread fear and wade off resistance. It was significant that these destructions and amputations were done on the city's eastern part because during the military defeat of the junta, most of the captured army personnel were burnt alive there and thus, these were acts of revenge⁸⁹, and in the western part of the city few, if any, houses were burnt or people killed. The remaining Nigerian force ably defended the western half of the city until reinforcement arrived, which fought back and pushed the AFRC rebel soldiers beyond the city until pressure was mounted on both sides to a ceasefire.

After this 2nd Freetown debacle the government agreed to a ceasefire but why? To start with, there was a popular reaction against the government's position of not negotiating with the RUF; people said it had no choice but to negotiate. The SLPP's strongest ally, Nigerian dictator, General Abacha, had surreptitiously died in his presidential palace and the new leader said he was not going to stay the course indefinitely in S/L. It was reported the war cost \$1 million a day and he promised to withdraw its 10,000 troops out the ECOMOG intervention force by May 1999⁹⁰.

⁸⁶ This was something myself witnessed when the government radio broadcast comedy spoke about the attacks and said it was a rumour. Even one journalist who reported about the advancing army/ rebel forces on the capital was reportedly killed.

⁸⁷ Questionnaires, Interviews, 2007

⁸⁸ Questionnaires, Interviews 2007, Meredith, p571.

⁸⁹ Interviews, Freetown, June 2007

⁹⁰ [http:// www.africa.upenn.edu/newsletters/irin420.html](http://www.africa.upenn.edu/newsletters/irin420.html)

Thus, Nigeria had seen enough and together with the British foreign minister, Robin Cook, told President Kabba that the war was unwinnable and that a diplomatic solution, however, bitter was the option or he should look elsewhere for troops if his government was to survive⁹¹.

Also the international community came under intense attack; some with vitriolic comments for its tacit racism, others saw it as double standards when NATO intervened in Kosovo, 1999 against the Serb forces of President Slobodan Milosevic to stop what was considered then as ethnic cleansing. The USA told the government it must hold peace talks with the RUF and President Clinton sent Rev Jesse Jackson to negotiate a peace deal. However, Mr Jackson made a controversial statement to liken the RUF to the ANC under Apartheid in South Africa and when he came under criticism he apologized. It thus showed that he did not understand the violent conflict's history.

Another significant twist had to do with the rivalry between France and Britain. Although there was no hard confirmation, it was understood that France had been secretly assisting the RUF. The RUF often spoke via Radio France International and since the RUF invasion in 1991; there was a lull between S/L and France as the latter closed its diplomatic activities in S/L. Thus, the UK and French foreign ministers, Robin Cook and Hubert Vedrine, embarked on what was seen as a new Anglo-French diplomatic drive to discuss their common stronger interests and cooperation in Africa⁹².

During this diplomatic stunt, a key jigsaw puzzle was about to fall in place. After the AFRC soldiers had been routed from Freetown, they took with them hundreds of abductees, including the Catholic Archbishop of S/L, Bishop Ganda with them to their hideout beyond the city. As Utas said, this 2nd AFRC exodus, the 1st being in February 1998, saw the outgrowth of another splinter group, the West Side Boys (Jorgel&Utas, 2008:10). This West Side Boys (WSB) occupied the strategic entry and exit point from the city, Okra Hill, from where they ambushed and loot vehicles plying the route to and fro the city. What became significant of the WSB was that after the 1st military defeat of the AFRC in 1998, most of its top leadership, including the chairman, Major

⁹¹ The Independent Newspaper, London, March 10,1999

⁹² *ibid*

J.P Koroma, escaped with the RUF to their Kailahun base. But together with his wife, the AFRC chairman was arrested, detained and tortured by the RUF commander, self-style General, Mosquito. Most people did not know about this incident until the WSB demanded they would only accept the government's ceasefire if their leader was released. A diplomatic marathon started to find out whether the allegation was correct. It was correct and as it turned out, President Taylor was the key in helping the government to secure his release in October, 1999, where he was flown to Liberia before airlifted to Freetown. Thus, the WSB became instrumental in pushing the Lome Peace Accord.

When the dust settled, both the AFRC and the RUF agreed to lay down its arms in exchange for amnesty, inclusion in a new coalition government. The ex-AFRC leader was made Chairman of a Peace Commission and the RUF leader became the Minister of Mines; ironically legalizing his control over the country's diamonds he had fought over and killed for. The agreement was painful to the government, while the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan himself said, "no one can feel happy about a peace obtained on such terms". This was what the US and the UK wanted and the government being weak had no alternative but to accept. However, the Lomé Accord soon ran into trouble. The country was divided between areas under Nigerian and few SLA personnel and AFRC-RUF control. The government held territory was minimal while the AFRC-RUF held control of the Kono diamond territory, providing it with the resources to fight on. The UN then deployed one of its largest peace keeping forces; 18,000 to date (Meredith: 572) to replace the Nigerian ECOMOG forces. However, as it happened in Rwanda, the UN force was deployed with inadequate resources and equipment⁹³; the plans to disarm the RUF and Kamajor militia made little impact. In May 2000, UNAMSIL (UN Armed Mission in Sierra Leone) made known its intention to move into the diamond fields and since the RUF was not willing to cede control of these areas, it retaliated by capturing 500 Kenyan and Zambian peacekeepers⁹⁴. The RUF made another advance to the city. To prevent the city from being overrun, the former AFRC junta leader, Major J.P Koroma, then Chairman of the Peace Commission, rallied people to the national stadium and told his ex-AFRC and the government soldiers to resist the RUF. The government officials

⁹³ Meredith, 2005

⁹⁴ Interviews, newspaper; Meredith 2005: 571; Questionnaire

had fled the city's mainland to the national airport occupied by the Nigerian and UN forces. The British navy intervened few days later with fully armed expeditionary force of paratroopers, combat aircraft and attack helicopters (Meredith, 2005:571). Their intervention brought calm and reverse the RUF advance and changed the conflict in favour of the government. Following this deal, the RUF fragmented into rival groups. General Mosquito based in Kailahun; belonging to the Mende ethnic group dominant in the RUF, was furious with Foday Sankoh for accepting the peace agreement and disarmament. One ex-RUF says, "he told Sankoh to piss off; asked for few loyal men to follow him to Liberia so that he would continue the war. The rival General, Issa Sesay, based in Makeni; belonging to the same Temne ethnic group of Sankoh, told Mosquito via radio that if he defied Sankoh he would go to Kailahun, disarm and kill him together with his family"⁹⁵. Mosquito then fled to Liberia where he was later killed by President Taylor to escape a possible UN indictment of war crimes.

Things moved quickly. On May 14, 2000, civil society groups and some members of parliament staged a mass demonstration of over 40,000 people to the RUF leader's residence demanding the release of the abducted UN peacekeepers. Sadly, when the crowd arrived at his residence, the RUF security opened fire and killed about seventeen and injured tens of people. The RUF leader had an initial lucky escape but was later captured, imprisoned and charged for war crimes to be tried in a backed UN Special Court. But all was not yet done; there was the constant menace of the WSB along the highway and the government was not strong to disarm them until another new twist occurred. On August 25 2000, several British and one SLA personnel 'mysteriously left the Freetown highway, moved to the WSB camp where they were captured' (Jørgel&Utas, 2008:24). It became world news as well as worrying to Blair's Labour government, who daily had to answer questions about the fate of these hostage soldiers. It resulted in weeks of failed negotiations until the British military sent in a rescue mission for the soldiers. The eventual defeat of one of the most notorious and feared warring groups sent a clear sign to the others that demobilization and disarmament was a better option. In November 2000, another cease-fire was signed enabling the UN forces to deploy throughout the country. With the arrest of

⁹⁵ Interview, ex-RUF, Kailahun, June 2007)

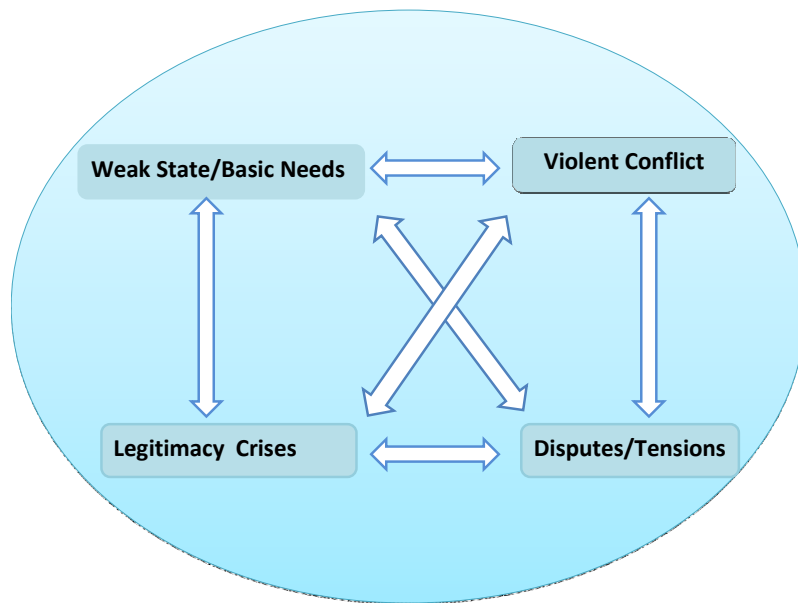
Foday Sankoh, the new RUF leader, self-styled General, Issa Sesay, was instrumental in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, including the Kamajors militia. In January 2002, the President formally declared the violent conflict over⁹⁶.

To conclude, it showed that weak states do not possess the institutions to resolve conflicts. The violence escalated even more and the general growing international awareness provoked an intervention by the international community to coerce the warring sides to the negotiating table. This is a pattern in some of these conflicts; there is plenty of evidence to say what is required in some cases, is the committed response of the international community to transform them. This to some extent answers the 2nd research question; what role can international actors play in escalating or solving internal violent conflict?

⁹⁶ Questionnaires; Interviews, 2007; Meredith 2005:572.

5 Conclusion

In conclusion, it could be said that I attempted to apply the theory of weak states in the violent conflicts, namely in S/L, thus, analysing the dangers posed by weak states to both their internal and external security. I set out to analyse my data with the method of process tracing, which could involve triangulation or a diagram. I then came up with this diagram as a conceptual model of weak state and violent conflict analysis. From the data collected and the analysis in chapter 4, this conceptual model was confirmed that there was a relationship between the weak state of S/L and the violent conflict, as I once again summarized.



The state's weakness of S/L was the legacy of colonization and post decolonization. The weak state brought about economic decline, pervasive political corruption that spawned mass discontent and insecurity. This undermined the implementation of effective public policy and reduced people's trust in the state's ability to secure their interests and livelihoods. Legitimacy crises of the government were many as the government limped and struggled to regain its legitimacy by instituting a multi party constitution. There was an ineffective operation of state institutions to cope with the rapid inflation and the irregular payment of government workers for months. The inevitable reality was the start of a brutal conflict by the RUF and a pendulum of controls by the military and civilian government from 1992-2001. There was a genuine concern against the illegitimate political order; chiefs in the rural areas and

the elite in Freetown were in control of power and the economic resources, but as the war went on, there was an economic motive. It showed a weak state and the emergence of the violent conflict led to a changing dynamics across family and ethnic lines and created an unholy alliance of criminal network. To say the least, the state was bedeviled by various groups: loyal and rebel soldiers with disaffected youths, the intervention of states and individuals whose aim was to exploit the diamond resources. It showed a state that was unable to protect itself against the outbreak of large scale direct violence. The state's inability to provide its own security led to depend on foreign mercenaries for security. As this breakdown of the cohesive national security continued, local social units and ethnicity re-emerged as a kind of security and trust that challenged the state.

It also revealed the legitimization of violence as a likely way to resolve these conflicts or a likely means to have access to the economic resources. The level of escalation confirmed the state's failure to resolve conflict. The outside intervention and committed response of the international community, including ECOMOG, UNAMSIL and the British army was very important in coercing the warring factions to a negotiating table.

Going back to the conceptualization of state variations, given the data analysis, one could say that S/L during the violent conflict swung between a weak and failed state. It was never a collapsed state because all the various governments from 1991-2002 were able to maintain law and order in some parts of the country; they had relative internal support and their international sovereignty was never questioned.

5.2 Findings

From my fieldwork, all the respondents, including interviewees and questionnaires suggest that good governance, meaning the adequate provision of their basic needs and protection of their citizens' rights was a way to prevent the recurrence of future violent conflict.

Appendix

This questionnaire is intended to examine the relationship between weak states and violent conflicts. I would appreciate your kind and genuine opinion to help me solicit sound views.

A. Personal Information: Sex.... Age.... Educational: Tertiary () Secondary () Region :N() W() E() S()

QUESTIONS

B. STATE CAPACITY AND PERFORMANCE

1. Do you feel that S/L was and is going through political and socio-economic problems since 1991? Yes

No.....

If Yes or no, why?

2. How has politics affected the country's growth and development?

3. What do you think are the main problems of governance in S/L? Explain

4. What are the social parameters of weakness in this country?

5. Has the State adequately provided essential services like water, road, electricity, job and security? If yes how?

6. If no why?

C. LEGITIMACY

7. What do you think can happen if the state fails to provide these for the people?

8. Do you consider S/L a weak or strong state? Tick the appropriate box:
Weak Strong.... Explain why you say so.

9. Who are the main local players that have contributed in the wrecking of the country's socio-economic and political structures?

10. How did they do it?

11. How did the centralization of power affect the provinces?

D. VIOLENT CONFLICT

12. Why do you think the RUF decided to take up arms in 1991?

13. Was there any link between the outbreak of the conflict and our natural resources? Explain

14. Foreign countries impacted our conflict. How were they involved?

15. And why were they involved?

E. STATE SECURITY

16. Why was the state not in full control over the use of military force during 1991-2002?

17. Were the security forces effective in protecting the populace during the conflict?
If Yes, how?

If no, why and what were some of the effects?

18. Is the Judicial process fair and accessible to the people? YesNo.....
If yes, how?

If no, why?

F. RECOMMENDATIONS

19. Do you think that these socio-economic and political problems would be solved? Yes...No....
If yes, how?

If no, why?

20. Is the present democratic process effective in S/L? Yes..... No....
If yes, how has it helped in ensuring good governance?

If no, why?

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