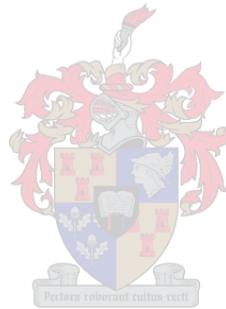


# **PERSPECTIVES ON “NEW WARS” IN AFRICA: THE CASE OF SIERRA LEONE**

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Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of Master of Philosophy (Political Management) at  
Stellenbosch University

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## **DECLARATION**

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own work, that I am the owner of the copyright thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The primary goal of this thesis is to explore, analyse and apply the New War theory to the West African case of Sierra Leone. The motivation for conducting a study of this nature was that much literature exists on the assumption that the Sierra Leonean conflict equates to a resource war. This research project attempts to bridge the gap between the New War schools of thought and those who maintain a resource war approach.

Although Kaldor's (2006) work on New Wars is significant, she does not place much emphasis on Africa. In order to supplement this, William Reno (2001) and Paul Collier (2000) have also been studied. Both write about Africa.

The RUF virtually razed the Sierra Leonean society to the ground. The overtly violent methods employed were dissimilar to the interstate and intrastate wars of the past. Blatant exploitation of the country's mineral wealth aggravated the situation. In attempting to reach a relevant finding, this study is divided into distinctive sections. Chapter two documents the theoretical background. The writings of Kaldor (2006), Reno (2001) and Collier (2000) are explored and applied.

The third chapter investigates the factors in the conflict. Issues such as the resource factor (diamonds) and poverty are discussed; the failed state in Sierra Leone; criminal networks; social conditions; arms; and the role of youth and children. The general finding of this chapter indicates that Sierra Leone fits this model. Chapter four describes and analyses the actors. Identity was not an issue in the Sierra Leone war; thus a large part of Kaldor's theory becomes redundant.

In the final assessment the study establishes what Sierra Leone's position is: New War or merely resource war? The bulk of the applied theory proved to be applicable to this case; but the study also acknowledges the mistaken views regarding Kaldor's identity theories. Collier and Reno's works prove to be significantly more relevant. This study was able to determine that Sierra Leone was indeed an example of New Wars, albeit considerably affected and influenced by greed.

## OPSOMMING

Die hoofdoel van hierdie tesis is om die Nuwe Oorlog-teorie te ondersoek, te analiseer en toe te pas op 'n geval uit Wes-Afrika, naamlik Sierra Leone. Die motivering vir die aanpak van sodanige studie is dat baie literatuur bestaan op grond van die aanname dat die konflik in Sierra Leone gelykgestel word 'n hulpbron-oorlog. Hierdie navorsingsprojek poog om die gaping tussen die Nuwe Oorlog-denkrigting en dié wat die benadering van 'n hulpbron-oorlog handhaaf, te vernou.

Alhoewel Kaldor (2006) se studie oor Nuwe Oorloë veelseggend is, lê sy nie baie klem op Afrika nie. Om hierdie studie aan te vul, is William Reno (2001) en Paul Collier (2001) ook bestudeer. Beide het Afrika bestudeer.

Die RUF het die Sierra Leonese samelewing tot op die grond afgebreek. Die openlik gewelddadige metodes wat aangewend is, was anders as die intra- en interstaat-oorloë van die verlede. Blatante uitbuiting van die land se minerale rykdom het die situasie vererger. In 'n poging om die mees akkurate bevinding te bereik, is hierdie studie in afsonderlike afdelings verdeel. Hoofstuk twee dokumenteer die teoretiese agtergrond. Die werke van Kaldor (2006), Reno (2001) en Collier (2000) word ondersoek, uitgebrei en toegepas.

Die derde hoofstuk ondersoek die faktore binne die konflik. Kwessies soos die hulpbron-faktor (diamante) en armoede word bespreek; die mislukte staat in Sierra Leone; misdaad-netwerke; sosiale omstandighede; ligte wapens; en die rol van jongmense en kinders. Die algemene bevinding van hierdie hoofstuk dui daarop dat dit lyk asof Sierra Leone die Nuwe Oorlog-patroon volg. Hoofstuk vier beskryf en analiseer die akteurs. Identiteit was nie 'n kwessie in die Sierra Leone-oorlog nie; 'n groot deel van Kaldor se teorie word dus oorbodig.

In die finale beoordeling, stel die studie vas wat Sierra Leone se posisie is: dié van Nuwe Oorlog of bloot dié van hulpbron-oorlog? Die meerderheid van die teorie het geblyk toepaslik op die gevallestudie te wees; maar die studie erken ook die foutiewe sieninge daarvan met betrekking tot die toepasbaarheid van Kaldor se sieninge oor identiteit. Collier en Reno se werke blyk veelseggend meer relevant te wees. Die studie kon dus vasstel dat Sierra Leone inderdaad 'n voorbeeld van 'n Nuwe Oorlog was, alhoewel hebsug en geldgierigheid 'n daadwerklike invloed gehad het.

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- God, for giving me the opportunity and the ability; and for being the source of all my inspiration and motivation.

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
APC	All People's Congress
CSO	Central Selling Organisation
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
EO	Executive Outcomes
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISU	Internal Security Unit
MPLA	Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NPRC	National Provisional Ruling Council
PMC	Private Military Company
RSLMF	Royal Sierra Leone Military Force
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SADF	South African Defence Force
SLA	Sierra Leone Army
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
SSD	Special Security Division
Sobel	"Soldier by day; rebel by night"
UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
ULIMO	United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNOMSIL	United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone
WB	World Bank

## **TIMELINE: 1991 – 2002**

### 1991:

Civil war commences. Foday Sankoh and RUF enter Sierra Leone (from Liberia) and capture several border villages. RUF consisted of Sierra Leone dissidents, NPFL people and mercenaries from Burkina Faso, who attack President Momoh's RSLMF. The RUF Leader was Foday Sankoh linked to Charles Taylor (a Liberian) through a training camp in Libya. Sankoh previously served time for participating in a coup against Siaka Stevens in 1971.

The RUF claimed to be fighting against the government officials, and their business associates in Freetown because they believed that they were plundering the country's resources. However, the main purpose was actually to gain control of the diamond fields of Kono for itself (RUF), and Taylor.

The RUF worked to destroy the existing system of authority – it seized and executed chiefs, and village elders etc. In a few weeks the RUF had already succeeded in overrunning a string of towns and diamond producing areas in the east of the country. Taylor then proclaimed Sankoh as “governor of Sierra Leone.”

Sankoh's rebellion was supported by the so-called “rarray boys” and illicit diamond diggers “san-san boys”. They hoped to profit from the new order. In mimicking Taylor's methods, Sankoh began forcibly recruiting children. He abducted them and subjected them to indoctrination (by means of drugging them and forcing them to commit atrocities). Many girl children became soldiers' “wives”. The number of child soldiers increased. Many of the children, however, joined voluntarily. They preferred this life, and many were looking for revenge.

The RUF also conscripted civilians to work as slave labour in mines, or as porters.

RUF town commanders were given free reign. The hacking off of hands and feet became the RUF trademark. Much looting took place. No ideology, or political strategy existed with the RUF – simply brute force.

A state rebellion took place; President Momoh asked Nigeria and Guinea to provide troops. Momoh also tripled the Sierra Leonean army, now including rarray boys, and prisoners. Momoh, in desperation, admitted entrants (to the armed forces) who weren't screened, and thus many undesirables became a part of the nation's military.

Momoh encouraged Liberian exiles living in Sierra Leone to form their own rebel group as well. The purpose of this was to combat the RUF, and to carry the war back into NPFL territory in Liberia.

ULIMO formed (United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia)

In the eastern areas, local Mende communities formed self-defence militias, based on traditional hunting guilds (Kamajors) to ward off RUF attacks. However, Momoh could not pay this new army, or supply them with support/equipment. Hence much

unrest occurred. The army was unhappy and the “commanders” tended to forcibly take the soldiers’ pay.

1992:

Dissident junior officers, led by Valentine Strasser approached Freetown to discuss the problems, and their dissatisfactions. They, however, ended up seizing power in a somewhat bloodless coup, and the National Provincial Ruling Council (NPRC) was formed. President Momoh was ousted. Strasser claimed to fix all the problems in the country, but then he began his own fraudulent behaviour.

Whilst this was occurring, much attention was still focused on the diamonds. The diamond fields were the centre of an increasingly chaotic struggle between the mining gangs, and the rogue military units, rebel warlords, and criminal business interests.

Sankoh’s terror tactics won him control of a large part of the diamond fields (adjacent to Liberia), and \$300 million traffic in diamonds from Sierra Leone.

1994:

RUF overran bauxite and titanium mines. This cut the government off from the last sources of income.

1995:

The RUF was poised, ready to strike at Freetown, the capital city.

Strasser was desperate to avoid defeat, and with a diminished army he made a deal with a South African Private Military Company (PMC), Executive Outcomes (EO). They provided Strasser with this military support in exchange for concessions to mine diamonds in areas where EO regained control. Within one week, EO had cleared Freetown of rebels.

EO then began retraining the army units, and also integrating them. EO also helped the Kamajors to become well-armed militias.

In August the diamond fields were back under Freetown’s control. But most of Sierra Leone was still under civil war.

Also in 1995, Strasser decided to hold elections, but he signalled his intention to regain power by announcing that he would, once again, stand as a candidate.

1996:

General Julius Maada Bio – Strasser’s deputy - deposed him in a coup in January 1996.

The RUF attacked villages in the north and east because they wanted to disrupt the election. The hacking off of arms and legs was done as a warning to the civilian population to stay away from the polls. Despite this, 1 million people voted in March 1996. Ahmed Tejan Kabbah (the leader of the Sierra Leone People’s party) was elected.

Sankoh wanted seats in government, and the expulsion of all foreign forces, including EO, and troops from Nigeria and Guinea. Much foreign pressure was exerted, especially from the International Monetary Fund. Kabbah was thus forced to terminate the services of the private military company, EO, in exchange for aid. Therefore Kabbah turned increasingly to Kamajors for help. Consequently, much discontent arose from the army.

Kabbah's government lasted no longer than 14 months.

1997:

On 25 May a group of 20 soldiers stormed Freetown's Pademba Road Prison, and released Major Johnny Paul Koroma (a dissident officer being held for a connection with a coup plot). Radio stations were seized, and it was announced that the AFRC (Armed Forces Revolutionary council) would be formed.

Soldiers wearing red shirts, and bandannas roamed Freetown – looting, raping, and shooting. President Kabbah fled to Guinea. Sandline International (another PMC) provided logistical support to Kabbah. Freetown became a derelict city.

Koroma's group had no strategy except to seize power. Koroma was uneducated, and his main concern was the low status of the army, and the precedence Kabbah gave to the Kamajors. All were unhappy about this, hence the military junta occurred.

As a consequence, the UN imposed sanctions that simply resulted in more smuggling.

Koroma and his AFRC decided to come to deal with Sankoh's RUF. The RUF was offered 4 places on the AFRC. Sankoh was absent (because he was being held in Nigeria), but despite this he was still made vice-chairman, and after 5 years of savage conflict, the RUF walked into Freetown.

The Nigerians decided to intervene, acting in the name of ECOMOG. On 1 June the Nigerians/ECOMOG bombarded army headquarters, expecting the AFRC to flee. However, this resulted in massive RUF attack on a small contingent of Nigerian troops guarding a hotel where at least five hundred foreigners had taken shelter. A truce was reached, and the foreigners escaped.

Freetown was in the hands of the AFRC and the RUF for 7 months. This city was subjected to blockades by air and sea by the Nigerian forces.

Sandline International (a British Security Firm), linked to EO, supported the Nigerian effort, and helped to train and supply the Kamajor militias who were engaged in combat with the RUF.

Taylor's people from Liberia helped to bolster the RUF.

1998:

In February the second battle for Freetown broke out as the Nigerian forces/ECOMOG advanced on the city centre. The AFRC/RUF forces abandoned the capital, and Freetown was freed.

In March Kabbah was able to return to the city. With international aid, and while being protected by the Nigerian forces, President Kabbah tried to restore the government.

Army officers who had supported the AFRC were tried for treason and sentenced to death.

In July the Nigerians sent Sankoh to Freetown to be tried. The RUF warned that if he was not released they would intensify their campaign of terror against the civilians. In October, however, Sankoh was convicted and sentenced to death. The RUF, in response, launched “Operation No Living Thing” (while Sankoh waited on death row for results of appeal). This Operation was made up of the mutilation and massacring of civilians, and abducting children en masse. The RUF forces/Sankoh again advanced on Freetown.

#### 1999:

In January the third battle for Freetown occurred. In 4 days RUF captured the city centre, and most suburbs. Devastation reigned as they had massacred 6000 civilians, amputating hands and feet, and destroying buildings, and homes. As well as this they had brought the Nigerians to the brink of defeat before retreating. Hundreds of captured children were taken with them.

After this, both sides agreed to conduct ceasefire negotiations in Abuja (May) and a peace agreement in Lomé (July).

Kabbah was worn down, and weakened, and he was dependant on the Nigerians/ECOMOG. He offered Sankoh a power-sharing deal. In the terms of this was a clause giving Sankoh and the rebels full amnesty for war crimes.

Sankoh was made vice president, and was given charge of the Strategic Minerals Resources Commission i.e. the diamond mines. ECOMOG withdrew, but UNAMSIL arrived in October. The RUF, in exchange, promised to demobilize and disarm to a UN peacekeeping force.

Kabbah’s government gained more territory, but the RUF kept possession of the strategic Kono diamond fields. This provided the rebels with ample funds to continue the war.

Plans to disarm the RUF and the Kamajor militias made little progress. The UN peacekeeping force, UNAMSIL, was deployed but it had inadequate resources, equipment, logistics, and intelligence. When UNAMSIL announced in May 2000 that it was going into the diamond fields, the RUF retaliated and captured 500 Kenyan, and Zambian peacekeepers.

#### 2000:

In May Britain intervened with a fully armed expeditionary force (paratroops, special forces, combat aircraft, attack helicopters and warships) to prevent the RUF from taking over Freetown, and to prevent the defeat and humiliation of UNAMSIL. As the first troops arrived, the civic groups in Freetown organized a mass demonstration demanding the release of the UN peacekeepers.

The RUF attacked Freetown again, but 30 000 people advanced on Sankoh's house, his bodyguards opened fire, and Sankoh escaped. However, he was caught 10 days later, and was handed over to the government.

After Britain's military intervention (UK forces arrived in September), major international effort made British personnel take up key posts in government, central bank, and police force. In addition to this they started rebuilding the national army. The UN peacekeeping force increased to 18 000.

After Sankoh's arrest the RUF fragmented. And in November a ceasefire was signed which enabled UNAMSIL to deploy throughout the country. (UNAMSIL departed in 2005).

2002 – 2007:

January (2002) Kabbah declared formally that the war was over, he won the elections and the British troops left. Sankoh died in 2003. UNAMSIL left in 2005. More democratic elections were held in 2007.

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# **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Problem Statement**

The history books teach us that wars were generally between states; and noting a few exceptions, the norm holds that (especially) the wars which occurred in Europe from the mid-seventeenth century to the early twentieth century were relatively short in duration. War was all about fighting in order to reach the stage of peace negotiations that would help either side to resolve their dispute (Münckler, 2005: 11).

Napoleon has been deemed the master of perfecting this type of warfare in that with the types of battles he was involved with, the numbers were so large that the logistics of the battles needed to be adjusted. Hence, the “concentration of forces on space and time” (Münckler, 2005: 11) became crucial.

There was a period when interstate wars were usually international disputes, and were fought because diplomacy failed to solve the disagreements that had arisen. They were fought by contracted armies, and the civilians were seldom, if ever, targeted. It was always assumed, with these wars, that the casualties were mainly soldiers. The Hague Land Warfare Convention of 1907, and the Geneva Conventions of 1949 determined the rules for this way of conducting war. These Conventions included rules regarding the various aspects of war. These rules contain the most important provisions that were intended to limit the barbarity of war (The International Committee of the Red Cross, 2006).

However, many recent wars are different, a few are revolutionary wars, but the majority are civil wars because they are internal as opposed to being interstate. Africa has, in the past two decades or so, become a theatre for many of these new wars. Many explanations exist for these new conflicts, some of which are relevant to this paper, and which will be discussed below. They are a) the New Barbarism; b) the economics of war; c) the nature of African political systems; d) various approaches

using social, cultural and individual factors; and finally, e) approaches linked to globalisation.

Firstly, Robert Kaplan writes about the New Barbarism (Allen, 1999). Three main ideas strengthen the New Barbarism theory in Africa. One, cultural identity is a crucial feature of social systems. This inherently means that different cultures and civilizations are prone to clash (Huntington in Richards, 2004: xiv). Secondly, in the post-Cold War era, the nature of conflict has changed – the monopoly of military violence no longer belongs to states alone. Equipment is cheap, not as advanced, and readily available to all sorts of organizations and groups who are prepared to undergo armed conflict independent of sovereign states, and disinterested in international opinions (Van Creveld, 1991: 198). Thirdly, and finally, New Barbarism maintains that the clash between cultures, resource competition, and environmental breakdown cause many small, localized, and uncontrollable armed conflicts (Richards, 2004: xiv). According to Kaplan, the war in Sierra Leone was a “product of social breakdown caused by population pressure and environmental collapse” (Richards, 2004: xv). Kaplan, and his New Barbarism thesis is not, however, the only literature relevant to the broader spectrum of new wars.

A second explanation for the emergence of a newer type of conflict is broadly discussed by Chris Allen (1999: 372); this is the “economics of war” theory. Several authors (Berdal & Malone, 2000; Keen, 2005; Reno, 2000 and 2001; Collier, 2000) propose this viewpoint. This approach sees new wars as being a response to the changing of economic conditions that arose as a result of the economic crisis and decline post-1980s. For this school of thought, new wars are not a reversion to barbarism, or long standing ethnic issues. New wars take place in the context of volatile economic positions and performances, where violence becomes functional, instead of irrational. This functionality, therefore, leads to and explains the presence and persistence of this violence. The notion of warlordism goes hand in hand with the economic agendas behind the new wars.

Thirdly, approaches exist which root themselves in the nature of African political systems, and the impact of the end of the Cold War, and of the economic decline of weak states. Richards (2004), and Chabal and Daloz (in Allen, 1999: 373)

characterise many African regimes as being “neopatrimonial”. But they claim that the reproduction of the patron-client relations that sustain these types of regimes are nowadays threatened by numerous factors (e.g. economic decline, the loss of aid and so on), and therefore a “crisis of patrimonialism” (Richards, 2004: xviii) occurs as the openings for clients are reduced at the time when they are most needed (Allen, 1999: 373).

The fourth distinction that exists regarding the new war field, deals with the approaches using social, cultural, and individual factors. These approaches offer a better grasp on the notion of “mindless violence”. Numerous studies have indicated that some origins of modern violence lie in the local history and rituals of the relevant society. This can, however, be separated from Kaplan’s views of the revival of ancient hatreds etcetera. Richards, and Chabal and Daloz tie themselves to this approach of new war, as well as to other approaches mentioned above. René Lemarchand, and Ali Mazrui, also write about identity and other social and cultural factors.

The fifth, and final approach to the new wars are those related to globalisation. These tend to explain why new forms of war have occurred in many locations in the past decade, and how they share the same character. Mary Kaldor (1999) combines many of the insights of the abovementioned approaches, and she also then makes strong points about the consequences of globalisation. Kaldor (1999) indicates that factors relevant to the new wars vary from identity to mixtures of war and crime, and that driving forces of the war are often located in the informal sectors with links to politicians, warlords, and global markets. In Africa these take place, mainly, in weak (and often failed) states.

The case of Sierra Leone is strikingly appropriate and relevant to these theoretical perspectives. In 1991, Sierra Leone was plunged into a devastating conflict when the Revolutionary United Front attacked the diamond fields as well as the capital. This conflict was to last eleven years, and in this time over two million people were displaced (CIA, 2007) and tens of thousands were killed. The origin of this conflict lay in the problems of poverty, the condition of the weak state, as well as economic concerns linked to the resource question in Sierra Leone - diamonds. In Sierra Leone, the diamond fields were it’s most valuable asset. During the 1970s, the then president,

Siaka Stevens converted the diamond industry into his own personal resource. Stevens ran a one-party dictatorship, and by the time of his retirement in 1985 he had accumulated a personal fortune estimated at \$500 million. Whilst he luxuriated with the product of the Sierra Leonean soil, the country was left bankrupt, and with very low levels of human development.

Stevens' successor was, the handpicked, Joseph Momoh who followed the same corrupt pattern as his predecessor. The government eventually stopped paying the teachers, then; with the collapse of the education system came the arrival of the "rarray boys". These were the thousands of unemployed youths who roamed the towns, they were perpetually angry and resentful, and formed the underclass of the nation. Whilst these young people were on the streets, the country was worsening. Due to the civil servants remaining unpaid life became chaotic with offices being ransacked, and the most basic objects being stolen out of government buildings. Aning & McIntyre (2005: 69) indicate that the RUF used the terrible state of the country to their advantage in that they claimed that the rebellion that erupted on 23 March 1991 was aimed at overthrowing the inefficient and repressive All People's Congress (APC) government; and at overhauling the economy by forcing the control of the natural mineral wealth from foreigners.

The atmosphere in the country was tense, and unstable, and in 1991, with the RUF invasion, the people of Sierra Leone were to be doomed for the next eleven years, until the peace in 2002. Various parties supported the rebels. Thus the movement grew from approximately only one hundred or so fighters, to the terrifying force that haunted Sierra Leone under the leadership of Foday Sankoh, and the support of Liberian warlord Charles Taylor (Meredith, 2005: 562 and Reno, 1995: 116). Trying to reach a state of peace was a long and arduous process which involved five global interventions such as the private military companies Executive Outcomes and Sandline International; ECOMOG; UNAMSIL, and the British forces, who right at the end intervened with a fully armed expeditionary force which succeeded in bringing the RUF to their knees (Meredith, 2005). Leslie Hough (2007) disagrees with Meredith (2005) on the usefulness of Private Military Companies in Sierra Leone.

This research project will accordingly apply the theories and principles of New Wars to the case specific example of Sierra Leone in the time period 1991, when the war broke out, until 2002, when the war was finally declared to be over.

Refer to Timeline/Chronology of Events 1991 –2002 above.

## **1.2 Purpose and Significance of the Study**

The point of departure of this study is the theoretical work and opinions, on New Wars, of various authors, specifically Mary Kaldor (1999 and 2006), William Reno (2001), and Paul Collier (2000). The research project will attempt to describe, analyse, and assess the various theories, factors and actors that are relevant to the topic at hand, i.e. the Sierra Leonean conflict.

This study will describe the eleven year conflict that took place in the West African country of Sierra Leone between 1991 and 2002. The nature of the conflict will be broken down according to discussions regarding the various authors; the application of their work will be made according to the characteristics, factors, and then actors that form part of the Sierra Leonean conflict. Kaldor's (2006) New War theory will be discussed first, and then the more Africa-specific work of William Reno (2001), and Paul Collier (2000), honing in on New Wars in Africa.

The specific nature of the conflict will be analysed, as stated above, this will be done along the lines of the factors and actors of the conflict (as characterized by the abovementioned authors). The factors include the weak Sierra Leone state and army, the economics of poverty and diamonds, the idea of a soldierless war (i.e. children), small and light arms as well as criminal networks for the marketing of diamonds. Actors in the conflict include the warlords (RUF), AFRC, Kamajors, RSLMF, Sobels, Executive Outcomes and the British Sandline, ECOMOG, UNAMSIL, and, finally, the British forces. These will distinguished from each other under the sub-headings of Public and Private, and Global or Local.

New Wars, according to the three abovementioned authors, will also be analysed and these three distinctive approaches will be synthesized to enable us to achieve a more rounded and complete understanding of this contemporary style of conflict.

Finally, an assessment will be made wherein the appropriateness of the perspectives on New Wars on Sierra Leone will be assessed.

The Sierra Leone conflict included a large, and diverse number of both factors and actors. One of the most important factors of the war was the alluvial diamonds that created the backdrop for the movie *Blood Diamond* (2006). As this movie illustrates, the diamonds were largely located in the Kono district in Sierra Leone. This part of the country was the first area to be invaded, and then taken over by the RUF. The RUF mostly made use of the diamonds to fund the small arms and weapons that they received in exchange for the diamonds (Weiss, 2005). *Blood Diamond* (2006) was largely based on the findings of Global Witness, a British based non-governmental organisation. These findings were published in a report (which was case-specific to Angola) “A Rough Trade: The role of companies and governments in the Angolan conflict” (Global Witness, 1998). Despite the fact that this report was based on the Angolan conflict, and the role/nature of illicit diamond trading in that specific conflict, it still dealt (mostly) with the issues of the South African-British group De Beers, and its Central Selling Organisation (CSO) (Global Witness, 1998: 2). According to Global Witness, the relevance of the CSO is high as:

“The De Beers company and its Central Selling Organisation (CSO) have dominated the international diamond industry for the last 60 years; sorting, valuing and selling around 80% of the world’s diamond production. Company literature boasts that the cartel structure provided by the CSO is of benefit to all involved in the international diamond trade” (Global Witness, 1998: 3).

This remains relevant regardless of the country under scrutiny, and thus this report, in general, proved to be a huge inspiration for the screenplay *Blood Diamond* which focused on the Sierra Leonean conflict.

*Blood Diamond* was released in 2006, four years after the conclusion of the conflict in Sierra Leone. Despite this, however, the movie succeeded in creating much awareness around the concept of conflict diamonds, and therefore this has formed a global awareness around the purchasing of diamonds, and the caution that needs to be exercised when doing so.

It is of the utmost importance to remember that although *Blood Diamond* has created a sense of awareness and feeling of social responsibility, one must not defer to believing that the only cause/reason for the Sierra Leone conflict was diamonds. This is most certainly significant, but this project will also illustrate that other factors and actors are relevant as well.

It is necessary that we do, though, still note the relevance of the diamonds as this has much to do with the resource, and economic perspectives of conflict, which will be discussed later, with special reference to William Reno (2001), and Paul Collier (2000). The RUF fought several battles to conquer Freetown (the capital of Sierra Leone), (see timeline). This was not so much for reasons based in political ideologies, but rather due to issues related to the existence of this lootable resource, diamonds (Le Billon, 2001: 569). A sturdy relationship existed between the illicit diamonds, and the financing of arms. In order to, effectively, be able to get the diamonds out of Sierra Leone, the RUF needed to have the convenience of the capital city. This would have meant that the rebels would have, with far more ease, been able to market the diamonds either through the circles of organised crime, or to possibly send the product directly into the hands of the diamond buyers in Europe. As Global Witness states:

“...Another key factor has been the number of middlemen involved in the trading process. This makes it extremely difficult to accurately trace the movement of diamonds around the world. This system has resulted in unaccountability and created an opaque screen, enabling the diamond industry to buy diamonds regardless of ethical considerations, such as its suppliers could be combatants and/or terrorists in warring countries. Another key factor relating to acceptance of the outside market is that of identification. De Beers claim it is not possible to

identify many of the rough diamonds that their buyers are offered. The reasons given include the difficulty of identifying parcels of diamonds containing mixed stones from several countries as there can be strong similarities” (1998: 5).

The RUF’s onslaught against Sierra Leone was cause for much international outcry, but this, however, only occurred after a substantial period of time. After this had been realised, Sierra Leone became the setting for numerous global interventions. Much took place in that country within the eleven year duration of the war, and through this many lessons were learnt.

The significance of this research project is that much has been written on the resource factor in the Sierra Leonean conflict, for example Paul Richards (2004), Michael Renner (2002), John L. Hirsch (2001) amongst others. In spite of this, it seems that a gap exists regarding the amalgamation of resource war authors, and then the New Wars camp, especially such as Mary Kaldor (1999 and 2006). However, due to the fact that Kaldor does not focus on Africa, it was necessary to bring in some other Africa-specific insights (i.e. Reno and Collier) as well. This study will attempt to fill this gap, by putting some perspectives together with New Wars opinions, and then to assess the relevance to Sierra Leone during 1991 through to 2002. This thesis is not about the peace agreements in Sierra Leone, but some mention will be made to in order to illustrate regional and global dimensions of this war.

### **1.3 Research Methodology**

The nature of this study is exploratory and qualitative; and is based on primary and secondary sources of information. The study also aims to be descriptive and analytical.

While secondary sources are mainly used and analysed, primary sources such as NGO reports and findings have been used and assessed. Secondary sources consist mainly of academic journal articles, publications, books and statistics derived from studies conducted by respected authors in the field of conflict studies, especially in Africa.

## **1.4 Theoretical Concepts**

### **1.4.1 Conventional (Modern) War**

Conventional war is based on the Clausewitzian notion that war is made up of three levels; these being the level of the state, the level of the army, and then the level of the people (Kaldor, 2006: 23). According to Clausewitz, and his thesis of modern war, these three levels have very clear dividing lines between them, and thus were definitely separate from one another. Clausewitz held that “these three levels operate through reason, through chance and strategy, and through emotion” (Kaldor, 2006: 23). This three-part notion of war constituted absolute war, which, according to Clausewitz, was an entirely rational activity. These ideas of modern war, as held by Clausewitz, had to do with wars that were fought between states, and with much emphasis on scale and mobility. For Kaldor (2006), these old wars are becoming an anachronism. Thus intrastate conflict was not dealt with at all, it was believed that all forms of war that take place occur interstate. This concept of conventional war is almost totally the opposite of what the New Wars authors propose.

### **1.4.2 New Wars**

Three authors will be used to discuss New Wars. These three, as mentioned above, are Mary Kaldor (2006), William Reno (2001), and Paul Collier (2000).

Kaldor (2006) emphasizes the role of globalisation in creating a new type of organized violence that she sees as being the New War. Also, Kaldor (2006) determined that the New Wars, as categorized by her, involve the blurring of the distinctions between war (in the traditional sense of violence between states, as well as for political reasons), organized crime, and large-scale human rights violations (as carried out by the state against its own people) (Kaldor, 2006: 2). This is important in that it can be seen to be different from the Clausewitzian school.

Kaldor (2006) argues that the conventional type of warfare, which used to exist, has now changed in three ways. The goals of the New Wars are about something different. Where in the past the motivation for war used to be about ideologies, or the acquisition of territory; Kaldor's New Wars are now more about identity politics than anything else. Kaldor discusses the types of identities that are challenged by war. These are normally on a more localised level, in the sense that people are claiming power based on labels. This is interesting, as we shall later note that the Sierra Leonean conflict was barely, if at all, influenced by identity. Here we immediately note the difference between Kaldor's perception of the New Wars, and then writers who have focussed their studies on Africa, i.e. William Reno (2001).

Reno (2001: 3) writes about vague nationalism. What he refers to by this statement is that many post-colonial states were not entirely sure how they should be governed, thus many countries, after the Cold War ended up expressing this by means of policies of economic self-sufficiency (domestically), and then practising the diplomacy of non-alignment (externally).

Kaldor writes about the way in which warfare is carried out, and how this has changed. According to Kaldor (2006), New War is about both guerrilla-style warfare, and counter-insurgency war. New War borrows from both of these modes of warfare, and is consequently a mixture of the two.

Other points to note with regard to the way in which New Wars are carried out, according to Kaldor (2006) are that the types of tactics, and weapons used differ to those of conventional warfare.

Kaldor discusses the economic side of war, and argues that the New Wars are financed in very different ways from the conventional warfare. Instead of being funded via the state, they are paid for through various subnational and transnational sources. Linked to this is Collier's (2000: 102) discussion about the increase in criminality in these New Wars.

Collier (2000: 91) deals, largely, with the economic factor of these New Wars. His argument is mostly based on the notions of greed and grievance, and he claims

“Conflicts are more likely to be caused by economic opportunities than by grievance. If economic agendas are driving conflict, then it is likely that some groups are benefiting from conflict and that these groups therefore have some interest in initiating and sustaining it” (2000: 91).

Reno (2001: 4) further writes about commercial contacts as a characteristic of the New Wars. Here he specifically refers to the fact that most of the typical followers of warlords are young men and women who use warfare as an opportunity to enrich themselves.

Collier (2000), and Le Billon (2001) place much emphasis on the resource factor in the New Wars. Collier (2000) writes extensively about the export of primary commodities, and how this is related to the concern of “lootable” resources.

Much literature exists on the theme of child soldiers; however, it remains a topic that is often shrouded in uncertainty. Child soldiers are very much a part of the New Wars. The United Nations has estimated the total number of child soldiers, globally, at approximately 300 000 (Münckler, 2005: 18). In Africa, especially, both government forces, and rebel groups have become ever more dependant on the recruitment of children to help them fight their battles (Kalis, 2002).

Warlordism is another notable feature of the New Wars, and of the Sierra Leonean conflict. John MacKinley (2000: 121) defines warlords as being:

“The leader of an armed band, possibly numbering to several thousand fighters, who can hold territory locally and, at the same time, act financially and politically in the international system without interference from the state in which he is based.”

MacKinley (2000: 121) further refers to warlords as the key actor where civil wars and humanitarian disasters occur. Much of the work which deals with the economy of war, according to MacKinley, explains many aspects of the economic survival of the warlord. It is necessary, though, to remember that warlords do not act in order to capture the state (MacKinley in Breytenbach, 2002: 7), but rather they only act once

the state has already become weak. This is because they can then effectively confront national governments, plunder their resources, terrorise and massacre uncooperative populations, and work against any peace processes which might occur (MacKinley, 2000: 121).

Le Billon (2001: 575) writes about the “destructuration” or fragmentation of the New Wars. He indicates that this has to do with the expression of the phenomenon of “armed warlordism”, this being where sovereignty is defined by commercial interests, i.e. the control of the diamond fields, as in Sierra Leone, by the RUF. Le Billon’s definition of a warlord is also rather useful, “...‘warlord’ defines strongmen controlling an area through their ability to wage war and who do not obey higher (central) authorities” (2001: 575).

In Sierra Leone, armed warlordism and the predatory behaviour of the “sobels” (soldier by day, rebel by night) was somewhat the result of the appropriation of street violence by the political elites who were recruiting and deploying criminals, who then began making use of the predatory economic ethos. This meant that because of the type of people who were employed as the soldiers, after not being paid, they decided to take the situation into their own hands and began looting the people and towns at night time – hence the reference to rebel behaviour (Le Billon, 2001: 575).

Mercenaries and Private Military Companies (PMCs) also play a significant role in the New Wars. In 1992, a bloodless coup was staged to oust Momoh’s APC regime. The young soldiers who staged this formed the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) and they named Valentine Strasser as their chairman (Hirsch, 2001:114). By 1995, Strasser was desperate to avoid defeat by the RUF so he entered into a deal with the South African private military company, Executive Outcomes (EO). They were to fight against the rebel RUF, and they did this in exchange for concessions to mine diamonds in areas where they regained control (this was linked to the relationship between EO and the Branch-Heritage group which held Sandline International, as well, and Branch-Heritage owned DimondWorks, registered in Canada), as well as a hefty bill which they charged the Sierra Leone government (Keen, 2005).

Executive Outcomes began training the Kamajors, who were local groups of hunters who had formed into units to protect their villages when the government no longer offered any assistance. EO scored an advantage as they shared their strategic methods with these informal fighters, and at the same time they managed to acquire crucial knowledge of the jungle (Hough, 2007: 11). EO was inclined to rely largely on a ground assault programme. Their military successes were also largely thanks to the role of the Kamajors (Keen, 2005: 152).

### **1.5 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study**

First important limitations are time and space, since this study has to be completed within a certain time span and it is limited to a certain length. This research project is further limited since not all angles of the Sierra Leone conflict can be covered in the scope of this study. A large amount of the research and work which has been done on the Sierra Leone conflict approach/take the stance of resource wars, and the lootability of the resource (Le Billon, 2001); as well as focusing much attention on the tenets of Greed and Grievance. This research project will mention some of these factors, but it is not the focus of the study, and thus great detail will not be entered into.

A further limitation is that due to the nature of the Sierra Leone conflict, and the fact that so many varying factors and actors exist, it will not be possible to enter into the historical backgrounds of all of these actors, especially of the different foreign interventions

In terms of delimitations, the analytical component of this study will only focus on the duration of the conflict. Much literature specifically analyses the peacebuilding issues post-2002. The literature has increasingly tended to deal with the issues of Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR). This is highly relevant when taking an all-encompassing approach to Sierra Leone, and when one wishes to see how and why the country is where it is today. However, this study will delve into the conflict only, and it will refrain from analyzing the peacebuilding programmes and initiatives post-2002. The reason for this is simple: the Kaldorian New War theory

deals with the reasons for the war and the conducting thereof; it is unrelated to the reconstruction and reintegration of the society post –conflict.

## **1.6 Outline of Remaining Chapters**

The remaining part of this study is divided into four chapters. Chapter 2 examines the theory that forms the basis of this study; namely the work done by Mary Kaldor (2006), William Reno (2001), and Paul Collier (2000) regarding the contemporary concept of the New Wars. Thus, this chapter is crucial to the study as it forms the foundations of this research project. The main focus is purely to describe, in detail, the characteristics of New Wars as detailed by the various authors.

Chapter 3 deals with the factors of the Sierra Leonean conflict. This includes a discussion of the weak (failed) state in Sierra Leone; the relationship between poverty and diamonds; child soldiers, hence the notion of a “soldierless” war; the small and light arms element of the conflict; and the possible relationship/existence of the criminal networks (informal criminal economy) to the conflict. Lastly, an assessment of the factors and the theory will be provided.

Chapter 4 analyses the parties to the conflict, therefore the actors. Because of the failed nature of the state, many parties were involved in the conflict, whether they were local to Sierra Leone or linked to global interventions. Due to the fact that so many actors existed, links were formed between some of them, and this chapter will also examine how they interrelated with one another. A distinction will also be drawn between whether the actors, in their local and global categories respectively, were public or private. The local actors and parties to the Sierra Leonean conflict, which are to be dealt with, are the Revolutionary United Front (“warlords”); the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council; the tribal Kamajors; Royal Sierra Leone Military Force; and the “Sobels”. The global interventions forming part of the discussion will be the Private Military Companies Executive Outcomes and Sandline International; the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group; the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone; and lastly the British Forces.

Chapter 5 provides the conclusion, where the key findings of the study are discussed and outlined. The aim and main findings of the study will be discussed. Also, the conclusion includes the success of the research methodology. Therefore it will also provide a brief discussion of the lessons that were subsequently learnt from the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO: “NEW WARS”**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The Sierra Leone conflict was cause for massive humanitarian concern from the international community. It is acknowledged that war is never acceptable, nor pleasant to deal with; but what makes conflicts (such as in Sierra Leone) so unpalatable is the notion that the nature of war has changed, becoming less conventional and more violent.

This chapter will delve, more deeply, into the description and explanation of New Wars. This notion has been briefly conceptualized in the previous chapter. The purpose of this chapter is to describe, in more detail, the varying perspectives of New Wars according to the theoretical insights of Mary Kaldor, William Reno and Paul Collier.

This chapter will provide the basis for the remainder of the research project.

### **2.2 Characteristics: Mary Kaldor**

#### **2.2.1 New Actors, Including Identity**

It is crucial to understand that Kaldor’s argument is based on the fact that new wars exist through the erosion of the autonomy of the state, and hence, also, through the “erosion of the monopoly of organized violence” (Kaldor, 2006: 5).

In 1.4.2 above, it was described how Kaldor sees “new wars”. Firstly we note that Kaldor’s ‘New Wars’ are more about identity politics than before. It is important to note that Kaldor (2006) does not specifically delve into the new characteristics of actors, only the reasons for these New Wars. Kaldor not only talks about the influential role of identity politics in these conflicts, but also the fact that they are

usually intrastate, as opposed to interstate. Identity-driven wars would imply that combatants could often be organized along social lines, and as a consequence of global forces Kaldor discusses the types of identities that are mobilised by war. These are normally on a more localised level, in the sense that people are claiming power based on social, religious or regional labels. In the case of Sierra Leone the identity factor was not always present except for what William Reno (2001) describes as “vague nationalism”. It could also imply that the usual role-players would be present, such as combatants on each side.

In these ‘New Wars’ localized home guards are also arming themselves and becoming party to the conflict. The state is usually failing, and therefore we see that the military becomes significantly less involved in the conflict, whilst attention is focused on attempting to protect the ruler of the country, as well as the public, from the insurgent groups. Global actors such as peacekeepers often fulfil this role. The general public is normally so targeted and tormented during the conflict that they will attempt to join one side of the conflict – be it an insurgent group (because they are kidnapped, i.e. children, or adults too, or simply because they feel safer on the other side of the gun), or a localized home guard, or some other form of armed group. The population of a region often has no other choice but to work for one of the warring parties, be they pro-government militias or rebels. Warlordism is another notable feature of the ‘New Wars,’ as well as of the Sierra Leonean conflict (MacKinley, 2000: 121). Mercenaries and Private Military Companies (PMCs) also play a significant role in the ‘New Wars,’ as the conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Angola and Sierra Leone attest.

Child soldiers often have a significant impact on the number of civilians involved in, and affected by the conflict. These children are almost always treated in the most brutal of ways, and are forced to endure extremely harsh treatment and conditions. Child soldiers are normally either recruited by means of abduction, or they join voluntarily (McIntyre, 2003). Often they are forced to kill family members and/or friends in their local villages so that they will be unable to return there, and this also works to desensitise them to extreme violence and killing. Drug and alcohol abuse becomes part of everyday life for these children; a reason for this is also that they become more immune to the violence when under the influence of some form of substance/alcohol.

Kaldor's identity theme is vastly similar to Reno's "vague nationalism" (below), as well as the issues of identity dealt with by Clarence Tshitereke. Tshitereke (2003: 85) in his discussion on identity, ethnicity and inequality states that few countries are homogenous, and therefore identity becomes a real factor in war, especially where some groups are perceived to benefit more from the spoils of war than others. Historically, no examples exist where all members of one particular state all reside together in one geographic area. Unavoidably, thus, very many states contain relatively large ethnic minorities. This is particularly true in Africa, where the arbitrarily drawn borders often cut directly through ethnic group boundaries. This signifies that "...the missing correlation between ethnicity and geography has frequently been dangerous tensions that may lead to war" (Tshitereke, 2003: 85). Wars that occur because of national or ethnic identity pose the risk of completely destroying minority groups in cases where ethnic cleansing has become a feature of warfare. Tshitereke also indicates how in ethnic conflict, the shifts in ethnic identity depend largely on the socio-economic and political context of the moment rather than on an objective criterion (2003: 85).

Another notable point, made by Tshitereke (2003: 86) is that frequently, when scarce resources are divided up, based on nationality, non-nationals will often try and "show" that they, too, are indeed nationals so that they may obtain a portion of the spoils. In circumstances such as this, the country is usually already suffering from depleted resources, thus tensions increase. The risks associated with such an explosive environment mean that the foreigners often become the targets of violence, which may lead to war. Tshitereke (2003) emphasizes that fact that nationalism does not only work to start wars, but due to its serious influence, it makes the possibility of compromise and the acceptance of defeat (for the minorities) far more difficult.

### 2.2.2 Mode of Warfare

Kaldor (2006) emphasizes the role of globalisation in creating organized violence that has become these New Wars. These 'New Wars' are also characterized by the blurring of distinctions between war and organized crime. In both cases there are massive violations of human rights. This makes this type of warfare different from the older 'Clausewitzian' school of thought (Kaldor, 2006). 'New War' (as indicated in the previous chapter) is also about both guerrilla-style warfare and counter-insurgency war (Kaldor, 2006).

Rebels often develop guerrilla style warfare in order to move around the huge concentrations of military forces characteristic of conventional war. Through guerrilla warfare, the territory is captured through the political control of the population. This is typical of warlords, and as far as possible, battles are avoided. Political control is, however, obtained in a different manner than what usually occurred with guerrilla warfare, where state forces are eroded to the point of abdication. Instead of obtaining control through liberation ideals, it is rather achieved through allegiance to a label and its leadership. Whoever does not show their support for this label, is then eliminated (Kaldor, 2006).

Counter-insurgency, a tactic predominantly used by the state, concerns winning back the hearts and minds of the local population. But it sometimes uses forced removals, mass killings, as well as psychological, political, and economic intimidation.

The types of population displacement which can occur are listed by Kaldor (2006: 105) as being the systematic murder of those under different labels - ethnic cleansing, rendering an area uninhabitable, as well as psychological damage and terrorising i.e. through sexual defilement. A direct result of this kind of war is that many thousands of people are displaced, thus becoming internally displaced persons, and refugees.

The majority of violence in new wars is usually aimed directly at civilians. It has been held that a return to primitivism is occurring, as it seems that all the illegitimate "side-effects" of conventional warfare have now become the standard way to fight the New Wars. In conducting war in such ways a blatant disregard exists for the (old) laws of

war (The International Committee of the Red Cross, 2006). Violence is now being used to create fear and conflict, whereas with conventional warfare the ideal is to defeat the enemy, and civilians were not targeted in such a direct manner (Kaldor, 2006: 102).

With conventional war, large forms of ammunition were used. Military equipment is quite tangible. New War sees the use of lighter, and smaller weapons. This is due to the nature of the warfare, and also the fact that it is not just armies anymore, but rather local peoples who fight in soldierless wars. Military skills are often absent.

### 2.2.3 War Economy

‘New Wars’ are funded differently. In situations like this it is the norm that public participation is relatively low, while in the national economy unemployment is exceptionally high. External resources pay for the commodities over which many of these wars are fought – ranging from the control over mining to the smuggling of diamonds and coltan (Reuters, 2005). What tends to occur in such situations is that the fighting forces take their own “pay” from looting, hostage-taking, plundering and external assistance. Illegal trade also helps to finance activities; examples of this include illegal drug and arms trade, human trafficking, and activities on the black market (Walter, 2001:519).

The “formal” economy of the specific country bleeds even further as resources are seldom, if ever, converted into revenues. Because the wars are so fragmented and informal, Kaldor (2006: 112) argues that the economy becomes informalized - a market place in which only those who are connected to war benefit.

Other economic issues which, according to Kaldor (2006) need to be taken into consideration are that many people become displaced, and hence become refugees. Refugee camps arise with the need to be funded from somewhere. Humanitarian aid is often not enough, and very often the living conditions within refugee camps are appalling, as well as providing opportunities for political mobilization to take place (Kaldor, 2006: 113-114). Often, it is not realised that the economic burden placed on the neighbouring countries can also be severe. The war economy of ‘new wars’

typically creates spill-overs. Porous borders exacerbate the situation. This holds many threats for the stability of those countries as refugees also compete for scarce resources such as food and housing.

The ultimate consequences of this change in the manner of warfare is that the New Wars are producing a phenomenal amount of civilian deaths together with floods of internally displaced persons and refugees, and the likeliness of contagion to the neighbouring countries.

## **2.3 Characteristics: William Reno**

### **2.3.1 Vague Nationalism**

As indicated in the previous chapter, William Reno (2001: 3) discusses “vague nationalism”, a kind of identity. Through this term, Reno suggests that most post-colonial states were unsure, and untrained as to how to govern themselves effectively. Therefore, the usual strategy that was employed meant that internally the country was centred around policies of self-sufficiency; whilst external relations placed emphasis on the policies of non-alignment. The realisation of these policies was supposed to occur through the mobilisation and involvement of cooperative populations. However this did not happen, instead, many rulers faced challenges from their own subordinates, and military coups started taking place, most often in African states (Reno, 2001: 3). Examples of this lie in the facts that by the year 2000, military rulers had replaced civilian governments in more than half of African states. With eighty successful coups, one-hundred-and-eighty-one failed ones and an unknown number of coup attempts between 1961 and 2004, Africa is one of the highest areas where such violent transfers of power occur (Ngoma, 2004: 87).

The typical, and immediate response to this was manoeuvring group conflicts within armed forces to undermine military command structures. Together with this went the creation of multiple special force units, informal paramilitary forces, as well as palace guards (Reno, 2001: 3). Whilst this worked to create a certain amount of short-term stability and security for the rulers; its long-term effect was to distribute weapons and

military skill throughout the societies (Reno, 2001: 3). Reno also highlights that most “...‘warlords’ originate in this context of fragmented military organisation, and come to the fore once the centralising power of the previous strongman leader collapses” (2001: 3).

Many of the rulers who feel that their security is threatened have entered into ways of buying the loyalty of many groups in society. In this way a vague nationalism is constructed to mobilize in the quest for power. The most common way of doing this has been through the use of state resources and assets as patronage. These are then distributed at the discretion of the ruler (Reno, 2001: 3 and Breytenbach, 2002). At the time, these rulers might feel that what they are doing is beneficial, but they are often ignorant of the consequences of patronage undermining state institutions. Leaders are, therefore, chipping away at their own institutions, weakening the state.

In this type of setting it was often found that rulers would be unhappy with effective bureaucrats as this could possibly lead to a potential political threat. This is due to the contrast of the efficiency of effective bureaucrats, and the ruling elites’ lack thereof. This contrast would prove to be a threat as unhappy citizens could easily make use of these discrepancies between the ‘levels’ to attempt to work the rulers out of the system (Reno, 2001: 3). Since 1989, regular elections have become more commonplace in Africa and thus the occurrence of violent successions was largely reduced. However, it should also be noted that elections have, in certain instances, added to the pressures which have sparked internal wars in countries such as Sierra Leone (Reno, 2001: 3).

### 2.3.2 Manipulation of Markets

Due to the lack of state institutions and bureaucracies required to control the subordinate public (whom the rulers still fear), they (rulers) opt more and more for the manipulation of the markets in order to satisfy their clients. Patronage becomes another form of self-protection. Loyal associates might be authorized to have access to economic opportunities, i.e. smuggling. Hence, Reno (2001: 4) makes use of the comparison between the ruler and the racketeer. Often foreigners, who wish to conceal illicit business activities, will seek out such rulers. The reason for this is that

both parties may use sovereign prerogatives in order to safeguard their transactions. An example of this is contained in the United Nations' accusations that Liberia's former president, Charles Taylor shielded illicit transactions, involving diamonds and arms, from conflict zones in Sierra Leone (Reno, 2001: 4). A consequence of this type of mutual support is the development of widespread criminal business networks.

Reno (2001: 4) indicates that this state of events is not to be confused with corruption; as corruption would insinuate that political legitimacy exists, and that state officials thus stray from a realistic benchmark of competence. Reno then goes on to say that these regimes based on patronage are founded on entirely different goals and structures. In this sense corruption (bureaucratic) and the informal intervention in markets works to connect the ruler's associates to a central political network. Rulers use this to their advantage by also making sure to pay public employees less than is needed for survival; as well as to destroy any inkling of private opportunities in the economy as this then works to force people to participate in the hierarchical patronage system in order to survive (Reno, 2001: 4). Thus, everybody is viewed as being "partners in crime" (Reno, 2001: 4) as the ruler simply delegates tasks of extortion to lower levels in the hierarchy, whilst then collecting 'his' share of the profits. Resource-rich countries (e.g. diamonds or oil) but with weak institutions, are often typical case studies.

Rulers do often have reason to be wary of the subordinates. This is because (since the conclusion of the Cold War) many a well-armed public has managed to depose an increasing number of patronage-based political systems. The main reason for this, Reno (2001: 4) notes, is that incumbent dictators no longer have the diplomatic and military support of superpowers. The threat arises once the nation becomes criminalized, and arms are readily available. From this point onwards the presence of arms spreads rapidly through society, especially by means of gang-type organizations. Thereafter the once-loyal associates and citizens of the country will not hesitate to challenge the now (post Cold War) undefended patrons (Reno, 2001: 4).

Reno also notes that this phenomenon is not solely African, but that it is specific to the collapse of regimes that relied on underhanded commercial connections, as well as predatory actions, to survive (2001: 4).

Commercial connections that are often developed through associations with the corrupt, patronage-based, pre-war regimes are valuable resources for the leaders of insurgencies who wish to fight their own way into power. Reno's (2001: 4) discussion of rulers as racketeers, and the manipulation of the markets is also relevant here as a frequent result. The insurgent group claims that they have a legitimate reason/motivation for their actions, as the RUF in Sierra Leone. However, as Reno (2001: 4) indicates, these insurgents seldom, if ever, show any real evidence of building administrations in the areas they control. From this point of view, they are not typical insurgents or revolutionaries, but warlords. They also, do not mobilize the populations to support them, and they only tend to recruit people from a narrow range of groups. Usually the refugees and internally displaced persons hold the government forces (despite their usual lack of skill/popularity in higher regard than the rebel groups (Reno, 2001: 4).

### 2.3.3 Armed Youths

Normally the pattern has illustrated that the kind of people who make up, and follow, such insurgent groups have typically been armed young men who are looking for economic opportunity through dealings with insurgents (Reno, 2001: 5). Much research has been conducted on the diverse reasons of young fighters for joining these groups, but Reno maintains that it is mostly due to the desire of these young fighters to remedy their own personal situations. More often than not these young men have undergone much trauma as they have largely been subjected to/have been victims of the destruction of economies and the collapse of state institutions (Reno, 2001: 5).

It is in the early stages of insurgency that the ideologically motivated critics of corrupt regimes appear. Their destiny is normally predetermined, in that eventually they will probably flee, or disappear. If these members voice their opinions too loudly, or recruit too much support, the character at the head of the insurgent group will feel threatened. The result is that this 'threat' (to the main leader) will need to either (voluntarily) leave, or be made to disappear (Reno, 2001: 5).

Reno (2001: 6) indicates why the ideological insurgent does not really have a place in the new wars. The reason for this has much to do with the fact that no time, or space, really exists for this ideological insurgent to build support through the administration of freed zones. Usually, the areas under conflict, in these wars, are littered with gangs, and freely available arms. Little political appeal exists about these rebel movements, and thus this ideological insurgent is at a disadvantage, especially militarily (Reno, 2001: 6).

#### 2.3.4 Commercial Contacts

As a result of the collapse of the militarized state and their patronage networks, the people with the best-developed commercial contacts are usually the best-armed insurgents. The reasons for this are very straightforward: the people with money and good foreign commercial contacts (especially arms dealers) get the weapons far quicker than their rivals. This suggests that the greatest skills an insurgent can have are the capacity for extreme violence, and openness to potential followers. These potential followers could also be motivated by the possibility of economic gain (Reno, 2001: 6).

Thus, the idea is reinforced that the most likely followers of insurgents are young men (sometimes women) who use the conducting of warfare as an opportunity to enrich themselves (Reno, 2001: 6). This perhaps relates to the literature which opines that the youth in armed conflicts often join the rebel forces voluntarily as they feel that being able to own a gun, and have the support of the “strong-man backer” (Reno, 2001: 4) means that they will have a better chance at improving their status, “even if they hate the politics out of which their backer has emerged” (Reno, 2001: 4; McIntyre, 2003).

Together with this they may realize that the success of their insurgency might not bring economic development and peace; but at the same time they know that it will be safer for them to remain on the side with the guns, than on the side being persecuted (Reno, 2001: 6). These followers are usually of the groups who are part of the most vibrant parts of society; and then also those who are typically marginalized in the collapsing economies of corrupt states.

Another perspective, offered by Reno (2001: 6) is that despite feeling more secure on the side with the guns; not all fighters will join the insurgent groups that terrorise their own communities. There is, at least, a variety of armed groups to choose from, if lucky/early (in the conflict) enough to select which one they would want to fight for. Examples of such armed groups are locally organised home guards, religious organizations that become armed, as well as varying instances of indigenous efforts that will try to defend communities (Reno, 2001: 6).

The previous chapter deals briefly with the warlord phenomenon, and the conceptualization thereof. Warlord-type insurgents have the 'benefit' of drawing international attention, because of their advanced weapons, and their capacity to cause disorder. They are important role-players in any potential mediation efforts (Reno, 2001: 6). This recognition is an advantage for these insurgents as their participation in negotiations can possibly lead to achieving the diplomatic recognition as ruler of the state (Reno, 2001: 6).

Economic rebels find it easy to convince outside parties to their claim to power; especially if they are able to capture the capital of the country (as the RUF repeatedly attempted to do in Sierra Leone), or convince outsiders that they need to be included in power-sharing agreements (Reno, 2001: 6). Rebels who captured the ruling capital may also gain access to the state revenue which could consolidate their quest not only for wealth, but power as well.

Foreign intervention forces often maintain that they do not have the capacity to force those with the guns to stop fighting. This motive, combined with diplomatic approaches that value negotiated settlements, mean that predatory rebel leaders are provided with a certain amount of externally guaranteed power and stability. This supposed power and stability occurs when/if they become either presidents, or government ministers. The appearance is then created that a return of order has been achieved in the relevant country, however, that is rarely the case. Mostly predatory rule is simply strengthened while political alternatives are left hanging (Reno, 2001: 7).

## 2.4 Characteristics: Paul Collier

### 2.4.1 Greed or Grievance?

The 'greed and grievance' distinction is based on the assumption that individuals or rebels desire wealth, and therefore capture resources illegally (i.e. greed). On the other hand they claim that they wish to rid the nation of a regime which denied citizens wealth or power, or security, a typical grievance. Many 'nationalisms' are grievance-driven. More often than not, the rebel organization that acts for the sole cause of greed, will not admit that economic benefits are its motivation, and then, like the RUF did in Sierra Leone, they claim that the reasons behind their insurrection, and the subsequent conflict, are to free the people from the corrupt, authoritarian government (in this case they were referring to the APC) that had let the country go to ruin, while they pocketed all the benefits in their own private estates (Meredith, 2005; Aning & McIntyre, 2005: 69; Collier, 2000: 92).

According to Collier (2000: 95), four main reasons exist why rebel groups could carry out conflict for the purposes of addressing grievances: Firstly, Collier mentions ethnic or religious hatred. This is identity-based. Conflicts carried out because of reasons linked to this might be restricted to a shorter time period, or they may be merely ruses for a deeper hatred and intolerance of outsiders. Secondly, Collier (2000: 95) names economic inequality as a possible reason for grievance disputes. This could refer, either, to unequal incomes, or unequal ownership of assets. Thirdly, Collier looks at a lack of political rights as a cause of grievance-based conflict. Liberation wars fall in this category. This has to do with autocratic and repressive governments, where people will often have a justifiable desire to overthrow the government in search for democracy. The final reason provided by Collier (2000: 96) for grievance-based disputes places its focus on government economic incompetence. This means that where a government is perceived to be inflicting much economic despair on its population, it may face an uprising.

Collier and Hoeffler (1999) conducted an intensive study wherein they tested the occurrence of civil wars in terms of these abovementioned factors. It was determined

in this study that economic agendas as cause for conflict heavily outweighed the factors related to grievance.

Greed related rebellions seem to be easier to lead because what they require seems to be predatory on the export trade (in primary commodities) (Collier, 2000: 100). This greed based approach to conflict argues that the underlying economic conditions are what created the risk for conflict; thus, some societies will have repeated conflicts solely because war is profitable (Collier, 2000: 105).

#### 2.4.2 Primary Commodities

Collier (2000: 97) asserts that any country that is dependant on primary commodity exports with about a quarter of its national income coming from them, has a four times larger risk of conflict than a country without primary commodity exports.

Primary commodity production is relatively easy and simple in that it does not depend on the processes of manufacture. For these reasons it is highly profitable as it depends solely on the exploitation of natural resources, which are sometimes very easy to acquire, especially when the warlords of Sierra Leone (RUF) forcibly placed the civilians in the alluvial diamond fields to work under horrific conditions. Another benefit of the exploitation of primary commodities is that they are not branded products, therefore it is much more difficult to determine their origin, thus many of the purchasers claim ignorance when it comes to the origin of the commodity, maintaining that they are not able to know if it comes from a conflict zone or not. This relates strongly to the Global Witness report dealing with the role of the De Beers Company and its Central Selling Organisation (CSO) in the illicit diamond trade (Collier, 2000: 94; Global Witness, 1998: 5).

We are reminded that countries with a high proportion of primary commodity exports have a much higher risk of conflict than those without. This works to provide the international community with opportunity for risk reduction. Most of the international markets for primary commodities are extremely centralized. A useful and relevant example of this is the diamond export industry, with specific reference to the CSO.

Several reasons exist for product centralization to occur, most notably being that due to their nature, primary commodities are not standardized, and therefore questions related to the quality of the product will surely arise (Collier, 2000: 106). Prospects for peace are, of course, increased where it becomes possible to curb the sale of primary commodities that are financing conflicts. Another means to prevent conflicts is for the international community to step in and work towards diversification of the economies of the countries that are most at risk (Collier, 2000: 106).

#### 2.4.3 Low Education and Large Proportion of Young Men

Primary commodities are not the only factors of importance for greed driven conflicts to occur. Other factors also play an important role in the economic agenda of the conflict. Collier (2000: 94) puts the other factor as being the “cost of attracting recruits to the rebellion”. Most commonly, the people who join, and participate in rebellions, are young men. Thus, Collier (2000: 94) calls attention to the fact that it is expected that the proportion of young men – with low education but also large in numbers, in a society, between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four, is a factor which has a definite impact on whether the rebellion will occur or not. The conclusion is drawn that the greater the proportion of young men, the easier it is to recruit rebels. Also, the willingness of young men to join such rebel movements is often greatly influenced by their low expectation of income earning opportunities (Collier, 2000: 94).

The prospects of earning an income, and the level of income which can be earned, are thus greatly related to the (low) level of education. Thus, we note that certain societies are far more prone to conflict than others because they possess “...more inviting economic prospects for rebellion” (Collier, 2000: 97). For example, a country with plenty of natural resources, a large number of young men, and a low level of education is at a much higher risk of conflict than a country without any of these characteristics.

#### 2.4.4 Economic Decline

Intrastate conflicts have exceedingly high costs on any economy. Collier (2000: 101) claims that, on average, during these such conflicts, the economy (in totality) declines by approximately 2.2 percent per annum. Thus, after a decade of war, a society will have an income that is possibly up to twenty percent lower than it would otherwise have been.

Collier (2000: 101) indicates that despite such losses, intrastate conflict can still be profitable in four main ways. Firstly, life during conflict becomes less predictable. A direct consequence of this is that people shorten their time horizons. This changes the ideas and practices behind human behaviour. Generally, societies in the midst of such conflict tend to be far more opportunistic (Collier, 2000: 101). Secondly, there tends to be an increase in criminality (Collier, 2000: 102). Governments tend to reduce their expenditure/budget on the police in the times of conflict; and they spend more on the military. A result of this is that the risks of punishment for criminal behaviour decline. The main economic activity of criminals according to Collier (2000: 102) is theft, and the level of theft thus increases. Thirdly, Collier discusses the disruptive nature of conflicts. As markets become disrupted, competition decreases. If there is good information and easy access to trading, marketing margins will be kept low. So much so that traders will normally earn no more than if they had another profession. Conflicts like these make information much more costly, and entry into the activity becomes exceptionally difficult. Marketing margins therefore increase, as trade becomes dominated by a monopoly, and competition is virtually eliminated (Collier, 2000: 102). Lastly, Collier (2000: 102) states that the scope for “rent-seeking predation” on trade increases for rebels; and sometimes even for government officials. This is where it has been noted that the distinction between soldiers as government officials and rebels becomes blurred; hence the “sobel” phenomenon: soldiers by day, rebels by night. This was prevalent during the Sierra Leone conflict. What is important to note regarding this phenomenon is what Collier (2000: 103) clearly indicates is that these sobels do not intend to rebel against the government - they simply take off their uniforms to avoid detection, and then use their weapons as a means of predation.

Competition in the field of predation is negative as it means that the activity of predation will die out as the activity itself becomes unprofitable. Eventually, the economic motivation for the conflict itself will no longer exist. To prevent this from happening, rebel movements try to monopolise predation. In order to do this, they need to develop a monopoly on rebel violence. This is illustrated in practice when rebel groups spend rather large amounts of time fighting other rebel groups. Collier (2000:103) specifically mentions that rebellions where no one group imposes its authority on the other may fade out.

## **2.5 Assessment**

This chapter aimed to provide a concise background, and detailed description of the three theoretical perspectives chosen to understand the phenomenon of New Wars: Mary Kaldor writing on a more global level, without specific focus on Africa, and two more Africa-specific authors William Reno and Paul Collier.

Kaldor (2006) characterises New Wars according to her formula of so-called ‘new actors’, the mode of warfare, as well as the increasingly important, and functional role of the war economy. The ‘new actors’ also looks at Kaldor’s reference to identity politics as being one of the main contributing factors towards these New Wars. Kaldor’s work relies heavily on the globalisation of the new era, and the influential role that this has on the New Wars.

Reno (2001) discusses identity under the veil of his ‘vague nationalism’. This is largely relevant to Africa as it details the after-effects of countries ruled by colonialism. Often, in the post-colonial times, such countries were ill equipped and untrained regarding continued survival. This resulted in a type of identity-driven ‘vague nationalism’ which Reno has characterised. Reno further examines these wars according to the Manipulation of the Markets, the role and existence of an armed youth, and the importance of Commercial Contacts in such conflicts.

Collier (2000) also places much emphasis on the economics of war theories. Collier’s most notable characteristic focuses on the ‘greed or grievance’ distinction. This relates, chiefly to the idea of resource politics, and the consequential ‘legitimate’ (i.e.

grievance) or ‘illegitimate’ (i.e. greed) reasons for beginning a conflict. Collier further looks at the role of primary commodities, and the commodity boom in such wars. Together with this is his discussion dealing with low levels of education, and high levels of unemployed young men. Lastly, Collier looks at the role and relevance of economic decline in a society, and how this is prevalent in societies riddled by such conflicts.

The following two chapters will analyse the Sierra Leone conflict of the eighties and nineties in the contexts of the theories outlined above. It will unpack the factors and the actors specific to this conflict within the frameworks derived from these authors three of the undeniable experts on “New War”, generally, and specifically in Africa.

## **CHAPTER THREE: FACTORS IN THE SIERRA LEONEAN CONFLICT**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Hirsch (2001: 15) writes, “Sierra Leone offers a prime example of an internal conflict where economic aspirations for control of valuable mineral resources, especially diamonds have been largely responsible for its inception and protracted duration.” Several factors were present, and played a large role in the origin and continuation of the conflict. These included the weak state (during the conflict, but most especially prior to it), issues of poverty and diamonds as resource, the notion of child soldiers (and the subsequent soldierless wars), the nature of arms used in the conflict, as well as the prevalence of criminal networks. As has been established before, the war in Sierra Leone lasted eleven years from 1991 to 2002. Much took place within these eleven years. In order to identify the major characteristics of the war, and to place them in context, an overview shall be presented.

March 1991 saw the onset of the Sierra Leonean conflict with the arrival of approximately one hundred fighters who invaded eastern Sierra Leone from bases in Liberia. This group comprised Sierra Leonean dissidents, Liberian fighters supporting Charles Taylor and a small contingent of armed mercenaries from Burkina Faso. This area is the Kono region, which is the location of the Sierra Leonean diamond fields. The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) under Foday Sankoh (a previous ally of Charles Taylor) claimed responsibility for the attack. The RUF wasted little time before they began waging war against the farmers, villagers and alluvial diamond miners in the eastern areas. Their reason for this was to create the impression that the then Momoh government was incapable of protecting its citizens. The RUF maintained the stance that they were fighting against the government officials, as well as their business associates. The motive behind this was to convince the public that the government was plundering the country’s resources. Despite this, however, the actual reason behind the RUF’s attacks was to gain control of the diamond rich fields

of Kono for its (RUF) own benefit, as well as that of Liberia's Taylor (Meredith, 2005).

In April 1992 the National Provincial Ruling Council (NPRC) came into power by means of a bloodless and somewhat unintentional coup against the Momoh regime. Valentine Strasser headed this NPRC (Hirsch, 2001: 115), and it did not take long before its members were also profiting from the ongoing conflict (Keen, 2005: 101). However, before the now-government began benefiting from the spoils of war, they launched aggressive offensives against the RUF in the diamond-rich region of the country.

The NPRC leadership changed in January 1996 when Strasser was deposed in a palace coup by General Maada Bio, who promised that the scheduled elections would not be disrupted. The RUF launched a terror campaign of hacking off limbs in an attempt to warn the public to stay away from the polls. However, many Sierra Leoneans still voted and President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, the leader of the Sierra Leonean People's Party (SLPP) was elected. Kabbah signed the Abuja Peace Accord with the RUF. However, this peace deal soon ran into difficulties (Meredith, 2005 and Fithen and Richards, 2005: 120).

In 1998, after the second battle for the state capital Freetown, the AFRC/RUF left the city, and Kabbah returned. With the help of international aid, and the protection offered by ECOMOG, Kabbah attempted to restore the government. By now the country was in a state of complete chaos. Sankoh, who had been held in Nigeria, was convicted and sentenced to death. In opposition to this, the RUF launched "Operation No Living Thing". This was their way to try and ensure that Sankoh would be freed. This operation involved the mutilation and massacring of thousands of civilians, as well as further increasing the number of abducted children (Meredith, 2005). The RUF forces once again advanced on Freetown.

In 1999 the third battle for Freetown occurred. After this, both sides agreed to discuss ceasefire negotiations. These discussions took place in May, and then in July in Lomé, Togo. The parties decided to renew most of the provisions of the Abidjan Agreement, including demobilization and disarmament, as well as the formation of the RUF into a

political party. President Kabbah and Sankoh signed the Lomé Peace Agreement on 7 July 1999 (Hirsch, 2001: 126 and Omotola, 2007: 38). ECOMOG withdrew, as a result of the peace agreement, and the UNAMSIL (United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone) was formed and introduced.

President Kabbah's government gained more territory, however, due to the fact that the RUF retained the Kono diamond fields, it was provided with sufficient funds to continue the war. Disarmament plans became increasingly unsuccessful. After the failed attempts by the UN to demobilize and create a peaceful environment, well-armed British forces entered Sierra Leone and fought to prevent the RUF taking over Freetown. Another reason for their entrance was to prevent the defeat and humiliation of the UNAMSIL troops. The RUF, however, advanced on Freetown once again. This time, though, 30 000 people advanced on Sankoh's house and eventually he was caught and handed over to the government. Consequently the RUF fragmented, and in 2002 President Kabbah declared that the war was finally over (Meredith, 2005 and Hirsch, 2001).

This chapter will further be reviewing and assessing all the factors involved in the war. The next section will explore the factors of an economic nature, derived from Kaldor, Reno and Collier. Thereafter the socio-political factors will be investigated. Finally an assessment will be provided of whether the theoretical principles of the three authors are appropriate (to the factors) or not.

### **3.2 Economic Factors**

The Sierra Leonean civil war took place in a period of globalisation. This is significant as when referring to globalisation we specifically mean the growing interconnectivity of markets, as well as the spread of capitalist networks (especially post Cold War). Kaldor (2006) maintains that the current globalised era has seen the end of "old wars". These so-called "old wars" were those characterized by Clausewitzian thinking (see Chapter 1).

Globalisation impacted on these “new wars” by means of the high technology bubble of the nineties, as well as the quest for resources such as oil and gas in Russia, the Middle East, West Africa (notably Angola and Nigeria) and Sudan, to name a few.

Allen (1999: 373), in discussing various approaches to “new war” refers to Kaldor who views these conflicts as the “product of globalisation’s destructive impact on national levels of political and economic organization”. Together with this is the subsequent decline of any central authority as well as contrasting growth of a variety of sources of authority and power. Another part of the equation is the increasing informalisation of the economy, and the erosion of economic and social security for the majority of the people (Allen, 1999: 373).

The establishment of this pattern together with the pursuit of resources led to the obvious point that oil was not the only sought after resource. Valuable and scarce commodities, such as coltan (in the Kivu district of the Democratic Republic of the Congo), and diamonds in Angola and Sierra Leone became exceptionally prized items.

Penfold (in Davies, 2000: 349) summed up the dire train of events as follows:

*“The tragedy of Sierra Leone is that her people are among the poorest in the world while the country is among the richest. The reasons for this are entirely man-made. Other countries in the world are poor because of natural disasters, few resources, unfertile territory, or bulging populations. Not so in Sierra Leone. God blessed this land with an abundance of resources. Just a relatively few people are responsible for the misery and hardship suffered by so many.”*

Diamonds played a central role in the eleven year Sierra Leonean conflict. Even before the conflict broke out in 1991, “corruption, cronyism, and illegal mining had squandered the country’s diamond riches, to the point where few government services were functioning and educational economic opportunities were scarce” (Renner, 2002: 22). Le Billon (2001: 565) indicates how diamonds are perhaps one of the more ‘useless’ materials in existence (excepting for their industrial cutting and abrasive

properties). Despite this, diamonds have become one of the world's most highly priced resources through the manipulation of markets by a cartel, as well as the manipulation of imagery and symbols (i.e. love, purity, eternity) (Le Billon, 2001: 565).

In the early nineties, the prices of food, diamonds and oil increased drastically worldwide. Many of the largest users of these resources are not only multinational corporations in the United States of America, the United Kingdom and France, but also large emerging markets such as India and China. Diamonds would often be sent to the cutters in India, Israel and Belgium before they could be displayed in expensive stores at the end of their journey (Adiga, 2004). It was in this type of environment that the commercial contacts between producers and markets became crucial.

Siaka Stevens, the Sierra Leonean leader from 1967 until 1985 led a corrupt one-party government where almost all governance was based on a system of patronage (Meredith, 2005). Under his rule illicit mining became part of daily life. This resulted in a massive reduction of Sierra Leone's diamond exports from two million carats in 1970, to less than two hundred thousand carats in 1984 (Aning and McIntyre, 2005: 68). Stevens along with his henchmen in government, and his foreign collaborators favoured this system of government as it meant that they could benefit from the looting of state resources. This, however, severely damaged the state's income and capacity to spend the necessary money on institutions and the like (Aning and McIntyre, 2005: 69).

The standard of living of the Sierra Leonean population depreciated severely. The reason for this was that massive amounts of state income were being directed everywhere but to the public account. After Stevens' retirement, Momoh was elected as his successor and he did little to amend the patrimonial methods implemented by Stevens. Eventually, the education system in Sierra Leone collapsed. With it went all hope for the stable democracy hoped for at independence. Sierra Leone already had a culture of 'lumpen' youth (Abdullah, 1998: 210). This problem was not really resolved by the existence of the renowned Fourah Bay College in Freetown. Despite the fact that these young (mostly) men were now educated, they persisted in hanging around, smoking, drinking, abusing drugs, gambling etc as many of them were unable

to find employment (Abdullah, 1998: 209). Hence, with the collapse of the education system (due to a serious lack of funds, and the teachers no longer being paid), this lumpen youth simply increased and became more lawless since the majority of them were no longer even educated. Life on the streets was all that was known to them, and many could not envision life any other way (Abdullah, 1998: 209).

Breytenbach (2002: 4) and Le Billon (1998) both argue that what resource rich states often have in common is that per capita incomes are exceptionally low therefore widespread poverty is the norm. This, thus, makes provision for uneven access to the wealth creating resources, such as the diamonds in Sierra Leone.

The poverty which was so rife in Sierra Leone meant that many citizens opted (or rather were forced to opt) for participating in the conflict – whether it be fighting for the RUF, or becoming a “sobel” – purely in order to survive (McIntyre and Weiss, 2003: 5).

It was in this type of environment that commercial contacts between producers and markets became crucial. The boom in the diamond trade benefited Sierra Leone (albeit more the various governments than the people per se), as Sierra Leone is one of the major sources of diamonds in Africa. The producers of diamonds were not always multinational corporations (i.e. De Beers) but also illicit smugglers, crime syndicates and warlords.

Breytenbach (2002: 7) discusses the issue of patronage, and how this is prevalent in systems where a severe lack of accountability has been established. Breytenbach (2002: 7) further notes that more than 85% of the present-day conflicts in Africa occur in “poor, weak, and non-democratic states.” MacKinley (in Breytenbach, 2002: 7) draws the distinction between insurgents fighting for political control, and warlords. MacKinley expands on this point by referring to the nature of an attack by such warlords, i.e. that they tend to wait for the state to become weak enough that they are able to continue their activities without any interference from the state (Breytenbach, 2002: 7).

Williams and Brooks (in Breytenbach, 2002: 4) point out that formal economies in poor states offer limited opportunities for moneymaking; and thus shifts occur away from the formal and legal to the illicit and informal sectors. Due to the lack of state institutions required to control the public, the rulers opt increasingly for the manipulation of the markets in order to satisfy their clients (Reno, 2001). Patronage, thus, becomes another form of self-protection. Loyal associates might be authorized to have access to economic opportunities, i.e. smuggling. This is where Reno (2001) compares the ruler to a racketeer. Insurgent groups often claim (usually falsely) that they are basing their attacks on strongly founded grievances. This, however, is normally not the case at all. The RUF in Sierra Leone did just this; they asserted a legitimate reason for their actions (Boas, 2001: 713), but as Reno (2001: 4) indicates, they seldom, if ever, provided any evidence of building such administrations. This perspective exposes them as little more than warlords. Another feature of these well-armed insurgents is that they are most often the people with the best commercial contacts. A credible reason for this is simple: those with the most money, and the reliable foreign commercial contacts get the weapons faster than their rivals would (Reno, 2001: 6).

The sought after diamond region in Sierra Leone – Kono, lies far from the capital, and is adjacent to Liberia, from where the RUF entered Sierra Leone in 1991. Resource wars occurred in both Liberia and Sierra Leone, and in both cases warlords Charles Taylor and Foday Sankoh, respectively, held prominent roles in the conflict. These warlords became kingpins in this underworld that also attracted mercenaries (Le Billon, 2001: 575). Economic rebels find it easy to convince outside parties of their claim to power; especially if they are able to capture resources or the capital of the country (as the RUF repeatedly attempted to do in Sierra Leone with the three battles for Freetown in 1997, 1998 and 1999) (Reno, 2001: 6).

Greed as motivation for continuation of the conflict became a key factor in Sierra Leone. Collier (2000: 100) maintains that greed-related rebellions are also much easier to lead. What they require is normally predatory on the export trade, in primary commodities. This was typical in Sierra Leone as a classic war economy existed which was driven by greed and fuelled by the commodity boom in both licit and illicit diamonds.

External resources often contribute to the payment of the disputed commodities. This was done by various means, which could range from controlling mining, to the smuggling of diamonds in Sierra Leone. Under such circumstances, fighting forces often resorted to taking their own “pay” from looting, hostage-taking, plundering as well as external assistance (Kaldor, 2006 and Kaldor, 2005: 216). A commodity boom was, therefore, seen as being key (Collier, 2000: 97 and Ross, 2004: 340). Any country that obtains about one quarter of its national income from primary commodities has a four times larger risk of conflict than a country without such exports.

This pattern reflects much irony. While many countries with established economies and emerging markets benefited from the resource boom, poorer countries often became the victims of this new wealth (Renner, 2002: 16 and Allen, 1999: 379). Resource wars thus erupted in the eastern DRC, Sudan, Angola, Liberia and Sierra Leone. While wealth was exported, domestic economies declined. Collier (2000: 101) indicates that, on average, during intrastate conflicts, the economy (in totality) declines by approximately 2.2 percent per annum. This apparently also applies to the declining amount of carats produced by Sierra Leone since 1984. An example of this is provided by the UNDP (1991) in Davies (2000: 351), which states that the number of the Sierra Leonean population living in poverty (i.e. less than US \$1 per day) was 82 percent in 1990. The annual per capita income in 1990 was US \$250, and Sierra Leone was ranked as 160 out of 160 countries on the UN Human Development Index (Davies, 2000: 351). Indeed, the profile of a poor country, yet rich in resources.

### **3.3 Social and Political Factors**

Most of the Kaldor, Reno and Collier factors dealt with economics, and thus focused mainly on this aspect of the Sierra Leonean war. However, social and political dimensions are also relevant. These relate to weak states, vague nationalism and the imperative of political access to diamond revenue. This necessitated political access to diamond revenues, often, with interlinked criminal networks. It seldom, if ever, benefited the local citizens. Consequently, many of the local people are filled with

grievances, and this makes them relatively easy targets for recruitment into militant formations that offer a better life (Collier, 2000).

The chronologies previously discussed look into the aspects and occurrences during the time period of the eleven-year war. It is also, however, essential to delve into the history of the Sierra Leonean state post-independence in order to understand the reasons behind its weak status.

Firstly, it must be noted that the Republic of Sierra Leone obtained its independence from Great Britain on 27 April 1961. Sierra Leone, at independence, opted for a parliamentary system (US Department of State, 2007). This proved to be just one of the reasons why this country had the potential to become a great democracy. Strong possibilities for sustainable development, and human security existed due to the structures that were in place. Examples of these structures were the strong independent judicial system as well as efficient and popularly elected local government structures. In addition to all of this, the Republic of Sierra Leone was rich in natural resources – diamonds, gold, iron-ore, vast agricultural land and timber, to name a few (Aning and McIntyre, 2005: 67). Prior to Independence Sir Milton Margai was appointed Chief Minister; and it was his party, the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) that led this country to Independence. The first general election took place in 1962. In 1964, after Sir Milton's death, Sir Albert Margai (Sir Milton's half-brother) succeeded him as Prime Minister (US Department of State, 2007).

The second set of post-independence general elections took place in 1967. These elections were highly contested. The result thereof was that the All People's Congress (APC), and its leader Siaka Stevens became the new Prime Minister and hence the ruling party in Sierra Leone (US Department of State, 2007).

Under Stevens' rule, in 1978, the Constitution was amended, and all other political parties – other than his own APC - were banned. Stevens remained the Head of State until 1985. During his reign, Stevens converted the diamond industry into his own personal reserve, sowing the seeds for patrimonialism and future conflict (Meredith, 2005: 562). Stevens ran a one-party dictatorship, and at his retirement in 1985 he had added a substantial amount to his personal fortune. In focusing all his attention on

manipulating the country's reserves for the sole purposes of self-enrichment, Stevens neglected to attend to the disintegration of the country. As Aning and McIntyre (2005: 68) indicate: *“Through a patrimonial system of rationed favours, theft of public funds, illicit payments and bribes and rent from economic distortions induced by price controls and administrative allocation of basic commodities like rice and fuel, corruption was institutionalized.”* Since his many years in opposition, and as part of his tactic to capture power, Stevens promoted a system of “free-for-all-mining” (Aning and McIntyre, 2005: 68). This allowed Stevens and his colleagues in government, as well as his foreign partners to benefit from this extreme looting of the state resources once they came to power (Aning and McIntyre, 2005: 69).

Despite the dire condition that Sierra Leonean peoples found themselves, Stevens, at his retirement, elected to have the patrimonial system continue. He did this by selecting his successor from amongst his most loyal supporters. The new leader was to be Stevens' obsequious army commander, Joseph Momoh (Meredith, 2005: 562). Momoh continued Stevens' legacy of a corrupt one-party system, and by this time the Sierra Leonean State was already on the verge of collapse (Boas, 2001: 708; Kandeh, 1999: 352 and US Department of State, 2007).

Due to the continuing illicit exploitation of the diamond fields, the country was losing massive amounts of money outside its own borders; whilst virtually nothing entered the state coffers. The result of this was that no means existed for the development and government investment into the infrastructure and institutions of the country (Meredith, 2005: 562). The government was subsequently left with a minimal income, and any state institutions/departments that had not yet collapsed were on the brink of disaster.

Due to the lack of revenue, government discontinued paying the teachers' salaries. The education system consequently became ineffective. A direct result of this was the continued presence of thousands of youths (mostly boys) who now had nothing material or constructive to occupy themselves with during the day. Many of them also had nowhere to go to. These “lumpen youth” (Abdullah, 1998: 207) played a significant role in the Sierra Leonean conflict of 1991 – 2002 (McIntyre and Thusi, 2003: 74).

Kposowa (2006: 35) argues that corruption, autocratic and patrimonial rule by Siaka Stevens and his APC worked to divide the country and hence create the possibility for takeover. The Sierra Leonean Police Force, as well as the Sierra Leone Army were both made to feel demotivated and isolated due to Stevens creation of his very own, armed paramilitary unit, the Internal Security Unit (Kposowa, 2006: 35).

This weak condition that the Sierra Leone state found itself in did not end at the inception of the conflict in 1991. It simply grew worse. The 1992 military coup in Sierra Leone was precipitated by much social unrest in the country. The focus of public protest in the years prior to, and during the early years of the conflict was on issues of declining living standards, leadership corruption and the necessary democratization of the political system (Kandeh, 1996: 390). In 1991, the APC, due to increasing pressure, agreed to liberalise the political system and hold multi-party elections. However, much uncertainty existed, as fears were rife that the claimed elections would not take place, or that if/when they did the desperate APC would rig them. Added to this was the RUF's armed rebellion on the Sierra Leonean Government that began in March 1992 after the invasion of 1991. The government did not handle this well, and this led to a further decrease in popularity amongst the civilians. Many people also believed that the ruling APC was profiting from the war, and that this was why they were delaying the transition to democracy. The APC's unpopular behaviour combined with the increasing tensions in the country, strengthened the belief that the APC would not do all it could to end the war, nor hold the promised multi-party elections (Kandeh, 1996: 390).

The various governments in Sierra Leone were typically unable to protect their own citizens and revenues. An initial example of this was the APC's feeble response to the war: the demotivated military was provided with more arms, and recruitment into this force was increased. The result of this was that the army suddenly found itself in positions of power. Under Siaka Stevens' rule, the military had been either disarmed, or only lightly armed. Now, however, they had open access to combat weapons. These arms were amassed and were later used against this APC government, to oust them from power (Kandeh, 1996: 390).

Many of the rulers who feared that their security would be threatened entered into ways of buying loyalty of various groups in society. It was by means of this that a vague nationalism was constructed to protect the rulers (Reno, 2001: 3). The most common means of doing this was through the system of patronage, as indicated by Reno (2001:3) and Breytenbach (2002). At the time of entering into these patrimonial deals and relationships, most rulers may have felt that what they were doing was beneficial. However, they tended not to realize how these methods undermined the state institutions thereby weakening the state (Reno, 2001).

Many soldiers were nevertheless aggrieved with government's treatment of them over the years. Thus, a group of (mostly young) soldiers left the warfront in order to make their objections known to the government in Freetown. The APC's reaction was pure panic due to the sight of a group of "war-weary" heavily armed, unhappy soldiers. A few clashes occurred between armed supporters of the APC and the soldiers. Once these skirmishes were over, however, the soldiers discovered that President Momoh and most of his cronies had fled the capital for Guinea. This resulted in the soldiers being left in control of the government. Captain Valentine Strasser, who was a mere 27 years of age at the time of the coup, was pressured into becoming the new Head of State (Keen, 2005: 94 and Meredith, 2005: 565).

This National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) will be dealt with in more detail in the following chapter, however; suffice it to say that despite their initial reasons for wishing to address the APC government (thereby coming into power) the NPRC also fell prey to the temptations of the "benefits" of being an authority. They became involved in the very things that they had accused the APC government of doing – corruption and fraud quickly arose again. Despite initially promising a quick end to the war and holding an anti-corruption stance, the NPRC were mostly poorly educated, and lacked the skills necessary to run the country (Keen, 2005: 94). This meant that there was little hope for sustainable development for the Sierra Leonean people. Eventually the old elements of the patronage-based system of the APC began breaking down, and a new political economy was entering the arena – one based almost wholly on the proceeds of the war. The NPRC were profiting very much from the ongoing conflict (Keen, 2005: 101). In 1995, however, it was agreed that elections would be held.

After much disruption and terror caused by the RUF (to warn the public from participating in the elections), the elections did eventually take place and in March 1996 Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, the leader of the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) was elected (Meredith, 2005: 566). Kabbah harboured mostly good intentions for the country, however he faced many daunting obstacles. One of those was that due to pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Kabbah had to end the contract with Executive Outcomes so as to receive aid (Francis, 1999: 327).

In May 1997 a group of soldiers stormed a prison in Freetown to release Major Johnny Paul Koroma. The Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) was subsequently formed (Meredith, 2005: 569).

Once again, as with the NPRC, most of the members of the group were poorly educated.

It is not really possible to further discuss the “weak state” of Sierra Leone, as at the entrance of the AFRC it could be held that the state was no longer weak, it was constituted no more than a collapsed state. Merely to offer some form of conclusion to the string of events dealt with above, it can be said that Kabbah eventually, out of desperation for peace entered into a power sharing deal with Sankoh at the Lomé Agreement in 1999.

Whilst so much inconsistency was undermining the systems of the Sierra Leonean government, the rebels (RUF) wished to gain full control of the diamond fields (in the east of the country); and then capture the capital, Freetown, on the coast (see the discussion of the various battles for Freetown above). The RUF planned this because if they were to become rulers then they would be able to have “official” access to the diamond revenues as with the example of the MPLA elites who became petrodollar millionaires in Angola (Global Witness, 2004).

During the war the illicit diamond trade was booming. However, at the same time the Sierra Leonean economy, outside the diamond trade, was declining. The ordinary citizens were the most negatively affected. Education was low (as mentioned above), and the level of unemployment was high. Collier (2000: 94) discusses the role of

young unemployed men in the conflict. These men were usually poorly educated and often willing to join insurgent groups, as they tended to hold low expectations of income earning opportunities (Collier, 2000: 94). Thus, the larger the proportion of young, unemployed men, the greater the chances were for more conflicts to ensue. In addition to this, the prospects of earning an income, and the level of income to be earned, were thus greatly related to the (low) level of education. Collier (2000: 97) states that certain societies are more prone to conflict because they offer more attractive economic prospects for rebellion. Thus, a country (such as Sierra Leone) with plenty of natural resources, a large number of unemployed young men, and a low level of education, was at a much higher risk of conflict than a country without any of these characteristics.

Many countries have been able to address the problem of unemployment by putting state services and/or institutions to use as a means of job creation. However, the state in Sierra Leone was so frail, that it did not offer much potential as an employer. In practice, the state of Sierra Leone was more or less confined to the boundaries of the poorly serviced city of Freetown. Despite this, however, both the RUF rebels, and the numerous Sierra Leonean rulers aspired to something very similar to Reno's vague nationalism (2001: 3).

The battles themselves, in Sierra Leone, were more equivalent to ragtag conflicts than outright wars. Weak states usually have weak armies – as in Sierra Leone, and hence, these armies were no match for the ruthless RUF who had access to the diamond money to recruit fighters and acquire small and light arms for their rebels. Diamonds in Sierra Leone did not only finance the RUF's rebellion, but they also produced a form of "common ground" between the protagonists in the war – these being the RUF and its allied neighbouring countries, the army, and other pro-governmental forces (even including the government itself) (Vines, 2005: 351). Davies (2000: 359) confirms that much evidence exists which has indicated that many of the so-called "conflict diamonds" were handed to Charles Taylor (once the Liberian president but presently indicted in the Sierra Leonean case of the International Criminal Court) in exchange for arms for the war.

Small arms can, and are used to threaten, coerce, and/or offer a sense of empowerment. This is especially the case where people who have become involved in the war feel that they have no other options left but to join the looting rebels in order to survive (McIntyre and Weiss, 2003: 5). Small and light arms are generally very easy to acquire and even children can handle them. Once they are inside the borders of a country, they usually stay there for relatively long periods, either working in the crime industry, or moving across national borders to seek opportunities there (Weiss, 2005: 9).

Various Sierra Leonean governments contracted mercenaries and private military companies (PMCs) (such as Sandline International and Executive Outcomes) for defence against Sankoh and his RUF.

The recruitment of children as both soldiers, and sex slaves, into the conflict was common; and both the government forces and the RUF took part in this practice. Foday Sankoh took much of what he did from the example set by Charles Taylor of Liberia. Taylor fully supported Sankoh, and vice versa. Taylor was a firm believer of recruiting (and even abducting) children to make up the body of his forces. Children were believed to be indispensable to these rebel forces as they could be easily “trained” in small arms and light weapons, and taught to kill with relative ease. Sankoh, thus, followed Taylor in forcibly recruiting children; often by means of abducting them during raids on villages. These children were almost always first subjected to a period of indoctrination, plied with drugs and subsequently trained to kill (Global Witness, 1998: 4). In certain instances these children were forced to kill their own parents and relatives. The reason for this was that they would be unable to return to their home villages if they escaped. Girl children were usually made to become the “wives” of the “soldiers” (Meredith, 2005: 563). Meredith (2005: 563) further expands on the notion of child soldiers and how they became an outstanding feature of the Sierra Leonean war – used not only by the RUF, but also by the government forces.

Despite the fact that most of the very young children were presumably abducted into the forces, it should also be noted that many of the older children, and adolescents, joined the fighting forces voluntarily. A reason for this could perhaps be the lure of

receiving any form of payment regardless of how little this was (Kalis, 2002 and McIntyre and Weiss, 2003: 4).

Between 1992 and 1996, the period of the worst fighting between the Government Forces and the RUF, approximately 4500 children had been forced to fight on both sides; hence the term “soldierless wars” (ReliefWeb in Kalis, 2002).

### **3.4 Assessment**

Allen (1999: 369) indicates that what the volumes of research on war and violence in the nineties claim, is that “violence has become a norm within social and political behaviour...and that violence and warfare have become self-reproducing, with no prospect that they can be brought to an end.” These so-called new wars have become increasingly common, and many differing theoretical perspectives exist competing for a more appropriate explanation of why and how they exist, hence our choice of Mary Kaldor, William Reno and Paul Collier, for understanding this particular conflict.

Mary Kaldor (2005 and 2006) structured most of her arguments on the initial point that ‘new wars’ are essentially about identity politics. Her focus was not on Africa, but many African conflicts are also identity driven, such as in Darfur, Sudan. She also focused on globalisation. This chapter has provided the reader with evidence of the globalised context of the war. This was necessary for the war to evolve the way it did, especially with regard to economic factors such as the manipulation of markets; and the importance of commercial contacts (as detailed by Reno, 2001).

Related to these economic factors were the issues of poverty and diamonds in Sierra Leone as well as the historically embedded (and ever-evolving) notion of criminal networks. The research in this chapter explored these aspects and worked to integrate them into a logical and coherent discussion. Collier’s (2000) greed as motivation for conflict was highly relevant as well (especially with regards to the resource aspect of the war) (Renner, 2002). The development of a war economy (Kaldor, 2006) as typical of new wars, proved to be fitting of the Sierra Leonean example. It was found that the issue of small and light arms was relevant both from the point of view of child soldiers and the diamond money that could buy them.

Reno's (2001) discussion of vague nationalism was also relevant and appropriate to Sierra Leone because the state (and various governments in Sierra Leone) was so weak and the RUF (on invasion) claimed to be fighting against the patrimonial one-party state of the APC. Although this was merely a cover, vague nationalism existed and both rulers and rebels aspired to a form of it. Sierra Leone was also a land of grievances (Collier, 2000) as the public had been neglected for long enough to be suffering from high levels of poverty, unemployment and declining levels of education.

In a country where resource wealth is in abundance but the people poor, conflicts are likely to emerge. The RUF benefited from factors which made the country ripe for a resource war.

The following chapter will deal closely with the varying actors in the conflict, and correlation will be drawn between the actors and the theory.

# **CHAPTER FOUR: ACTORS IN THE SIERRA LEONEAN CONFLICT**

## **4.1 Introduction**

Kaldor (2006) places much emphasis on the role of globalisation and identity in the 'new wars'. This is particularly significant with regards to actors in a conflict. The Sierra Leonean war was a very complex conflict. This is true for the underlying reasons for the war, as well as the diversity of actors and interventions that were party to the conflict.

The large and somewhat fundamental role of economics and theories of economic factors is important. These factors were dealt with in the previous chapter, but their convincing role is underlined by the number of local and global, public and private actors in the war.

Sierra Leone is a country with less than 6 million people. More than a fifth of the population lives in the capital, Freetown. It is a multi-ethnic nation with a Muslim majority, but religion hardly divided this nation. Ethnic divisions are also not prominent. However, two ethnic groups are relevant: the Temne and Mende, each comprising about one-third of the population. The Mende were always dominant in government, whereas the Temne tended to support the RUF. Despite this, the civil war was never overtly ethnic.

This chapter will discuss the various actors in the conflict according to the different categories being local private actors (i.e. outside the state), local public actors (government forces and militia), private military companies and other international actors.

Many of the actors in the war sought to profit from the conflict. This was most notable through the diamond revenues. It takes us back to Allen's (1999: 372)

discussion of the “Economics of War” theories as proposed by scholars such as Berdal and Malone (2000), Keen (2005), Reno (2000 and 2001) and Collier (2000). All of these actors sought to manipulate markets. This approach envisages new wars posing a response to the change in economic conditions since the 1980s. This school of thought sees new wars as the logical outcome of weak states being engulfed by resource wars rather than being related to new barbarism or ethnic tensions. Together with the war comes persistent violence. Warlordism, as per MacKinley (2000: 121) completes the economically driven process.

Despite the relevance of economic perspectives, the socio-political factors in a conflict are just as important to take heed of and understand. Chapter 3 dealt with all the factors in the war, and the actor-centred discussions build onto this.

#### **4.2 Local Private Actors**

As already noted in Chapter 1, it is important to remember that warlords (a typical feature of the civil war in Sierra Leone) do not act in order to capture the state but rather that they tend to act once the state has already become weak (MacKinley in Breytenbach, 2002: 7). Thus, they (the warlords) are able to effectively confront the weak ruling government, plunder the state’s resources, terrorise and kill populations; and act as spoilers against any potential peace processes (MacKinley, 2000: 121).

Sierra Leone saw the involvement of two notable warlords (Le Billon, 2001: 565). These were Foday Sankoh who ruled the Revolutionary United Front and Charles Taylor who ruled the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). Taylor was known as “West Africa’s most notorious warlord” (Meredith, 2005: 556). Originally from Liberia, Taylor was educated in the United States of America. At the time when Samuel Doe had successfully executed a coup against the patrimonial regime of William Tolbert on 12 April 1980, Taylor was back in Liberia. Taylor quickly fell out of favour with Doe and the latter accused him of embezzlement. As a result of this, Taylor fled to America where he was arrested on Doe’s orders (Meredith, 2005: 557). Here Taylor spent sixteen months in prison. Through bribes to prison guards, Taylor managed to escape and made his way back to western Africa. Here he traveled around

the surrounding countries mixing with various dissident groups and plotting his overthrow of Doe.

It was at this time that Taylor began amassing supporters. Libya offered Taylor much support as the Libyan government had always been anti the pro-American regimes in Africa. It was here, with the Libyan support that military training was provided for a group of 160 Liberian dissidents (Davies, 2000: 351 and Meredith, 2005: 557).

In 1989 Taylor was prepared to launch a rebellion against Doe's regime. Two West African leaders gave essential assistance to Taylor: Félix Houphouët-Boigny of Côte d'Ivoire and Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso. Both these leaders harboured personal grudges against Doe, hence their support of Taylor. In addition to this, Taylor's own band of fighters was comprised of rebels from Sierra Leone, Nigeria, The Gambia and Ghana (Meredith, 2005: 557).

Initially Taylor and the NPFL focused their attentions on a small region of Liberia that was home to many of the Gio and Mano tribes. Doe and his Krahn followers openly persecuted these people. Taylor believed (correctly) that if he targeted this area he would soon see the benefits. It was by means of this that Taylor obtained many new followers. In response to Taylor's rebellion, Doe sent a Krahn force to the region to attack the rebels. Doe's army fell on the people looting, raping and killing. They targeted the Gio and Mano peoples. Taylor was thus able to add many numbers to his following. This was because the locals (many teenagers and young boys) were adamant to take revenge against Doe and his ethnic Krahn (Boas, 2005: 80).

Taylor provided his new recruits with basic training and sent them to fight. Taylor, ever resourceful, grouped orphans together into "small boys units" as well as freeing prisoners in local jails in order to add to his numbers (Meredith, 2005: 558). These and other NPFL forces were plied with drugs and alcohol, which transformed them into crazed killers, who aggressively targeted the Krahn.

By 1990, Taylor's forces had almost reached the capital city, Monrovia. A second rebel group, who had originated with Taylor, but later split, was also targeting Monrovia in Liberia. Prince Johnson led this group.

In fearing for the safety of their own nations, a group of ECOWAS states under the leadership of Nigeria, met to discuss the Liberian case. As a result of this they decided to put together a peacekeeping force that would enter the Liberian conflict. This group was known as the ECOMOG, or ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (Boas, 2005: 81). On 23 August 1990, once a ceasefire had been negotiated, the ECOMOG troops landed in Monrovia and set up headquarters. Johnson eventually captured, and murdered Doe and with the assistance of the ECOMOG forces a new interim government of national unity was established (Meredith, 2005: 560).

Taylor, however, refused to accept this state of affairs since he was intent on capturing the state and presidency for himself. Accordingly, he refused to participate in the interim government arrangements, and continued to fight, attacking ECOMOG (Meredith, 2005: 561).

ECOMOG responded to this by means of air raids against Taylor's forces, thereby joining the war. Taylor, unable to capture Monrovia, settled on establishing his own regime outside Monrovia in an area known as "Greater Liberia." Here his warlord economy grew rapidly, amounting to \$200 million dollars per annum (Reno in Meredith, 2005: 561).

Now that Charles Taylor's history and role in the Liberian war has been conceptualized, it is possible to understand Taylor's encouragement and support of the warlord Foday Sankoh and his RUF's attack on Sierra Leone.

While ECOMOG had been making use of air strikes to fight Taylor, Sierra Leone had offered its own territory to ECOMOG as a base. Taylor was angered by this and, on 1 November 1990, threatened to "...attack and destroy Freetown's International Airport, arguing that by allowing its territory to be used as an operational base for ECOMOG Sierra Leone had made itself a legitimate target" (Gberie, 2005: 58; Keen, 2005: 37 and Silberfein, 2004: 217). Taylor's interest was also piqued by the rich alluvial diamond fields of the Kono region of Sierra Leone (Meredith, 2005: 561). In addition to this Taylor wished to assist his fellow rebel allies, the RUF, to become established in Sierra Leone (Adebajo, 2002: 82; Reno, 1995: 116 and Lamin, 2005: 149).

Taylor reacted against President Momoh, and Sierra Leone, for helping ECOMOG by supplying Sankoh and the RUF with arms and ammunition (Hirsch, 2001: 32).

Foday Sankoh was born in the early 1930s in a small village in Sierra Leone, and he grew up in poverty. His education was limited and went only as far as primary school. In 1956 Sankoh joined the army. At this time the army was an institution where only people with little or no education went. The general opinion in Sierra Leone was that the people who went to the army were those who were unable to make it anywhere more “respectable” (Gberie, 2005: 40). Sankoh remained active in the army until 1971. His time of service was interrupted twice in order for him to attend training in both Nigeria, and Britain respectively. Upon his return to Sierra Leone, several coups and counter-coups took place. In 1971 a coup against Siaka Stevens and his APC, was attempted. This failed and the army chief Brigadier John Bangura (who had planned the coup) was arrested along with any army personnel who may have been aware of the plans. Sankoh was one such individual. He was tried and imprisoned for seven years.

Precisely twenty years after the failed coup (in which Sankoh really had little to no role), on 23 March 1991, Sankoh announced that he “...had launched a ‘people’s armed struggle’” (Gberie, 2005: 43). Sankoh claimed that the purpose of this was to overthrow the APC government, headed by President Joseph Momoh.

If it had not been for Taylor’s influence and support, and more importantly, perhaps, that of Libya’s Colonel Gaddafi and his “Green Book” (Abdullah, 1998: 213; Gberie, 2005: 49 and Peters and Richards, 1998: 184), Sankoh and his RUF may not have come near to their goal and subsequent activities. According to Abdullah (1998: 213), the difficult socio-economic situation leading up to the 1990s had been the main cause of the attractiveness of Gaddafi’s Green Book. The Libyans sponsored Green Book study groups at Fourah Bay College in Freetown. The reason that many Sierra Leoneans were trained in Libya, in the late 1980s, was that the then-student union president Alie Kabba was very much a fan of the Libyan way of rationalizing revolution (Abdullah, 1998: 214). After being expelled from Fourah Bay College, Kabba and three other students were initially imprisoned, and then later travelled to

Ghana to complete their studies. Libya was interested in people, such as these four students, because of their (Libyan) sympathetic outlook on revolution (Abdullah, 1998: 214).

Kabba and his colleagues felt that they had been treated very unfairly. Thus they began initiating the training of potential revolutionaries in Libya in order to carry out an armed assault against the APC government in Sierra Leone (Gberie, 2005: 50). These students subsequently recruited many lumpen youth, and included them in their activities in Libya.

These 'lumpen' youth and the 'rarray' boys were one and the same (McIntyre and Thusi, 2003: 74). They were comprised of the thousands of unemployed youths who spent their time roaming the streets of Freetown and other towns and cities occupying themselves with the lifestyle of those considered to be "socially deviant" (Abdullah, 2002: 21 and Meredith, 2005: 562). These 'rarray' boys were treated as an alienated underclass, and passed the time by gambling, drinking, often taking drugs, as well as becoming involved in petty theft. The origins of the 'rarray' boys date back to the beginning of the twentieth century and they were mostly the unemployed and unemployable male youths (Abdullah, 1998: 207).

Sierra Leone saw the first generation of 'rarray' boys as thugs for the politicians. They were mostly used to carry out the politicians' dirty work, and the post-independence patrimonial one-party states did nothing for the upliftment of this group of youth. It has been argued that had the APC government invested in education and the creation of decent jobs, rather than focusing on lining their own pockets, the conflict would possibly not have escalated as it did. Without so many grievances against the APC regime, far fewer people would have become such easy prey for the RUF's recruiters (Kposowa, 2006: 43 and Aning and McIntyre, 2005: 69).

The 'rarray' boys spent their time in *potes* (which were areas of relaxation for the unemployed youths), and with time the character of the *potes* began to change as the individuals who used and frequented them were no longer limited to the criminal elements of society. Members of the working class began joining this section of society, and with time these working class individuals became involved in the

leadership (Abdullah, 1998: 209 and 2002: 24). This community remained gender-specific as no women were included, and while the range of “members” was growing, the rarray boys remained on the margin of the Sierra Leonean society (Abdullah, 2002: 24).

The students of Fourah Bay College played a significant role linking the rarray boys with mainstream society, and the 1970s saw the beginning of an amalgamation of rarray boy culture into campus life (Abdullah, 2002: 26). Tertiary students took parts of the rarray boy culture only to transform this and the characteristic *potes* into a new and strong oppositional culture. This became a youth discourse to be reckoned with. It was founded on principles of Pan-Africanism, national liberation and violence (Abdullah, 2002: 28). From this point on this “youth constituency” as Abdullah (2002: 29) refers to it, was different. The majority of the unemployed men were literate and more concerned with appearances than the original rarray boys. These new groups were relatively politically conscious due to having received education, and “...vague hints at political transformation” became commonplace amongst them (Abdullah, 2002: 30).

The drug culture grew amongst this youth, and it was deemed to go hand in hand with the ideals of radicalism and non-conformity. Abdullah (2002: 32) notes that the “intellectual origins of rebellious youth culture could be dated to this period.” However, this was still prior to the time of the formation of the RUF. Thus, despite the intellectual elements, and the links to various ideologies and the followings of “advanced revolutionaries” such as Karl Marx, Marcus Garvey and Fidel Castro to name a few, the formation of the RUF as a revolutionary movement would only come later (Abdullah, 2002: 32).

With the increased number of intellectuals into the youth group came the declining level of petty crime and theft. The group had moved away from their roles as “thugs” for the corrupt politicians. The youths seemed to view the term “revolution” in their unique and seemingly juvenile way. Revolution was deemed to be anything that offered the possibility of being anti-system. This misunderstanding of what a revolution was made up of would be reproduced in horrifying ways in the 1990s with

the conflict's methods and justifications as employed by the rebel movement (Abdullah, 2002: 33).

Davies (2000: 358) and Meredith (2005: 563) also refer to the involvement of the illicit diamond miners, or san-san boys, in the formation of the RUF. As with the other members of Abdullah's (2002: 29) "youth constituency" these young men were hoping for an opportunity to profit from a new order. These attractive economic prospects thus played a large role in the formation of the rebel movement (Collier, 2000: 97 and Reno, 2001: 5). Reno has confirmed this by stating that most of these young fighters join insurgent groups, mostly, in order to remedy their own situations (Reno, 2001: 5).

Sankoh was one of the recruits from the youth culture in Sierra Leone. With his ever-present urge for revolution, especially now against the APC regime, Sankoh was most enthusiastic to carry out this armed attack wholeheartedly. However, things did not go according to plan, and the project disintegrated. Sankoh, however, along with two others, Abu Kanu and Rashid Mansaray, was disappointed by the project's failure, and remained loyal to the idea. Things were not, however, destined to work out and so the three wishful revolutionaries abandoned their ideas until later (Abdullah, 1998: 220 and Gberie, 2005: 51).

Eventually, Sankoh, Kanu and Mansaray were able to take up where they had left off and they joined up in Sierra Leone. A leader had not been determined yet, and the three were very much equally involved. They eventually moved to the hinterland, and this proved to be strategic in the sense that they opened the link between the soon-to-be RUF and Liberia's NPFL. It was by means of extensive travelling that the trio met Charles Taylor (Abdullah, 1998: 220).

Sankoh and his group made a deal with Taylor in 1989. These men would help Taylor in his fight to "liberate" Liberia. In return for this, Taylor agreed to provide them with a base to launch their armed struggle (Abdullah, 1998: 221). After this informal alliance with Taylor, the Revolutionary United Front was endorsed (Abdullah, 1998: 221 and Davies, 2000: 358). By the time of the invasion in 1991, Sankoh had become the leader of the rebel movement, and when Kanu and Mansaray questioned the

indiscriminate violence that the RUF was committing, Sankoh waited until he was strong enough to lead the incursion alone, and then he had them executed (Abdullah, 1998: 227).

The RUF rebellion, numbering approximately 20 000 men, women and children, (the numbers in the year 2000) initially began with only a few fighters (Davies, 2000: 358). However, recruits were relatively easy to come by, in the beginning. This was because many held deep-seated grievances against the ruling APC government who enforced many discriminatory policies against the people of the southern regions in Sierra Leone.

Chapter 3 explored the presence of youth, especially those who were armed, as a factor in the war. This was closely linked to the lumpen youth (Abdullah, 1998: 207 and McIntyre and Thusi, 2003: 74) discussed above. Another factor is the presence and participation of child soldiers in the war. Peters (2004: 6) argues that the youth had little choice in their potential involvement in the war as he says, "...voluntary conscription is not voluntary at all, but coerced by circumstances." Reno (2001: 5) reiterates this point (as mentioned above). Twum-Danso (2003: 30) once again confirms this by saying that the principal reasons that youth and children joined the war were so that they could survive. Children were viewed as being indispensable to the armed forces as they were easy to train, especially in the use of small and light arms. What is also important to note is that the rebel RUF was not the only party to the conflict that included child soldiers in its ranks. Evidence has been provided that children were used by almost all the main parties to the conflict. Aning and McIntyre (2005: 74) show that in testimonies of child combatants it became clear that children had fought for several factions. These included the Sierra Leonean Army, the RUF and RUF/AFRC forces as well as certain components of the Civil Defence Forces (Aning and McIntyre, 2005: 74).

The varying governments in Freetown fought against the RUF in union with certain civil defence groups such as local hunter groups (Adebajo, 2002: 82). The Kamajor militia played a large role in the war. The reason for their continuously increasing importance was the failure of the government troops to successfully retaliate against the RUF. Thus the civilians looked amongst themselves for forms of protection against the rebels. Kaldor (2006) speaks of the possibility of localized home guards

also arming themselves and becoming party to the conflict. This behaviour was very fitting of the Kamajors.

These units were organized around a core group of traditional hunters. Among the Mende people they were known as Kamajors, this hence became the term applied to all these groups during the war regardless of ethnic origin (Keen, 2005: 90). Initially beginning as a type of secret society throughout Sierra Leone, the Kamajors were licensed to carry weapons (specifically guns) due to their occupation of hunting. The Kamajor duty, with the onset of their involvement, extended to the protection of their communities (Gberie, 2005: 84). Kamajors were useful because they knew their local territory well.

Traditionally, the Kamajors had to be at least thirty years old. However, with the progression of the war, the notion “kamajor” was used to describe any form of civil defence organization. These often comprised members younger than thirty as well as people who were not skilled as hunters (Keen, 2005: 90).

A certain amount of superstition and mysteriousness accompanied the Kamajor image. This worked to their advantage in the fight against the rebels. Initially these civil defence units and the government forces worked together against the rebels. Despite this collaboration, the civil defence and government forces remained vulnerable to the RUF attacks (Keen, 2005: 90). It eventually seemed that the government forces had entered into a type of deal with the rebels, and from then on the civil defence, and particularly the Kamajors worked increasingly on their own. NPRC soldiers, especially, seemed to feel threatened by the involvement of the Kamajors in the war. This was possibly due to their own corrupt behaviour; for example looting villages for their own profit (Gberie, 2005: 85).

Over time, various local defence organizations appeared, especially from 1994 onwards. However, it was only in 1996 once a retired army officer, Captain Hinga Norman became the Deputy Minister of Defence that a more coordinated effort took place to recruit, train and arm the Kamajor militia (Gberie, 2005: 92 and Allen, 1999: 371). This was especially focused throughout the Southern and Eastern provinces of the country (Gberie, 2005: 86).

In 1995, with the arrival of Executive Outcomes (EO) onto the scene, the Kamajors became even more involved in the war. EO began incorporating large units of the Kamajor militia into their forces. Training programmes were set up to skill these civil defence units in the means of counter-insurgency (Gberie, 2005: 93).

In involving so many youth, and then the units such as the Kamajors in the war, a version of Reno's vague nationalism was being cultivated (Reno, 2001: 3). Weapons and military skill were being distributed throughout society and thus the youth was being armed, children were being forced to fight adults' wars, and civil defence units were developing their own forms of traditions and loyalty, against the RUF as well as against the government forces (Reno, 2001: 3 and Kaldor, 2006). The civilians were afraid, and in the absence of government-provided protection they arranged to take matters into their own hands. An example of this was in 1994 in Bo, the second largest city in Sierra Leone. A rebel attack took place, and the civilians were convinced that the government forces had been complicit in the attack. Ordinary citizens imposed a night time curfew in the city and where two soldiers had breached this curfew they were killed. As Gberie (2005: 88) states, this was probably the first time in history where ordinary citizens, not the government, had imposed such control. This was about the movement of those supposed to be their own soldiers, and supposed to be protecting them.

### **4.3 Local Public Actors**

Sierra Leone, at the time of the RUF invasion, in 1991, was a weak state without an efficient army. The APC government of President Momoh had been continuing in the same patrimonial and patronage-based continuum as Siaka Stevens' one party regime. Stevens had been in power from 1967 until 1985. In 1978 Stevens had the Constitution amended and he then proceeded to ban all other political parties besides his APC (Kposowa, 2006: 44). It was in 1985 that Joseph Momoh; Stevens' handpicked successor took over (US Department of State, 2007).

The 1980s saw economic growth coming to a standstill, and runaway inflation levels were becoming the norm (Kposowa, 2006: 45). The nature of the weak state in Sierra Leone was dealt with in extensive detail in Chapter 3. Despite this, however, it is

necessary to simply revisit the idea as it plays an explanatory role in the discussion of the virtually non-existent Sierra Leonean Army.

Breytenbach (2002: 7) has said that more than 85% of Africa's recent conflicts occurred in relatively poor, weak and non-democratic countries. MacKinley further substantiates this point by indicating that in general warlords tend to wait until a state has become sufficiently weak before they attack. The reason for this, as mentioned in the previous chapter, is that in doing this they are more guaranteed of facing little resistance by the government (MacKinley in Breytenbach, 2002: 7).

The APC, led by Stevens, intentionally worked to undermine the Sierra Leonean Army. This was done through the creation of the Special Security Division (SSD) initially known as the Internal Security Unit (ISU) (Zack-Williams, 1997: 374). This body's sole function was to silence and/or eliminate any opponents to the APC regime (Keen, 2005: 17 and Kposowa, 2006: 46). In creating this privatized security unit, it was Stevens himself who ultimately undermined the Sierra Leone Army and Police. Stevens disarmed the army, and kept them merely for ceremonial purposes. High-ranking army officials had to belong to the APC and Stevens generally treated them lavishly (Keen, 2005: 17). Although the higher-ranking army officials were receiving this kind of treatment, the average soldiers' salaries would remain unpaid (Keen, 2005: 32). While the generals tended to be treated well, it was a common occurrence that they would seize the soldiers' pay – even though this was already barely enough to survive on (Keen, 2005: 32). This combined with the intense feelings of demoralization was by no means conducive to repelling and fighting the RUF rebels when the war broke out in 1991 (Kposowa, 2006: 46).

Stevens also employed the standard lumpen youth in this ISU when it became necessary for a larger force to exert its influence against the population, i.e. at election times. Besides this, however, he neglected the Sierra Leonean youth. His failures to pay attention to the declining socioeconomic conditions in the country, as well as his lack of interest in the declining state of education resulted in a large group of society being anti-APC. These people (youth) were consequently willing to join any ranks so as to earn some sort of living.

President Momoh continued to enforce most of the methods initiated by Stevens. In 1987 however, after being pressurized by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, Momoh declared a state of economic emergency. He subsequently sent the army out into the rural areas to enforce the new emergency measures. This was ineffective as the positioning of soldiers worked to establish a culture of economic agendas within the army (Keen, 2005: 32). The soldiers began to realize that after having been restrained and treated in such an unjust fashion for so long, they could now profit from their new reign. Keen (2005: 34) investigates this issue further and illustrates how the army gained much power and independence from their new illegal tactics. Whilst realizing that they had much to gain if the status quo was retained, motives developed within the army to keep things the way they were and to take as much advantage of their newly discovered “freedom” as possible.

The RUF invasion (23 March 1991) took the Momoh government by surprise and the initial response was to increase the size of the army. The problem arose where, in the APC’s haste to recruit, those recruited ended up being very similar to the rebels. The APC government armed this initially demoralized military. The arms that were given to the soldiers for the purposes of counter-insurgency tactics against the RUF were stored and later used to oust the APC government from power (Kandeh, 1996: 390). The Momoh government underwent severe criticism by the civilians, and the army. It was believed that the APC government was profiting from the war and that they thus wished to prolong it (Kandeh, 1996: 390).

A group of soldiers who had become much aggrieved with the states’ long-enduring harsh treatment of the army decided to approach government in order to address these grievances. This group, on their arrival in Freetown, was met with armed supporters of the weary APC. After a few skirmishes, and upon hearing that Momoh and his cronies had fled, the young soldiers were left in control of the government. Captain Valentine Strasser was made the new Head of State, and the National Provincial Ruling Council (NPRC) was formed (Keen, 2005: 94 and Meredith, 2005: 565).

The NPRC initially announced that their junta’s aim was to “...be a quick end to the war, rehabilitation of the battered country, and a return to civil rule” (Gberie, 2005: 69). The Sierra Leonean public largely supported the NPRC as they felt that this new

government would restore peace and bring a new beginning to the country (Richards, 1996: 9). However, the NPRC was poorly educated and not experienced enough to manage their new positions. Post-coup and succumbing to the temptations of wealth, the NPRC soon became as corrupt as the previous regime. The NPRC entered into the practice of looting the homes of politicians and businessmen and they claimed to have retrieved approximately 41 billion Leones (Gberie, 2005: 74). However, despite the earlier rhetoric about the corrupt and exploitative behaviour of the APC, the NPRC was soon to follow in their footsteps. NPRC members began to engage in their own fraudulent and corrupt activities and deceptively tried to fill their own bank accounts (Meredith, 2005: 565). Again, like so many of their predecessors, the NPRC tried to get involved in the diamond trade and offensives were launched against the RUF in the diamond mining regions of the country (Meredith, 2005: 565).

In 1994 the NPRC launched a drive to increase the number of soldiers in the country to fight the RUF. These soldiers were not compensated sufficiently, however, and this resulted in the notion of 'sobels'; soldiers by day, rebels by night. In early 1995 the NPRC made an offer of peace to the RUF threatening them with military action if they did not comply. However, the RUF ignored this and overran large diamond mines in the eastern regions of the country. In February 1995 the RUF rebels advanced on Freetown. The NPRC placed much reliance on the large contingent of Nigerians stationed there. However, this proved insufficient and the NPRC entered into a contract with South African based Executive Outcomes (EO), a private military company (Hirsch, 2001: 116). Within one week EO had cleared Freetown of rebels, and then began retraining army units as well as integrating them. EO assisted the Kamajors in becoming a formidable militia (Meredith, 2005). 27 April 1995 saw Strasser lifting the ban on political parties in Sierra Leone, and offering amnesty to the RUF. The RUF did not, however, respond to this, in early 1996 EO retook certain large mines that had been captured by the RUF.

Strasser and his NPRC were placed under much pressure, by the many civic organizations and other parties, to hold elections. Thus in 1995 Strasser agreed to this. However, due to the extreme profits that the NPRC was making out of the war, as well as their unpopularity, Strasser indicated that he would stand as a candidate for the presidency. This ultimately meant that he intended to retain power. However,

Strasser had pushed his luck in threatening to fire his colleagues if they did not support him, and his deputy, General Julius Maada Bio, deposed him in 1996. Maada Bio allowed the election campaign to proceed (Meredith, 2005: 566).

The RUF launched a terror campaign so as to prevent the Sierra Leonean citizens from voting in the election. Despite this, however, many people did still vote. President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, the leader of the Sierra Leonean People's Party (SLPP) was elected (Meredith, 2005: 566). Kabbah had good intentions for Sierra Leone, but the country was in such turmoil that he faced tremendous difficulties. A significant obstacle to Kabbah's wishes for peace was that due to the provisions of the Abidjan Accord as well as increasing pressure from the IMF, Kabbah was forced to terminate the contract with EO in order to receive aid (Francis, 1999: 327).

In December 1996 Kabbah succeeded in getting the RUF to sign the Abidjan Peace Agreement (Meredith, 2005 and Fithen and Richards, 2005: 120) – this will be discussed in more detail below. This was, however, an unsuccessful attempt, and Kabbah's government only managed to last fourteen months (Meredith, 2005: 569 and Keen, 2005: 202). In May of 1997 a group of soldiers stormed the Pademba Road Prison in Freetown to release Major Johnny Paul Koroma, and a coup was staged. Koroma's dissident soldiers seized the radio station and announced the formation of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). Koroma's AFRC were again (like the NPRC) uneducated and they had no real strategy other than to seize power. Main grievances were that the army was granted such a low status, and that Kabbah gave much precedence to the Kamajors. Violent clashes took place, and during these battles many government buildings were totally ruined. Thousands of soldiers took over Freetown, shooting, raping and looting. In addition to this chaos, a few hundred prisoners from the Pademba Road Prison were roaming the streets as well. President Kabbah fled to neighbouring Guinea and civilians and foreigners alike fled the country (Meredith, 2005: 569).

The AFRC entered into a deal with Sankoh and the RUF (Penfold, 2005: 551). The RUF was offered four places on the AFRC, and Sankoh (although he was being held in detention in Nigeria) was made the vice chairman (Meredith, 2005). Consequently, the RUF walked, virtually unresisted, into Freetown.

After Kabbah fled to Guinea, he asked the Nigerian force, in the name of ECOMOG, to help restore him to power in Freetown (Adebajo, 2002: 87). During the AFRC coup, a large number of Nigerians had been wounded or captured by the RUF. ECOWAS tried to reverse the coup through diplomatic rather than military means. Sanctions were imposed on the military junta in Freetown, and the international community refused to recognize the military regime, maintaining that President Kabbah was Sierra Leone's legitimate leader (Adebajo, 2002: 87).

In 1997, Koroma broke off all contact with ECOWAS. After that the ECOWAS foreign ministers determined that the only way to rid Sierra Leone of the AFRC/RUF regime would be to use military force. Peace talks led up to the conclusion of the Conakry Agreement on 23 October 1997. However, more clashes took place and in 1998, after the second battle for Freetown, the AFRC/RUF left the city, and Kabbah returned (Meredith, 2005: 570).

President Kabbah tried, with the help of international aid and the protection of the Nigerian forces, to restore the government. Sankoh, who was imprisoned in Nigeria was sentenced to death, and in response to this the RUF launched their "Operation No Living Thing" terror campaign to try and ensure Sankoh's release. The RUF approached the capital, and the third battle for Freetown began in January 1999 (Meredith, 2005: 570). After the terrifying rampage of amputations, mutilations and massacring, the RUF withdrew from the capital taking hundreds of abducted children with them (Meredith, 2005: 570). Keen (2005: 248) compellingly says "Neither the new army nor the Kamajors nor ECOMOG had been able to defend the capital."

After the January 1999 battle for Freetown, many international roleplayers began exerting much pressure on President Kabbah to enter into a peace agreement with the RUF. Sankoh was released from his detention in Nigeria to attend the peace talks. Finally the Lomé Agreement was signed in July 1999 (Hirsch, 2001: 126 and Omotola, 2007: 38).

#### **4.4 Private Military Companies**

As previously mentioned, while the NPRC and Strasser were in power, they contracted the services of Executive Outcomes, a South African Private Military Company (Keen, 2005: 151 and Meredith, 2005: 565). As they had a reputation for efficiency in Angola, military functions were outsourced to them. Tony Buckingham of the Branch-Heritage Group introduced the NPRC to EO. The scope of the EO's contract included training, providing military logistics and conducting offensive operations against the rebel movement, the RUF (Francis, 1999: 326). EO was widely known for its successful military operations against the UNITA rebels in Angola. Most of EO's employees comprised former South African Special Forces and former South African Defence Force (SADF) personnel. The EO contract began in May 1995 and was expensive; it cost the government approximately US\$15 million (Gberie, 2005: 93). However, because Strasser's NPRC did not have that amount, the Branch-Heritage group agreed to finance the operation in exchange for future mining concessions (Gberie, 2005: 93).

Once in Sierra Leone, EO launched their training of selected army units in counter-insurgency. Kaldor (2006) speaks of the tendency of governments (or those on their behalf), in these new wars, to make use of counter-insurgency methods. In addition to this, large units of the civil defence Kamajor militia were incorporated into a "formidable fighting machine" (Gberie, 2005: 93). When EO arrived, it made certain that it was sufficiently equipped with Landrovers, Boeing aeroplanes, helicopters and much more. The (mostly Nigerian) ECOMOG forces assisted EO in the Northern region of the country. The Kamajor militia then led EO into the Eastern regions on a so-called "search and destroy" mission (Francis, 1999: 327 and Gberie, 2005: 94). The end of 1995 saw EO significantly reducing the RUF's activities.

In 1996 EO added to its forces, and began a ground assault against the RUF after already having cut the rebels off from a large source of diamonds. EO's basic functions were to protect the diamond fields and to secure the capital city of Freetown.

The stability that EO provided to the region played a large part in the success of the democratic elections that occurred in 1996. Furthermore, the RUF agreed, for the first time, to enter into some sort of negotiations with the government (Keen, 2005: 152). This led to the Abidjan Peace Accord that was signed on 30 November 1996 between the RUF and the newly elected President Kabbah of the SLPP (Francis, 1999: 327). Coincidentally, one of the conditions that the RUF imposed on the signing of the peace accord was that the government would terminate its contract with EO. This stipulation, combined with external pressure from the IMF meant that EO's time of service in Sierra Leone had come to an end (Francis, 1999: 327; Keen, 2005: 159 and Zack-Williams, 1997: 377). This opened the way for United Nations peacekeepers and British forces sometime later.

In 1997, 14 months after Kabbah became President, the AFRC military coup came to pass. This junta, which aligned itself with the RUF, was internationally isolated, and remained unrecognized as a legitimate government. President Kabbah's government, which was in exile in Guinea, hired the London-based Sandline International (like EO, also a private military company) to help restore the civilian government to Freetown (Francis, 1999: 328). Sandline appears to have played an advisory and logistical role in overthrowing the junta, it also assisted in the training and arming of certain Kamajor units, loyal to the ousted government (Keen, 2005: 216). It became apparent that Sandline guided ECOMOG's planning for the assault on the military regime in Freetown, as well as all the air support. In addition to this, Sandline shipped approximately 35 tonnes of weapons and ammunition in from Bulgaria (Keen, 2005: 216 and Francis, 1999: 328). However, once these ammunitions had arrived, the ECOMOG forces had already succeeded in overthrowing the military junta (Francis, 1999: 328). Despite this, however, Sandline played an important role in the restoration of Kabbah's government in 1998.

#### **4.5 Other International Actors**

President Momoh and Sierra Leone had offered the Economic Community of West African States' (ECOWAS) Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) a base from which to attack Liberia in their fight against Charles Taylor. Taylor never forgave this move, and he promised that Sierra Leone would "taste war" as a consequence of their

action (Adebajo, 2002: 82). The Liberian warlord lived up to his promise by supporting the RUF invasion of Sierra Leone on 23 March 1991. In response to the war, President Momoh increased the size of the army. ECOMOG forces were sent to assist the Sierra Leone Army in the fight against the rebels, but they did not really play a significant role in the conflict until the ousting of President Kabbah and his regime by the AFRC junta in 1997 (Adebajo, 2002: 87 and Malan *et al*, 2002: 17).

Shortly after President Kabbah was elected in 1996 the Abidjan Peace Accord was signed between Kabbah's government and the RUF. After the elections, Kabbah was protected by Nigerian troops (in the name of ECOMOG) and there were approximately 900 such troops in Sierra Leone at that time. In 1997 army dissidents staged a coup and Major Johnny Paul Koroma took control. This junta was known as the AFRC, and they soon entered into relations with the rebel RUF. Kabbah fled the country, and requested that the Nigerians help to restore him to power (Adebajo, 2002: 87).

Initially diplomatic means to restore the old government were attempted and ECOWAS imposed sanctions on the junta. The British government, in opposition to the junta halted all aid to Sierra Leone and suspended the country from the Commonwealth (Keen, 2005: 212). In October of 1997 the United Nations also imposed an embargo was placed on the sale and supply of oil and arms to Sierra Leone (Adebajo, 2002: 88).

After increasing pressure, Koroma terminated communications with ECOWAS. A month later, the ECOMOG peacekeepers in Freetown were labelled ECOMOG II and they secured the capital while Nigeria launched air-strikes and bombings directed against the junta. Thereafter, the Conakry Agreement was entered into and the AFRC/RUF agreed to the restoration of Kabbah's government by May 1998 (Keen, 2005: 216). Soon after the deal, Koroma proceeded to undermine virtually all the clauses in the agreement. Weapons and ammunition were accumulated and vicious attacks were launched against the ECOMOG forces. ECOMOG continued bombing the capital, and this led to unease among the member states of ECOWAS. These states felt that Nigeria had been acting unilaterally and that the ECOMOG forces had the

duty of enforcing the embargo against the junta, and not employing force against the regime (Adebajo, 2002: 88).

Early 1998 saw the Nigerian forces/ECOMOG attack the junta. Their reasoning for this was that the AFRC/RUF had been launching attacks on ECOMOG. The fighting was concentrated, and the junta was forced from Freetown. Kabbah and his government were restored. This has been deemed as ECOMOG's finest victory in Sierra Leone (Adebajo, 2002: 88; Keen, 2005: 216 and Gberie, 2005: 116).

In the next few months following Kabbah's reinstatement to power, ECOMOG re-established control over almost two-thirds of Sierra Leone. However, with time the AFRC/RUF forces made their way back to the capital and in January 1999 the third battle for Freetown took place. Once again ECOMOG was involved and it eventually succeeded in forcing the rebels to withdraw from Freetown after fighting that endured six weeks. Much criticism was made of the ECOMOG troops, and ECOMOG was also accused of having committed abuses (Keen, 2005: 244 and Adebajo, 2002: 96).

After the January 1999 incident, once the rebels had been chased from the capital and a relative stable atmosphere arose (under the circumstances) President Kabbah was pressured by the international community to enter into peace talks with Sankoh and his RUF (Keen, 2005: 250 and Gberie, 2005: 157). Sankoh was released from prison (where he had been awaiting his death sentence) and the negotiations were conducted in Lomé, Togo (Omotola, 2007: 38). This Lomé Accord declared an end to the hostilities and granted amnesty to all of the parties involved (Gberie, 2005: 157). Sankoh was made chairman of a commission on strategic minerals, as well as being given the office of vice-president of Sierra Leone (Gberie, 2005: 158 and Reno, 2001b: 221).

In August 1999 ECOMOG began withdrawing its forces from Sierra Leone. At this time a United Nations Observer Mission (UNOMSIL) had been present in the country, but they had played a very minimal role. Thus, in order to replace the ECOMOG troops, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was created (Adebajo, 2002: 100). Kamidza *et al* (2005: 40) state that UNAMSIL was

especially created to build the capacity of security service organizations in the country.

The UNAMSIL force was made up of troops from Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria, Kenya, India, Jordan, Bangladesh and Zambia. Only a small number of military observers were to come from developed countries (Malan *et al*, 2002: 22). The deployment took long, and ceasefire violations were commonplace. Despite the initially positive and optimistic feeling that surrounded the arrival of UN troops in Sierra Leone, the UNAMSIL forces were targeted on several occasions. They were forcibly disarmed themselves by the RUF and army dissidents (Hough, 2007: 13). Thus, due to security concerns, the UN Security Council made the decision to expand the UNAMSIL mission from 6,000 to 11,000. The forces were strengthened again, at a later stage, to 17,500 (Malan *et al*, 2002: 22 and Malan *et al* 2003: 53). UNAMSIL's mandate included the following:

- The provision of security at key locations and government buildings, especially in Freetown, large intersections and airports;
- The facilitation of the free flow and movement of people, goods and humanitarian assistance along specific access roads;
- The provision of security in and at all sites of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes;
- The coordination with and assistance to the Sierra Leone law enforcement agencies in execution of their duties;
- The protection of weapons, ammunition and other military equipment collected from ex-combatants, as well as assistance in their subsequent disposal (Neethling, 2007: 85).

Once the last of the ECOMOG troops had left Sierra Leone, in May 2000, increased pressure was placed on the RUF to disarm. The UNAMSIL forces then attempted to open their first DDR centre in the diamond district of Koidu (Keen, 2005: 262). However, the RUF did not approve of this plan and consequently they killed seven peacekeepers and took five hundred more hostage (Health and Human Rights, 2000: 2068). These actions by the rebels consequently ended the Lomé Agreement of 1999 (Hough, 2007: 13).

Meredith (2005: 571) indicates that to protect the UN troops from defeat, and from humiliation, Britain intervened in Sierra Leone in May 2000. They came fully armed with paratroops, special forces, combat aircraft, attack helicopters and warships. The British troops established training programmes for the new Sierra Leone army soldiers and they helped them to fight the RUF (Hough, 2007: 13). With the arrival of the first troops in Sierra Leone, the civilians organized a mass protest demanding the release of the UN peacekeepers. A crowd of approximately 30 000 people approached Sankoh's house, and with that his bodyguards opened fire while he escaped (Meredith, 2005: 571). The British intervention was the key factor in turning the tables on the RUF (Hough, 2007: 14).

After Britain's military intervention, much international effort was placed into restoring order in Sierra Leone and bringing a conclusive end to the war. British personnel occupied key posts in government, the central bank, the police and the army. At the same time as this the UN peacekeeping force was increased to 18 000. After Sankoh's arrest the RUF splintered. Then, in November 2000 the British forces were able to get the RUF to sign a ceasefire agreement in Abuja (Hough, 2007: 14), and in January 2002 Kabbah declared that the war was over (Meredith, 2005: 572).

#### **4.6 Assessment**

Several of the actors discussed in this chapter became so involved in the Sierra Leonean conflict purely because the conflict became so chaotic. This was especially true with regards to the RUF's unrelenting attempts to gain control of the capital, Freetown. Three such battles took place with the last one, in January 1999 being the worst. These battles for Freetown were significant because the RUF did not want to capture the capital so much for reasons based in political ideology. Rather the rebels' motivations were related to diamonds – the lootable resource (Le Billon, 2001: 569 and Silberfein, 2004: 217).

The RUF used the diamonds in order to procure arms. The capital played a necessary role in getting the diamonds out of the country.

Due to the extreme and violent nature of the RUF's tactics combined with the battles for Freetown, as well as the lack of an effective and reliable army, external assistance was called upon. This was most notable in the form of EO, ECOMOG and Sandline International.

After the Lomé Peace Agreement was signed in 1999, the ECOMOG forces were replaced by the peacekeeping UNAMSIL. However, despite this the RUF continued its fighting. These rebels went so far as to target the UNAMSIL troops. In response to this Britain intervened and the methods they used were such that the RUF was crushed and subsequently fragmented.

Apart from these external (international) interventions, the nature of local actors (whether private or public) is noteworthy. The reason for this is that it became apparent how the warlords and rebel groups functioned.

Reno's vague nationalism (2001: 3) was clearly evident in the development and use of certain actors such as the Kamajors, the armed youth and children.

The weak nature of Sierra Leone's state, and hence the army was also crucial to take note of. This is because it was largely due to this that the Sierra Leonean government could not effectively fight the RUF.

The poor treatment of the army led to many grievances (Collier, 2000: 96) that ultimately culminated in the 'sobel' phenomenon as well as the two coups that occurred in 1992 and 1997 by the NPRC and AFRC respectively.

Through this exploration of the various actors in the Sierra Leonean conflict it has been apparent that certain parts of the theory on new wars have been competently applicable to the facts at hand.

Chapter 5 will synthesize all the aspects of the war, discussed previously, with the literature of new wars. It is in this way that a conclusion can be formed as to whether the Sierra Leonean war was indeed a case of new war or not.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION**

### **5.1 Aim and Main Findings of the Study**

The main aspects under investigation in this study were the ‘New War’ theories and their applicability to the case study of the Sierra Leonean conflict that occurred from 1991 to 2002. The writings of Mary Kaldor (2006), William Reno (2001) and Paul Collier (2000) were the main works used regarding ‘New Wars’. Key research goals included describing the eleven year conflict that ravaged Sierra Leone and subsequently assessing whether New War theory could be found to be applicable or not. This was done by way of breaking the conflict into factors and actors that were then analysed and assessed along the ‘New War’ framework.

In Chapter Two a detailed discussion was provided of the varying ‘New War’ perspectives from Kaldor, and then the more Africa-specific writings of Reno and Collier. The main purpose of this chapter was to provide the theoretical basis and context of- and for the remainder of the research project. The information contained in this chapter proved the foundations for this research project. Varying characteristics were provided for each of the three authors. Under Kaldor, characteristics such as new actors, the mode of warfare and the war economy were discussed. The characteristics, provided by Reno, were vague nationalism, the manipulation of the markets, armed youths and commercial contacts. Lastly, Collier’s work indicated that greed and grievance, primary commodities, low education, a large proportion of young men and economic decline were his defining characteristics. Chapter Two explored these sometimes similar, sometimes differing features and this knowledge was then made use of in the following two chapters.

In Chapter Three the importance and relevance of the various factors to the conflict were dealt with. This included a review and assessment of the economic as well as socio-political factors to the war. Theory supplied by Kaldor, Reno and Collier was mostly supportive of the economic factors, however, certain elements of the theory were also found to be fitting for the socio-political factors. The economic factors dealt with in this chapter included the issues surrounding poverty and diamonds in Sierra

Leone, as well as the increasing role of the criminal networks. This chapter found Kaldor's 'globalisation' and 'war economy'; Reno's 'commercial contacts' and 'manipulation of markets' and then Collier's 'unemployed and poorly educated youth,' 'greed,' 'the commodity boom' and 'economic decline' to be relevant to the economic factors in the Sierra Leonean war.

The socio-political factors that were discussed included, and were related to the weak Sierra Leonean state, poverty and its resultant impact on the youth, low levels of education and high levels of unemployment, the nature of small and light arms in the conflict, and finally, child soldiers resulting in a "soldierless" war. Kaldor's new actors and mode of warfare; Reno's vague nationalism and armed youths and then Collier's grievances, low levels of education and high levels of unemployment were found to be applicable to these abovementioned socio-political factors. Hence it was established that most of the Kaldor, Reno and Collier characteristics were applicable to the economic dimension of the war, however, certain of them did fit neatly into the socio-political factors of the war.

In examining these factors of the Sierra Leonean war, together with the theoretical perspectives, Chapter Three reiterated the fact that theory remains just that. An ideal-type classification will seldom, if ever, be all encompassing of a real-life scenario. Despite this though, and with the study's usage of Africa-specific authors as well, it became clear that the varying characteristics of the authors were reasonably appropriate to the Sierra Leonean case.

Since the purpose of this study was to analyse the Sierra Leonean conflict (and then apply the new war theories); the nature and role of the various actors was discussed in Chapter Four. It was due to the complex nature of the war that so many various actors, and interventions were party to the war from 1991 to 2002. Chapter Four divided the discussion of the actors into four distinctive categories. These were: local private actors, local public actors, private military companies and other international actors.

It was due to the failed nature of the Sierra Leonean state that so many actors were party to the war, whether they were local to Sierra Leone or linked to global interventions. The nature of the war resulted in links and relationships being formed between certain actors. Chapter Four details the varying actors (without entering into

lengthy discussions of the origins of foreign interventions) and the role that they played in the Sierra Leonean war together with an examination of the practical aspects of their presence in Sierra Leone.

Key findings of Chapter Four were that the type and nature of the actors in the Sierra Leonean war were largely determined by the potential economic benefits of the war. The warlords and rebel RUF supplied the study with a prime example of this: although claiming grievances and political-ideological reasons for the RUF invasion of Sierra Leone on 23 March 1991, any existing ideology soon disintegrated. The RUF were principally known to persist in their attacks due to great economic gains. The diamond fields and the capital were their biggest targets. Le Billion (2001) discusses the 'lootability of diamonds'. The RUF's motivations were largely based on this fact.

Due to the extreme violence practiced by the RUF, Sierra Leone required external assistance. This took the form of private military companies and foreign interventions.

Chapter Four highlights the entrance into- and exit from the war by the various actors. The different peace attempts were briefly mentioned insofar as to expand on the chronology, as well as to refer to the necessity and circumstances surrounding interventions such as ECOMOG, UNAMSIL and the British forces.

Chapter Four succeeded in showing that certain parts of the 'New War' theory are indeed sufficiently applicable to the case of Sierra Leone. However, it remains crucial to remember that (as stated above) no theory will fit a case study entirely.

In Chapters Three and Four the practical analysis of the factors and actors of the war was carried out. In so doing, it became evident that to achieve the most fitting application of New War theory to Sierra Leone, it was necessary to synthesize the works of the three authors so that a broader understanding, and application, of the theory could ensue. The result of this approach was a more rounded and complete understanding of this contemporary style of conflict.

Chapter One illustrated that a gap existed surrounding the amalgamation of resource war authors together with those from the New War school of thought. This study addressed these issues by means of incorporating the works of resource war, and political economy authors such as Renner, Le Billion and Hirsch (to name a few) into the discussions based on the New War theories of Kaldor, Reno and Collier. It was through this that a broader and all-encompassing perspective on the war in Sierra Leone could be formed.

It was found, that despite the significant relevance of the resource war authors, the Sierra Leonean conflict proved, in this study's opinion, to indeed be a West African example of a New War. Certainly, not all of the features were met i.e. Kaldor's emphasis on identity as being a main factor in the new wars. However, despite this, the case proved to be generally covered by Kaldor's new actors, globalisation, mode of warfare and war economy; Reno's vague nationalism, manipulation of markets, commercial contacts and armed youth; and finally, Collier's characteristics of greed, grievance, primary commodities, economic decline and low education and a large proportion of young men.

## **5.2 Success of the Research Methodology**

The limitations of the research methodology were inherent to the nature of the study. Thus, because this study was limited with regards to time and space not all angles of the Sierra Leonean conflict could be covered.

It is also important to note that this study did not allow for a more hands-on approach to research and data-collection. Fieldwork could not be conducted, as it was neither possible, nor feasible to travel to Sierra Leone for purposes of physically collecting such data. Thus, reliance was placed on, mostly, secondary sources. This resulted in this study being characteristically literature driven. Fortunately, many of the authors whose work was used in this study, and who have written specifically on the Sierra Leone war, had, themselves undertaken research trips to Sierra Leone. Here they conducted interviews and hence much of the case literature did involve a large proportion of practically obtained information, albeit secondary.

Had this study been conducted under different conditions, i.e. a longer time span with the possibility of travel and field research in Sierra Leone, it is believed that a more extensive and comprehensive account might have been delivered on the conflict.

As previously stated, this thesis primarily aimed to showcase Sierra Leone as an example of New War, according to Kaldor, Reno and Collier. In addition to this it was hoped that the gap between resource war and new war writers could be narrowed.

This study did manage, to a certain degree, to bring the two schools of thought together. It did at least prove that the two schools are not as far apart as was previously believed to be the case.

In retrospect, and after much consideration, this study concurs that the Sierra Leone conflict has been well documented. Although this may prove to be a deterrent for future studies (such as this one), it should also be noted (as mentioned before) that this study aimed to address a gap in the literature. It is believed that this was successfully undertaken.

### **5.3 Relevance of the Theoretical Concepts**

Chapter One provided conceptualisations of both ‘conventional’ (modern) war and then ‘New Wars’. The purpose of including a conceptualisation of ‘conventional’ warfare in this study was in order to set a brief standard of what (precisely) New Wars are not.

‘Conventional war’ is based on the work of Clausewitz. The notion of conventional war was relevant to this research project as these wars were typically interstate. In addition to this, in terms of Clausewitz; three levels constituted war: the state, the army and the people. It is through these varying levels that it can be established that ‘New War’ is different. This is because with ‘New War’ such levels do not exist.

Hence, after noting the importance of having a theoretical point of departure such as this one, the study was able to move towards a conceptualisation of these New Wars. It would be somewhat futile to, now, enter into a discussion regarding the relevance of the theoretical concept New Wars as this is precisely what this research project was based upon. The applicability of New Wars onto the Sierra Leonean case was established through the discussions entered into in Chapters Three and Four.

Kaldor's (2006) 'New Wars' were relevant insofar as her discussion regarding the blurring of the distinctions between war, organized crime and large-scale human rights violations. This has mostly to do with the mode of warfare. Kaldor also discussed the way in which warfare was carried out, together with the economics of war. Both of these were highly relevant and applicable to Sierra Leone.

Where, however, Kaldor talks about the role identity in the wars it was apparent that this was neither relevant nor applicable to the Sierra Leonean conflict. This highlighted the difference between Kaldor's New War theory and then the works of Reno (2001) and Collier (2000).

Reno's (2001) perceptions of New War were very relevant to this case study as his points were found to be highly applicable. These were vague nationalism, commercial contacts, the manipulation of markets and armed youth.

Paul Collier (2000) was found to be largely concerned with economic factors. Collier begins his discussion by delving into the notions of greed and grievance. Collier further looks at the role of primary commodities as a determining factor in the nature of the war. Le Billon (2001) also places lengthy emphasis on the resource factor. Together with his discussion of the commodity boom, Collier lists low levels of education and a large proportion of young men as well as a state of economic decline in the country as potential reasons for conflict. These have been viewed as being highly relevant and appropriate to the discussions at hand.

It was through the analyses of the factors and actors in the Sierra Leonean war (Chapters Three and Four) that this study determined the theoretical concept of New Wars to be highly applicable.

## 5.4 Lessons Learnt

In the initial stages of this study it was believed that Mary Kaldor's (2006) work on 'New Wars' was potentially going to be wholly applicable and relevant to the Sierra Leonean war (1991 – 2002). However, the opposite has been proved, Although most of Kaldor's characteristics were deemed to be relevant to Sierra Leone, her views were sometimes overstated especially as identity formed a large portion of Kaldor's New Wars. This was not exactly the case in Sierra Leone. In addition, it is believed that economic, and the resource-driven side of the war was far more relevant than what was initially believed to be the case.

Many warlords and rebel groups claim, in initiating attacks, that their motives are "legitimate" and that they enter into such actions on the basis of grievances. Often this proves to be nothing more than a cover for what was really a greed-inspired rebellion. Greed, which is totally illegitimate, has proved, especially in Sierra Leone, to have been the principal reason for the long duration of the war. Foday Sankoh and his RUF may have initiated conflict on the basis of grievance. But they may also have attracted recruits and supporters based on this notion, however any semblance of ideology was soon to disappear and be replaced by raw greed for the diamonds in the country.

Chapter One tells that the movie *Blood Diamond* (2006), although rather accurate in what it portrays, emphasizes the greed-factor, and the diamonds, as the sole reason for the war. This research project has, indeed, shown that many more reasons were cause for (at least) the origin of the war. Despite this, however, the diamonds remain to have been primary in the duration of the war. Sadly we acknowledge that the human fault of greediness was largely the cause of the suffering of far too many innocent Sierra Leoneans. Despite this, however, we do not disregard the fact that a number of interrelated factors inherently drove the Sierra Leonean conflict.

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