

**AN ASSESSMENT OF MULTI-PARTY
ELECTIONS IN POST-CONFLICT COUNTRIES
IN AFRICA: THE CASE OF SIERRA LEONE**

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LEGON

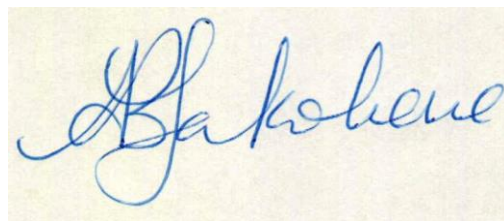
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DECLARATION

I, PAUL NORTEY DOWUONA, hereby declare that except for materials quoted or cited from other sources which has been duly acknowledged, this dissertation and the interpretations drawn therein are my original work under the supervision of Dr. Afua Boatemaa Yakohene. No part of it has been published or submitted anywhere else for any other purpose.



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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project work to my family, Ampofowaa – my beloved wife and my two boys Nii Noi and Nii Narku, for their unending support towards my Masters education.

To my parents Samuel & Maud Dowuona, as well as my siblings Naaki and Nortei for their advice and role they played in completing my studies.

To all my extended family members, colleagues at work and in school, as well as friends in and out of the country, thank you for your encouragement during this study – God bless you.

To all the people who volunteered information and their time during this work in Sierra Leone, and whose desire is to see a better Sierra Leone, keep the dream alive and it shall materialize.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADP	-	Alliance Democratic Party
ANC	-	African National Congress
APC	-	All People's Congress
C4C	-	Coalition for Change
CAR	-	Central African Republic
CDA	-	Citizens Democratic Party
CDP	-	Citizens Democratic Party
CFR	-	Council on Foreign Relations
CSO	-	Civil Society Organization
EC	-	Electoral Commission
ECOMOG	-	ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitory Group
ECOWAS	-	Economic Community of West African States
HRWI	-	Human Rights Watch International
IEBC	-	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
IGR	-	Institute of Governance Reform
MDC	-	Movement for Democratic Change
MPLA	-	Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
NASA	-	National Super Alliance
NDA	-	National Democratic Alliance
NDC	-	National Democratic Congress
NECSL	-	National Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone
NEW	-	National Election Watch
NGC	-	National Grand Coalition
NPD	-	National Progressive Democrats
NPP	-	New Patriotic Party

NURP	-	National Unity and Reconciliation Party
OAU	-	Organization of African Unity
ODM	-	Orange Democratic Movement
PLP	-	Peace and Liberation Party
PMDC	-	People's Movement for Democratic Change
RNIP	-	Republic National Independent Party
RUF	-	Revolutionary United Front
RUFP	-	Revolutionary United Front Party
SADR	-	Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic
SLJA	-	Sierra Leone Journalist Association
SLPP	-	Sierra Leone Peoples Party
UDM	-	United Democratic Movement
UN	-	United Nations
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
UNPP	-	United National People's Party
UP	-	Unity Party
WANEP	-	West Africa Network for Peace Building

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ABSTRACT

This study assesses how post-conflict countries in Africa fare when they transition into democracy through the vehicle of multi-party elections. The study, particularly, focuses on Sierra Leone which was ravaged by a protracted civil war which started in 1991 and lasted till 2002. Using a methodology that combines primary and secondary sources of data, the study seeks to answer four questions bordering on the nature of multi-party elections in post-conflict Sierra Leone; sociopolitical effects of multi-party elections in post-conflict Sierra Leone; challenges of multi-party elections in post-conflict Sierra Leone and the future of multi-party elections in post-conflict Sierra Leone. The findings show that Sierra Leone has been quite successful in maintaining its peace and stability through the conduct of multi-party elections. For example, multi-party elections have opened the space for all actors, including ex-combatants, to legitimately seek power. Quiet, significantly, the country has successfully conducted four general elections (2002; 2007; 2012 and 2018) which have resulted in the smooth transfer of power, from incumbent governments to opposition parties, on two occasions (2007 and 2018). Even though the study also found that there are some lingering challenges, particularly regarding high unemployment among the youth and low representation of women in governance, most people interviewed for the study remain optimistic that there are bright prospects for multi-party elections and multi-party democracy in Sierra Leone.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Research Problem

The spread of the third wave of democratization to Africa in the early 1990s marked substantial change in the political history of the continent, according to Van de Walle.¹ This was the era when most countries had emerged from periods of long conflicts of war and coups d'état. Coming from these periods of wars and coups meant that resources to develop the economies were lacking. Thus, Africa in her bid to revive her fortunes, had to turn to the West and other highly developed countries for support. Some of this support came with certain conditionalities for democratic reforms as noted by Larry Diamond.² One of such reforms was the need for the countries to organize multi-party elections to establish legitimate governments. As a result, many African countries were, more or less, pressured into toeing the line of the West irrespective of ideological differences. Therefore, from the 1990s, as the National Intelligence Council³ has reported, many countries within the sub-Saharan region embraced the concept of multi-party elections albeit with some initial feet dragging.

Lyons⁴ has argued, that for post-conflict countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the main objective for embracing multi-party elections was the termination of war. Indeed, for most post-conflict countries, the issue of conducting elections was essential to ending the period of conflict and charting a new path to stability and development. Lyons further expatiates that international and multilateral and bilateral donors made loans and other forms of assistance available for reconstruction only after post-conflict elections had been held.

Before 1990, there were only a few democracies on the continent of Africa and those were mainly confined to sparsely populated countries like the Cape Verde, Mauritius, and Botswana. However, by 2007, Freedom House⁵ classified about half of all African states as democratic regimes where citizens could choose and replace their leaders in reasonably free and fair elections. This, no doubt, offered some significant degrees of personal and political freedoms. It can be argued that even in states where the democratic processes were deemed to be dubious – with charges of electoral malpractices, corruption, and incumbency abuse – civil society groups and the media were able to champion the cause for more freedoms as noted by Larry Diamond.⁶

It is instructive to point out that many of the electoral democracies that emerged after 1990, including Benin, Mali, Ghana and South Africa have remained resilient for more than two decades. In the case of Ghana, after almost two decades of military rule under Jerry Rawlings, the country emerged as one of the shining examples of democracy on the continent. And the trend continues to be positive: between 2002 and 2006, average levels of freedom improved almost half a point on the Freedom House seven-point combined scale of political rights and civil liberties.⁷

The deepening of democracy is contingent on the establishment and strengthening of key institutions that assure accountability of rulers to the ruled between elections. Whereas all but few African countries have now held two or more multi-party elections, the number that can be classified as “liberal” or even “electoral” democracies remains modest. Lindberg⁸ has argued that “free and fair” elections are necessary but insufficient benchmarks of democratization. He states that in the African context, it is not clear whether elections or

institutions are the main drivers for deepening democracy. He therefore advocates for more analysis into the nature of democracy in Africa and the factors that can strengthen the practice.

To the extent of the above, this study looks at how post-conflict countries on the continent have adjusted themselves to peace and stability through the conduct of multi-party elections. The study primarily focuses on Sierra Leone as a case study.

1.1 Statement of the Research Problem

From the 1990s till now, many African countries, inclusive of countries which suffered from long periods of conflict, such as Liberia and Sierra Leone, have embarked on multi-party elections in order to chart a new path to development as discussed by Peter Pharm⁹ and Boas and Utas.¹⁰ Multi-party elections, within the context of this research, refer to where multiple political parties participate in national elections, and all have the capacity to gain control of government offices, separately or in coalition. This usually has been the case after a country has come out of a conflict to ensure all interested parties have an equal opportunity to govern their country.

A former chairman of the Electoral Commission (EC) of Ghana, Kwadwo Afari-Gyan,¹¹ has noted that, if elections were defined as a contest for positions of leadership and power, then it could easily be interpreted to be paradoxical in situations where they are also expected to be used to stabilize countries. Afari-Gyan adds that, in spite of the seeming paradoxes, elections can play significant roles toward stabilizing post-conflict countries.

Despite significant steps towards democratization in the last two decades, problems of consolidation are evident. According to the National Intelligence Council¹² there are semi-

authoritarian regimes (especially in the Central Africa region including countries such as Gabon, Cameroun, Equatorial Guinea, Burundi etc.) that continue to manipulate electoral processes or otherwise intimidate opposition elements. In some places, elections may produce a change, but it only affects the fortunes of the governing elite to the detriment of the poor who have to suffer the debilitating effects of corruption, nepotism and mismanagement. In some other places, the electoral processes may be well managed, but voter registration may be biased and inadequate in a manner that may freeze out specific interests and ignite tensions.

In the specific case of Sierra Leone, the country was engulfed in a civil war that lasted from 1991 to 2002. Within this period, governance structures in the country broke down totally as the central government lost control of some parts of the country to the control of rebels. It is however, important to bring out the fact that prior to the outbreak of the civil war democracy had taken a dip in the country following the declaration of a one-party regime in 1978. And it is even more important to stress the fact that the challenges of Sierra Leone, with respect to democracy, started as far back 1967 when the All People's Congress (APC) led by Siaka Stevens won the presidential election and the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) was reluctant to relinquish power. This led to the first coup d'état in the history of the country and it dented its democratic credentials.

Thus, the history of democracy in Sierra Leone, even before the war period, was chequered. Some of the factors that account for this include the deep-seated ethnic divisions in the country and the unequal levels of development across the country that sometimes cause tensions to rise. In spite of the country's rich endowment in diamonds, poverty and unemployment levels are extremely high, giving forlorn hope to the youth. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission

that was established after the war identified the causes of the war to include the high levels of despondency among the youth.

Fallouts of the civil war were catastrophic. About 50,000 people are estimated to have been killed, mostly women, youth and children. Many people were also either internally displaced or externally as refugees in neighbouring countries. The destruction of physical structures was equally devastating for a country that was already reeling under high infrastructural deficits. Thus, Sierra Leone emerged out of the civil war with a shattered economy and a broken-down governance system that needed urgent fixing. It was at this stage that the country, with the assistance of the international community, decided to adopt democracy.

Over the course of about 17 years, after the war, the country has been able to organize four multi-party elections which have resulted two electoral turnovers. In terms of the theory of Samuel Huntington's two-turnover-test (TTT) the regime changeovers in Sierra Leone are quite significant as they symbolize the country's commitment to democracy. It is these democratic consolidations that have inspired this study which is geared towards probing the conduct of elections in Sierra Leone and how that has helped the country to stabilize after the civil war.

1.2 Research Questions

This study generally seeks to address the issue of how Sierra Leone has fared with the conduct of multi-party elections after the end of the civil war. The specific research questions to be answered include the following:

- What is the nature of multi-party elections in post-conflict Sierra Leone?

- What are the socio-political effects of multi-party elections on post-conflict Sierra Leone?
- What are the challenges of multi-party elections in post-conflict Sierra Leone?
- What is the future of multi-party elections in post-conflict Sierra Leone?

1.3 Research Objectives

In order to answer the research questions, set above for this study, the following objectives will be pursued:

- To examine the nature of multi-party elections in post-conflict Sierra Leone
- To examine the socio-political effects of multi-party elections on post-conflict Sierra Leone
- To examine the challenges of multi-party elections in post-conflict Sierra Leone
- To assess the future of multi-party elections in post-conflict Sierra Leone.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study encompasses the period spanning from 2002 when the first post-war election was held in Sierra Leone to the most recent election in 2018. However, in order to put the discussions in perspective, the civil war and its effects on the country will also be discussed, as well as the support the country has received from the international community in the process of consolidating its democracy after the war.

1.5 Rationale of the Study

This study is intended to contribute to the body of knowledge on Sierra Leone and its effort to build peace after the war. Whereas many of the existing literature concentrate on the war and the democratic processes thereafter, this study zeroes in on the elections and electoral

processes. Broadly, it also looks at multi-party elections' influence on peace, stability and economic development in post- conflict countries particularly.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

This study is hinged on the concept of multi-party democracy. And there are two reasons for this. Firstly, multi-party elections, as a system of voting, are framed within the context of multi-party democracy. Secondly, Sierra Leone, which is the main focus of this study, is currently practicing multi-party democracy just like most of the other post-conflict countries that are covered in the study.

In his work titled "What is Democracy" Howard Cincotta¹³ traced the practice of democracy to the ancient Greek city-state of Athens in the fifth century B.C. According to Cincotta democracy is derived from two Greek words 'demos' (meaning people) and 'Kratos' (meaning power or rule). In the account of Cincotta the 'Assembly' was the central political institution in Athens during the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. These assemblies were usually composed of between 5,000 and 6,000 members and they were open to all adult citizens except women, slaves and foreigners who were barred from political participation. The interesting thing was that, the leaders of the Athenian Assembly were not elected. Rather, they were chosen by lot and this was based on the Athenian principle that that any citizen was capable of holding public office. For decision making, the Athenians relied on a voting system whereby a simple majority vote was used to decide on all domestic issues.¹⁴ It is instructive to note from the account of Cincotta that partisanship was not originally part of democracy as practiced by the Greeks. However, voting as a decision-making mechanism was borrowed from them.

In modern times, efforts to define democracy have always been premised on the famous Gettysburg Address by Abraham Lincoln in 1863.¹⁵ In that address, Lincoln concluded by stating that democracy as a “government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”¹⁶ Flowing from that the U.S. Department of State has defined democracy as “a form of government in which power and civic responsibility are exercised by all adult citizens, directly or indirectly through their freely elected representatives.”¹⁷ Other definitions by scholars such as Zagorski¹⁸ denote that “liberal democracy is the modern system of representative government that embodies the principle of popular rule while protecting individual rights”. With specific reference to multi-party democracy, Hague and Harrop¹⁹ indicate that “in multi-party systems, the legislature comprises several minority parties, resulting in coalitions or, less often, minority government by the leading party.”

Around the world, multi-party democracy comes in different forms as implied in the definitions above. Heywood²⁰ has however, observed that “the modern understanding of democracy is dominated by the form of electoral democracy that has developed in the industrialized West, often called liberal democracy”. Indeed, liberal or multi-party democracy may take the form of a direct democracy or representative democracy. An example of a direct democracy (which is rare in modern times) can be found in Switzerland where sometimes the general population decides on issues directly in the cantons (states).²¹ In the case of representative democracy, an example can be cited of the United Kingdom which runs a parliamentary system with a House of Commons and a House of Lords. Suffice to say, UK politics is dominated by the Conservative Party, Labour Party and Liberal Party. Another example is the presidential system in the United States which has a Congress made up of House of Representatives and a Senate dominated by the Republican Party and Democratic Party.²²

In the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) as Robin Pettitt²³ explains, the countries run multi-party systems that are best described as “consensual”. This is because they operate proportional representation and there are no parties that dominate the political space. For this reason, they always have to forge coalitions to be able to form governments. Some analysts believe that their system is less oppositional and less acrimonious as the parties always need each other to form government. The disadvantage, however, is that sometimes the electorates decry the fact that the political horse trading to form coalitions go on their blind side or without their approval.²⁴

When it comes to Africa, the practice of multi-party democracy sometimes has no clear-cut delineations between presidential and parliamentary systems. For example, in Ghana, whereas the country operates a presidential system where a president is elected directly, the country’s constitution requires that majority of ministers must be selected from parliament.²⁵ This system has been described as a ‘hybrid’ even though some analysts believe it is confusing. Scholars like Aknirade²⁶ espouse the view that the ambiguity, not just emanating from Ghana but quite symptomatic of African multi-party democracies, is the orchestration of the West trying to impose its brand of democracy on poorer countries. He holds the viewpoint that, multi-party democracy is often accompanied by the struggle for power along partisan, ethnic and religious lines. He argues that the jostle for the power often cause upheavals in national cohesion. To his mind, one-party systems are preferable since they ensure stability.

But, Prah²⁷ disagrees with the criticism in his article titled “Multi-Party Democracy and its Relevance in Africa.” He asserts that “multi-party-political systems are generally regarded as the most reliable systems for the cultivation, development and institutionalization of democracy. The multi-party model lies at the heart of the tradition of modern liberal

democracy. Its central advantage is that, in modern capitalist society, it permits the co-existence of contrastive views of how social life should be ordered without suffocating relatively inferior constituencies.”²⁸

Putting everything together, (i.e. the criticisms notwithstanding), a multi-party system is often thought of as a better system of government because it is based on individual merit, rather than hierarchy or privilege. This form of government affords the populace equal opportunity to govern and, in the process, narrow social inequalities. It protects the rights and interests of minorities by ensuring that checks are placed upon the power of the majority. Again, it also provides a means of electing public offices through a competitive struggle for the popular vote of citizens and, finally, it provides a system of government that serves the interests of the people irrespective of whether they participate or not in political office. It is for this reason that multi-party democracy has been chosen to undergird the conceptual basis of this study.

1.7 Literature Review

Multi-party elections in post-conflict countries can be analyzed from two perspectives. There are countries that have ended up as authoritarian regimes and there are those that have fully embraced democracy in its entirety after their conflicts. Opinions are still divided on how these countries are faring. Whilst some believe that democracy offers more stability and engender equal participation, it is not delivering the needed development compared with authoritarian regimes.

1.7.1 Post-conflict Authoritarianism in East and Central Africa

In East Africa, Rwanda emerged out of its civil war and genocide in 1994 and finally adopted multi-party democracy in 2003. However, under the leadership of Paul Kagame, the country

has often been slammed for practicing authoritarianism and dictatorship. In the elections that were conducted in 2003 Kagame obtained 95.05% and for the 2010 and 2017 he obtained 93.08% and 98.79% respectively, as reported by the African Elections Database²⁹ and the Human Rights Watch International (HRWI).³⁰ In Burundi, Rwanda's southern neighbours, their own civil war ended in 2005 with the country coming under the leadership of Pierre Nkurunziza. Since then, the country has attempted to practice multi-party democracy but it has been solely dominated by Nkurunziza who controversially won a third term bid in 2015 amid protestations from the opposition. Other post-conflict countries in the region like Eritrea and Somalia are struggling to take adopt the path of multi-party democracy.³¹

In Central Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), after two civil wars, is still struggling to find its feet with multi-party elections. The recent election of Felix Tshisekedi, to many analysts, is an indication that the country may gradually be consolidating democratic rule through multi-partyism. Indeed, the transfer of power between Joseph Kabila and Tshisekedi marked the first time in the history of the country that political power had exchanged hands peacefully. But there are concerns that the election was rigged to deprive Martin Fayulu victory as analyzed by Kris Berwouts and Filip Reyntjens.³²

1.7.2 Post-conflict Democratization in Southern and West Africa

The situation is however different in southern Africa where countries like Mozambique which was embroiled in a civil war from 1977 to 1992 has taken the path of multi-party democracy since 1994³³. South Africa is another country that experienced grave violence during the apartheid era but since 1994 has adopted multi-party democracy even though it has been dominated by the African National Congress (ANC).³⁴ Equally, Angola, after the end of its civil war in 2002 adopted multi-party democracy and the country has since remained stable

albeit the dominance of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) which was for decades led by Jose Eduardo Dos Santos (until he stepped down in 2017 and was succeeded by João Lourenço).³⁵

In West Africa, two countries that have witnessed severe civil wars in recent memory are Liberia and Sierra Leone. Quite significantly, both countries, with the assistance of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the United Nations (UN) have been able to restore democratic rule and both are progressing well. In the case of Liberia, the election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in 2006, as the first elected female head of state in Africa, marked a watershed in the country's democratic march. Since then, the country has remained stable and peaceful, leading to its first democratic transfer of power in 2018 through multi-party elections. That election brought into power George Opong Weah, the ex-international football star turned politician.³⁶ For Sierra Leone, the country is the subject of this study and chapter three will delve deeply into how its adoption of multi-party elections has sustained its peace to date.

1.7.3 Pros and Cons of Multi-party Elections after Conflict

Questions have always been asked about why countries adopt multi-party elections after conflicts. Janine Aron³⁷ in answering this question posits that conflicts alter institutions depending on the scale, duration and type of conflict. She explains that in some extreme cases, like the Somali conflict, formal political, social and economic institutions were completely destroyed. It is on this basis that Wantchekon and Neeman³⁸ agree that elections in post-conflict situations allow contenders in the conflict to lay down their weapons and peacefully compete for the power that they were seeking for in the battlefields.

Przeworski³⁹ also holds the position that contestants in competitive elections would always accept the outcomes and not fight again if the processes are transparent and if there are opportunities for losing candidates to contest in future elections. In other words, the playing field must always be level for all contestants. Indeed, the process of refereeing elections is very critical in ensuring that the outcomes are acceptable by all parties. Londregan and Vindigni⁴⁰ argue that elections are a cheaper but more credible way to bring about balance in political forces that would have otherwise been on the battlefield. They premise their argument on the fact that participation in elections is costly for the individuals involved. Thus, in their opinion, elections reveal the number of people who are willing to incur some costs in order to gain some political advantage.

But not all leaders who emerge victorious in conflicts often want to engage in free and fair multi-party elections. Some prefer to run authoritarian regimes and adopt multi-party elections as a smokescreen or façade like the examples of Kagame, Nkurunziza and Dos Santos. This has led some analysts to raise questions as to why dictators or autocrats sometimes organize multi-party elections. In the view of Cox⁴¹ authoritarian leaders only feel the need to hold elections when they come under pressure and feel threatened that they might lose power through mass protests or some violent means like coups d'état or revolutions.

The position of Cox is buttressed by Matanock⁴² who argues that in post conflict settings, elections serve as a commitment device to ensure that both the incumbents and combatants have relatively fair chance of keeping peace agreements brokered by international organizations. In this sense, elections (and other seemingly democratic institutions) serve as a safety valve and prevent opponents from releasing pressure against authoritarian regimes. The

arguments of Matanock are supported by Gandhi⁴³ and Svolik⁴⁴ who argue further that elections prevent collisions between opposition elements and sit-tight authoritarian regimes.

From the perspective of Magaloni⁴⁵ elections tend to bolster the confidence of authoritarian governments and deter opponents from resorting to violence. For this reason, he argues that elections may serve to defuse existing and simmering conflicts. Magaloni further states that even though the dynamics of democratization could lead to the eruption of conflict, elections, at the end of the day may serve as alternatives to conflicts.

Collier⁴⁶ has observed that the competitive nature of elections sometimes take countries to the brink of political violence. In his opinion, elections, as associated with democracy, do not always lead to peace. This is particularly symptomatic of Africa where a number of countries have suffered electoral-related violence that sometimes disturb internal peace. Chua⁴⁷ in turn, argues that given the high levels of poverty around the world, especially in developing countries, democracy can sometimes lead to deep tensions between minority and majority populations over the control of national resources.

Bigombe, Collier and Sambanis⁴⁸ in their article titled “Policies for Building Post-Conflict Peace” established that 31% of political conflicts usually restart within ten years of their ending. Through their application of theoretical frameworks to data sets on conflict, they found that the high incidence of peace collapse in Africa is preventable with the right policies. They argue that, so far, policies implemented by post conflict governments, with support from the international community, have been highly inefficient in addressing the underlying factors responsible for the conflicts. They therefore call for more pragmatic policies to end the cycle of conflicts in Africa.

In response to that call, the United Nations (UN), according to Benjamin Reilly⁴⁹ has made the need for multi-party elections an integral part of their peacekeeping missions. This is because the UN is gradually moving from pure peace-building to state-rebuilding. Reilly contends that multi-party elections give post conflict countries the opportunity to jumpstart their development by conferring legitimacy on the governments. In the process, new political systems are developed and all actors are brought on board.

Idean Salehy and Christopher Linebarger⁵⁰ in their empirical study titled “Elections and Social Conflict in Africa, 1990–2009” found that even though it is a fact that elections may sometimes spark some violence, the probabilities are reduced significantly when the elections are genuinely free and fair. According to them, they did not find a correlation between a recent armed conflict and probability of an election-related violence. Rather, they established that illiberal elections are quite problematic.

Little⁵¹ accentuates the viewpoint of Salehy and Linebarger by positing that elections are far better in preventing conflicts even if they occasionally lead to isolated incidents of violence. In his model about counterfactual thinking on the causal impacts of elections, he argues that elections minimize the probability of conflicts, compared with situations where elections are not held at all. In essence, he concludes that although elections may generate some forms of conflict under some conditions, they, on the average, deter conflicts. This is especially when all parties are adequately included in the process.

Most analysts agree that inclusiveness, as a principle in democracy, requires all sides to be equally involved in the preparatory processes of multi-party elections from beginning to end. There is always the need for consensus to be built around a legal framework and

communication must constantly be maintained among all parties, including non-partisan actors. What this means is that the participation of non-partisan actors must be facilitated in a way that ensures that they meaningfully play roles as referees. As a matter of fact, the introduction of non-partisan participants sometimes comes with its own challenges as some of the partisan actors may view that as an act of foreign interference in the electoral process. However, it can be argued that giving opportunity to non-partisan actors in the end play a key role in dousing tensions between political parties, stakeholders and the public at large.

1.8 Sources of Data

As mentioned above, the research utilized both primary and secondary data. For the primary data, one-on-one interviews were conducted with nationals of Sierra Leone (mainly from Freetown). They included civil society groups such as Sierra Leone Journalist Association (SLJA), Institute of Governance Reform (IGR), National Election Watch (NEW) and the West Africa Network for Peace Building (WANEP) as well as some academics from Fourah Bay College. The two major political parties in Sierra Leone comprising the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) and the All People's Congress (APC) were also interviewed. Some of the development partners of Sierra Leone including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) were also interviewed. The secondary data focused on reports submitted by various Election Observer Groups (Commonwealth Observer Group, African Union Observer Group and the Carter Center) during successive elections and other relevant books, articles, newspapers and internet sources on the subject. The civil society groups were contacted because of the key role they play as watchdogs of Sierra Leone's democracy and the fact that many of them have been involved in election monitoring. The political parties were also contacted because they are the main players in the conduct of elections in the country. For the development partners, they continue to provide support for the country before, during and after

elections. Some ordinary citizens that were interviewed included a victim of the war, a driver, a former combatant, an unemployed graduate and a teacher.

1.8.1 Data Analysis

This research utilizes the thematic analysis for analyzing the data collected, as the research seeks to assess patterns between multi-party elections' influence in post-conflict countries. As explained by Braun and Clarke⁵², thematic analysis is one of the forms of analysis within qualitative research which emphasizes pinpointing, examining, and recording patterns of meaning within data. The respondents were generally open about their responses. They were ready to answer follow up questions that dug deeper into the issues. A common trend that can be deduced from the responses is the fact that the respondents were more optimistic than pessimistic.

1.9 Research Design

Traditionally, two main methods, namely qualitative and quantitative, have dominated the field of research. However, in recent years, a triangulation of the two methods, known as the mixed methods, is also gaining currency. Qualitative methods are usually used when there is the need for deep insights and knowledge to be ascertained in a particular subject matter. Quinn Patton⁵³ explains that qualitative research analyzes data from direct fieldwork observations, in-depth, open-ended interviews, and written documents. Polit and Beck⁵⁴ on the other hand prefer quantitative methods and argue that the aim of most quantitative studies is not to generalize. Rather, they are intended to provide contextualized understanding of a phenomenon under investigation. Their position is supported by Roger Watson⁵⁵ who states that quantitative research involves measurement and works with the assumption that the phenomena under study can be measured. The method therefore sets out to analyze data for trends and relationships

that can be verified and measured. Some other scholars argue for a combination of both methods. For example, according to Steckler et al.⁵⁶ both qualitative and quantitative methods have weaknesses which are compensated for when they are combined. They therefore recommend the use of the mixed methods. For this study, however, the qualitative method was used because of the nature of the subject under investigation. The study involved the use of primary data gathering through interview and the use of questionnaires. This was in line with the view of Alan Bryman⁵⁷ that qualitative research typically involves participant observation, the use of semi- and unstructured interviewing, focus group discussions, as well as the qualitative examination of relevant literature.

1.9.1 Sampling Size, Population and Method

Guarte and Barrios⁵⁸ describe purposive sampling as a deliberate selection of sampling units within a population based on their knowledge of the subject matter at hand. Devers and Frankel⁵⁹ recommend the use of purposive sampling in qualitative research because it helps researchers to identify and negotiate access to research sites and subjects. It was for this reason that this study used purposive sampling as a technique in order to be able to settle on respondents who have deep knowledge and understanding of the political situation in Sierra Leone, and more particularly, elections. A total of ten respondents were interviewed.

1.9.2 Ethical Considerations

For the purposes of this research, the consent of all persons whose views were sought were made aware of what the information was going to be used for. They all agreed to freely and voluntarily participate in the interviews and discussions, and nobody was paid or compensated in any way. However, for reasons of confidentiality the identities of the respondents are not revealed in the body of the study. Thirusa Naidu⁶⁰ in her article titled, “To Be or Not to

Be...Revealing Questions of Anonymity and Confidentiality” discusses the importance of anonymity and confidentiality in social research. She advises that where respondents ask for anonymity and confidentiality, this must be respected.

1.10 Arrangement of Chapters

The study is organized into four (4) chapters. Chapter one comprises the introduction, statement of the research problem, research questions, research objectives, scope, conceptual framework, literature review, and research methodology.

Chapter two discusses an overview of conflicts in Africa while Chapter three discusses the political history of Sierra Leone, multi-party elections in pre and post-conflict Sierra Leone, its successes, challenges and the way-forward for peace, stability and development in the country.

Chapter four, finally, looks at the summary of research findings, conclusions and recommendations.

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CHAPTER TWO

OVERVIEW OF CONFLICTS IN AFRICA

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of multi-party elections in Africa, generally, but with emphasis on post-conflict countries. It begins with an attempt to define conflict, followed by an identification of some causes of conflict in Africa. The discussion then continues with the impact of conflict, followed by an analysis of multi-party elections as a conflict resolution mechanism. The last two sections focus on the challenges and advantages of multi-party elections. Then, finally, there is a conclusion which summarizes the discussion.

2.1 Definition of Conflict

Before arriving at a definition of conflict, it is important to analyze a few scholarly views on what constitutes conflict. Sherriff Folarin¹ in an article about the types and causes of conflict posited that, conflict is as old as mankind. He enumerated types of conflict to include intra-personal conflict, inter-personal conflict, man against society, family conflict, intergroup conflict, intra-state conflict, inter-state conflict and global conflict. Folarin is not alone in his views about the age long existence of conflict. According to Ho-Won Jeong,² conflict has existed since the beginning of human history and it will probably never end. He argues that human existence is perpetually plagued with conflict and that human survival is dependent on how humans manage conflict.

Commenting on the concept of conflict, Louise Skoog³ noted that political conflict is at the heart of all political systems. She says that political conflicts can erupt between citizens, social groups, as well as between political representatives and political parties. According to Skoog,

political conflict occurs when there are difficulties in reconciling different interests over objectives. This view is equally upheld by Jeong who describes conflict as a situation where perceived goal incompatibilities and attempts to control each other's choices degenerate into adverse feelings and behaviour toward each other.

With the above in mind, it is perhaps now appropriate to consider the definition of conflict as proffered by Emily Pia and Thomas Diez.⁴ According to the two scholars, conflict can be defined as a struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, or goals. In their view, conflict might initially be benign but may escalate and lead to destructive violence. They argue further that, conflict may lead to a new social order and therefore might be productive rather than destructive. This is premised on the fact that, the parties involved in the conflict would be able to deal with their incompatibilities so that such a new order or form is achieved. Their position is supported by Dean Tjosvold⁵ who argues that even though many people associate the term conflict with negativity or destruction, there are positive sides to conflict depending on the circumstances.

It is vital to mention that, for the purposes of this study, conflict will be analyzed from the intra-state political angle. This kind of conflict usually involves the use of weapons and soldiers or rebel groups carrying out acts of insurrection against the state. There are several examples of such conflicts around the world, on all continents. However, Africa, for the better of its post-independence period in the 1960s, through to the 1990s and early 2000s, witnessed several armed conflicts that claimed millions of lives.⁶ This occurrence has motivated several researches into conflict on the continent.

2.2 Causes of Conflict in Africa

According to Ho-Won Jeong⁷ most conflicts involve value differences and power disparities. In his interpretation of conflict, he explains that misperception and miscommunication play roles in the evolution of adversarial relationships. In Africa, several factors have been identified as causes of conflicts. Frances Stewart⁸ broadly identifies political, social, and economic inequalities as the main causes of conflict in Africa. According to Nancy Annan⁹ these can be broken down to include poverty, human rights violations, bad governance and corruption, ethnic marginalization and small arms proliferation. In the view of Pamela Aall¹⁰, there are three assumptions underlying conflicts in Africa namely, the fact that conflicts are thought of as a zero-sum power politics among contending leaders; the fact that states are weak and therefore fail to provide basic services and security; and fact that conflicts result from sharply differing views of culture and society.

For the purposes of this study, however, emphasis would be laid on four causes of conflict. These are: ethnicity and nepotism; corruption and mismanagement, personal ambitions of leaders and the quest for autonomy or self-determination within unitary or federal states. They are discussed below:

2.2.1 *Ethnicity and Nepotism*

Osita Agbu¹¹ in his paper titled, 'Ethnicity and Democratization in Africa: Challenges for Politics and Development' makes the argument that post-Cold War democratization in Africa has been undermined by several factors including ethnicity. According to Agbu, the presence of ethnicity in governments creates a semblance of dominance by one ethnic group and fear among all the remaining sidelined ethnic groups. Inevitably, this leads to rivalry and tensions that eventually metamorphose into conflicts. Bruce Berman,¹² also, in his paper titled,

‘Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa’ argues that, at independence, most African states were already fragile as a result of their ethnic compositions. This resulted in most governments being nepotistic and characteristic of the phenomenon known as ‘family and friends’ government.

Ethnic-related conflicts in Africa are many and they include the Rwandan and Burundian genocides in East Africa, involving the Hutus and Tutsis, as recounted by Peter Uvin¹³. Others include the Sierra Leonean and Liberian civil wars in West Africa as analyzed by Victor Davies.¹⁴ In the case of Liberia, Master Sergeant Samuel Doe’s toppling of the William Tolbert government in 1980 was somehow seen as an attack on the Americo-Liberian hegemony over the country. It was therefore not surprising when Charles Taylor, an Americo-Liberian, started the war against the Doe regime. Some pundits, including Earl Conteh-Morgan and Shireen Kadivar,¹⁵ analyze it as a form of counterattack on behalf of the Americo-Liberian population.

2.2.2 Corruption and Mismanagement

The 1970s through early 1990s witnessed the most coups in Africa as analyzed by Patrick McGowan.¹⁶ And the most accusations that the soldiers often leveled against governments they overthrew were that of corruption and mismanagement. Scholars such as Kempe Hope¹⁷ describe corruption as the ‘AIDS of Democracy in Africa’. In his view, much of the conflict and underdevelopment on the continent are attributable to the high levels of political corruption and mismanagement. There have been some instances in Africa where leaders have been said to be richer than their countries. An example is Mobutu Sese Seko who was alleged to have stashed away billions of dollars in foreign banks while the economy of Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo) reeled under decay according to Leonce Ndikumana and James Boyce.¹⁸ In the end, Laurent Kabila raised a rebel army that marched on Kinshasa to remove Seko and that sparked instability for decades. The irony and paradox of the military coup makers is that,

when they took over governments, they ended up in the same corruption quagmire. An example is General Sani Abacha who is infamously remembered for the millions of dollars he allegedly stole from the Nigerian kitty, as discussed by David Enweremadu¹⁹ in his paper titled: 'Nigeria's Quest to Recover Looted Assets: The Abacha Affair'.

According to Transparency International (TI)²⁰ corruption in Africa is multifaceted and complex. TI says that corruption is a hindrance to the socioeconomic and political development of the continent and, that, corruption in public institutions, especially, harm hundreds of millions of citizens by undermining their chances of a stable and prosperous future. More often than not, when the youth become despondent about the future, they become easy targets for warlords, like what happened in the Sierra Leonean conflict.²¹

2.2.3 Personal Ambition of Leaders

Many persons who are intimate with the conflict literature on Africa would not be surprised to see ambition identified as a source of conflict in Africa. Indeed, there is abundance of evidence to suggest that some of the conflicts on the continent are oftentimes driven by the sheer ambition of some persons to be heads of state at all cost. For the purposes of this study, the author classifies all individuals who wage protracted conflicts to become heads of state as individuals who are driven by their personal ambitions more than anything else. The author argues that even though these persons may cite social injustice as their motivation to start a conflict, their conduct, once in office, shows that they are more disposed towards self-aggrandizement than social justice.

A typical example in West Africa is the Liberian conflict that was started by Charles Taylor in December 1989. In his book titled 'Charles Taylor and Liberia: Ambition and Atrocity in

Africa's Lone Star State,' author Colin Waugh²² recounts how the quest of Charles Taylor to become president of Liberia, by all means possible, threw the entire country and its neighbours in the Mano River region into chaos, lasting for more than a decade. In Central Africa, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire), the ambition of Laurent Desire Kabila to become president also led to the rebellion against Mobutu Sese Seko, according to Francois Ngolet²³ in his book, 'Crisis in the Congo: The Rise and Fall of Laurent Kabila.' There are other examples in regions such as East Africa, where Yoweri Museveni led a rebel movement to ascend the throne of power only to hang on forever, as analyzed by Nizar Motani in his article titled: 'Regime Hegemony In Museveni's Uganda: Pax Musevenica.'

The other side of the ambition debacle is where some African leaders also decide to hang on to power till conflict erupts. In some situations, some of the leaders make attempts to or succeed in tinkering with their constitution to pave the way for their ambitions. In 2006, Olusegun Obasanjo, for instance, attempted to change the Nigerian constitution but failed as dilated by Claire Soares.²⁴ In 2009, Mamadou Tandja of Niger, however, succeeded in changing his country's constitution to accentuate his third term bid but it ended up in a coup d'état the following year.²⁵

In 2012, Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal also succeeded in bending Senegal's constitution for a third term bid but lost the presidential election to Macky Sall after two rounds of voting.²⁶ As a matter of fact, all these ambitious attempts to continuously hang on to power could have degenerated into violent conflicts, as was the case in the Ivorian conflict involving Laurent Gbagbo and Alasane Ouattara in 2011.²⁷ In central Africa, the long stay in office of Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo (Equatorial Guinea, since 1979), Paul Biya (Cameroon, since 1982), Sassou Nguesso (Congo, since 1997), Pierre Nkurunziza (Burundi, since 2005), and the Bongo

dynasty (Gabon) has made the entire region unstable and conflict-prone. In North Africa, prior to the Arab Spring, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali (Tunisia) had been in office for 14 years; Hosni Mubarak (Egypt) 30 years; and Muammar Gaddafi (Libya) 42 years. Thus, it can be seen from the above that the situation where some African leaders put their ambitions above the national interest by either waging warfare to capture power or by clinging on to power is a major source of conflict on the continent.

2.2.4 Agitations for Autonomy or Self-determination

Another major source of conflict in Africa is the contentious question of autonomy. It is often discussed as a by-product of ethnicity. Indeed, while that may be true, it has to be pointed out that it is an issue that deserves much more attention than it usually gets. The origins of these conflicts can be traced to how colonialism banded some territories together arbitrarily. This continues to create internal frictions that sometimes explode. There are several examples of countries that have gone to war as a result of internal agitations for autonomy. One of the first countries to experience a major conflict in relation to the question of autonomy was the Congo where Moise Tshombe led a secession attempt, to breakaway the Katanga region, right after independence was declared from Belgium in 1960.²⁸

In Nigeria, the civil war that broke out between 1967 – 1970 according to John Stremlau,²⁹ was because of the secession attempts by the people of the eastern part of the country to declare the Biafra Republic. As a matter of fact, that conflict persists till today under the influence of Nnamdi Kanu and his Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) separatist movement.³⁰ In Senegal, the Casamance region remains in conflict due to the desire of the people of that area to have their own government, independent of Senegal. In her article titled: ‘Understanding The Casamance Conflict: A Background,’ Aissatou Fall³¹ explains the genesis of the conflict and

why it persists till today. She notes that even during the colonial period the people of the Casamance area resisted French rule and right from Senegal's independence in 1960 they agitated for their own autonomy. Indeed, the situation is not different in northern Mali where the Tuareg people have been agitating for their own separate country since Mali's independence in 1960.³² The situation got out of hand in 2012 when rebels of the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (NMLA) took control of the northern part of the country and declared their independence after the coup that overthrew President Amadou Toumani Touré.³³ In Cameroon, presently, there is a raging conflict involving the English-speaking people of the northwestern and southwestern part of the country, over the issue of autonomy for Ambazonia.³⁴ In August 2019, ten people were arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment but that has not stopped the tensions in the country in that part of the country.³⁵

Perhaps, the mother of all the fights for autonomy is that of South Sudan which successfully won its independence from Sudan in 2011. In their book titled: 'South Sudan: from revolution to independence' Mathew LeRiche and Mathew Arnold³⁶ describe the Sudanese conflict as Africa's longest running civil war. It started from Sudan's independence in 1956 and raged on for decades till it culminated in a referendum in January 2011 and finally the declaration of independence in July 2011 with Salva Kiir as president and Riek Machar as vice-president.³⁷ It is important to mention that, besides Sudan which has lost part of its territory, Morocco faces similar campaign by the Sahrawi people who are fighting for the independence and international recognition of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). Alice Wilson³⁸, in her article, 'Sovereignty in Exile: A Saharan Liberation Movement Governs,' describes SADR as Africa's last colony. As a matter of fact, Morocco withdrew her membership of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1984 when the continental body recognized the Polisario Front which has been spearheading the SADR campaign of autonomy.³⁹

From the foregoing, it is obvious that the issue of agitation for autonomy is a major source of conflict on the African continent. It is worthy of note that, even for a relatively peaceful country such as Ghana, there are budding separatist movements in the Volta region, fighting for autonomy for Western Togoland.⁴⁰

2.3 Impact of Conflict in Africa

2.3.1 *Socio-Political Impact*

In recent memory, the Rwandan genocide counts as one of the most devastating human catastrophes in history. The genocide which lasted between April and July 1994 claimed the lives of an estimated 500,000 Tutsi minority, according to Human Rights Watch (HRW).⁴¹ In the estimation of Marijke Verpoorten,⁴² however, the total number of Tutsis killed may be in the region of 800,000 and the number of Hutus killed estimated to be between 25,000 and 40,000. No doubt, it was a humanitarian disaster of monumental proportions and it has since been a blot not only on the conscience of Africa but the entire world. This is due to what some analysts refer to as the failure of the UN to intervene in the conflict in a timely manner. In neighbouring Burundi, the civil war that broke out in 1993 and lasted till 2005 also claimed another 300,000 lives (mainly Hutus).⁴³ The Liberian civil war also recorded its own humongous casualties estimated to be around 250,000.⁴⁴ This is besides the reported cases of rape, torture, abductions, beatings etc. that were carried out with impunity.⁴⁵ Till date, there are many Liberians who have not been able to come to terms with what happened because they have not received closure (through a genuine reconciliation process).⁴⁶

There is no denying the fact that conflicts have had disastrous effects on Africans. For example, the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR)⁴⁷ reports that about 2.9 million people are in need of

humanitarian assistance in the Central African Republic (CAR) because of the instability in the country. Out of the number, an estimated 581,362 persons are internally displaced and require critical support.

2.3.2 Economic Impact

Violent conflicts, more often than not, lead to destruction of public infrastructure and this tends to have several consequences on a country's economic development. To cite an example, Liberia, after its civil war, was without electricity for a very long time. According to the USAID, Liberia has one of the lowest electricity access rates in the world; currently at 12%. The USAID further notes that, less than 20% of residents in Monrovia have access to electricity. By 2030, the country is anticipated to have a peak demand of 300 MW and the country is now struggling to look for the needed investments in the energy sector.⁴⁸ Nigeria is another country which has been at the receiving end of economic downturns as a result of conflict. Mention can be made of how Nigeria has gradually been losing its foreign direct investments (FDI) inflows which stood at \$9bn in 2011 to \$2bn in 2018 due to the conflict in the northern part of the country and also the oil-rich delta region.⁴⁹

Libya is another country which has had a huge negative economic impact as a result of conflict. Prior to the Arab Spring which swept through the Maghreb region in North Africa from early 2010, the country whose economy is mainly dependent on petrol used to produce 1.6 million barrels per day. The revenues from the petroleum sales represented about 65 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP); 96 percent of export revenues, and nearly 98 percent of government revenues, according to Mohsin Khan and Karim Mezran.⁵⁰ However, after the civil war that deposed Libyan leader, Muammar Qaddafi, the economy, as per the estimates of Cruz Echevarria and Javier Garcia-Enriquez⁵¹ for the 2011–2014 period showed a cumulative

loss in the growth rate of per capita real GDP of 64.15%; a cumulative loss in per capita real GDP of 56,548 dollars; and a cumulative loss in the aggregate real GDP of 350.5 billion dollars.

As a matter of fact, this is how the World Factbook of the CIA describes the Libyan economy in the post-conflict era:

Libya's economy, almost entirely dependent on oil and gas exports, has struggled since 2014 given security and political instability, disruptions in oil production, and decline in global oil prices. The Libyan dinar has lost much of its value since 2014 and the resulting gap between official and black-market exchange rates has spurred the growth of a shadow economy and contributed to inflation. The country suffers from widespread power outages, caused by shortages of fuel for power generation. Living conditions, including access to clean drinking water, medical services, and safe housing have all declined since 2011. Oil production in 2017 reached a five-year high, driving GDP growth, with daily average production rising to 879,000 barrels per day. However, oil production levels remain below the average pre-Revolution highs of 1.6 million barrels per day.⁵²

2.4 Multi-Party Elections as a Conflict Resolution Mechanism

Several African countries have retraced their steps to peace and stability through multi-party elections, which is a prerequisite of multi-party democracy. It is relevant to note that, not long ago, the entire West Africa region was considered as a hotbed of instability. Beginning from the first coup d'état in the region (in Togo in 1963) and the civil wars of the 1990s that destabilized the sub region, some analysts including Baffour Agyeman-Duah hypothesized that if military radicalism in some of the states was not brought under control, the entire sub region stood the risk of taken over by military rule.⁵³

Today, however, it is noteworthy that the situation is vastly different. All fifteen member states of ECOWAS now have an appreciable broad-based constitutionally elected government. Apart from Togo, which is experiencing sporadic political turmoil, over the issue of presidential term limits, the entire sub region has in the last ten years changed governments through the ballot box within a free and fair multi-party framework. It is therefore not surprising that the

ECOWAS region is experiencing relative calm, but for the terrorist insurgencies in Northern Nigeria, Northern Mali, Northern Niger and Northern Burkina Faso (along the Sahel).

In the history of ECOWAS, only Cape Verde and Senegal have never experienced coups. All the remaining 13 countries have undergone violent regime change, with Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire witnessing civil wars. The question that arises is: what changed, why is there calm in the region? Here, it is essential to bring into focus the role multi-party democracy has played in the restoration of stability. Mention, firstly, has to be made of the Declaration of Political Principles of ECOWAS (A/DCL.1/7/91) which was endorsed in Abuja in July 1991.⁵⁴ This particular decision of the heads of states called on all ECOWAS countries to respect the need for "political pluralism". Quite significantly, this opened the floodgates for multi-party elections which started in Benin in 1991, then Mali and Ghana in 1992. In Benin, particularly, Mathieu Kerekou won international praise when he lost in the first multi-party elections and accepted defeat and handed over power to Nicephore Soglo.⁵⁵

Comparing the situation in West Africa with that of Central Africa where autocratic rule is still the order of the day, it can be observed that, there are political tensions in countries such as Cameroon, Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea. Thus, multi-partyism in West Africa has been highly beneficial and promoted peace and stability.

Focusing on the situation in North Africa, an example can be cited of Tunisia whose last presidential election was won by an independent candidate, Kais Saied.⁵⁶ A few years ago, perhaps before the Arab Spring, the thought of an independent candidate president would have been risible in Tunisia, given the stranglehold that President Ben Ali had over the country.

However, in the aftermath of the uprising, there have been a lot of reforms that have allowed for more pluralistic political participation. It is true that Saied may not have won on the ticket of a political party, but he is not the first to win in a multi-party election as an independent candidate in Africa. As a matter of fact, when Soglo won in Benin in 1991, he did so as an independent candidate; same as Yayi Boni who won in 2006 and Patrice Talon who won in 2016. What is important, therefore, is the fact that Tunisia is currently consolidating its democracy through multi-party elections and democracy.

2.5 Advantages of Multi-party Elections in Africa

Within the context of this study, the first advantage that can be cited about multi-party elections is the fact that it gives all warring factions an opportunity to legitimately contest for political power instead of waging warfare for it. For instance, in the heat of the Liberian war, when a ceasefire agreement reached in 1995 paved the way for presidential elections to be held in July 2007, all the warring factions had an opportunity to participate in the elections. Former warlords including Charles Taylor (National Patriotic Party), Alhaji G.V. Kromah (All Liberia Coalition Party) and George Boley (National Democratic Party of Liberia) all had the opportunity of participating in the election. Taylor won with 75% while Kromah and Boley scored 4% and 1% respectively.⁵⁷ For a moment, the elections stalled the war and peace returned to the country, momentarily.

In the case of Sierra Leone, the post war election saw the participation of Johnny Paul Koroma (Peace and Liberation Party) who had been a major actor in the conflict. He placed third with 3% of the vote behind Ernest Bai Koroma (All People's Congress) who placed second with 22% and Ahmed Tejan Kabbah (Sierra Leone People's Party) who won the election with 70%.⁵⁸ Even though Koroma was later indicted in March 2003 by the Special Court for Sierra

Leone, his participation in the election sent a signal to all the warring factions that it was time to smoke the peace pipe.⁵⁹

Multi-party elections also have the advantage of giving voters the opportunity to choose from among different candidates. This is unlike a one-party system where citizens have no choice than be stuck with a ruling government. In the years after independence, some African countries, including Ghana (1964-66), Tanzania (1965), Malawi (1966), Zambia (1972) and Sierra Leone (1978) opted for one-party systems of government.⁶⁰ These created conditions that led to coup d'états in some of these countries. It is, however, crucial to note that, today, all these countries have reverted to multi-party democracy with multi-party elections. And, it has to be stated that, besides giving the electorates the opportunity to choose from a pool of contestants, it also gives the contestants themselves the opportunity to contest as many times as they may deem necessary. A poignant case in point is Ghana's Fourth Republic where three presidents namely John Agyekum Kufuor John Evans Atta-Mills and Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo all contested more than once before winning the presidency. In the case of Akufo-Addo he contested on three occasions before he eventually clinched victory. So, multi-party elections, in essence, create equal opportunities for all citizens to participate in the governance process.

Another advantage of multi-party election is the fact that it deepens the rule of law and minimizes electoral conflict. The year 2013, for instance, saw Ghana and Kenya beseech their Supreme Courts to adjudicate on electoral disputes that could have degenerated into violence. In the Ghana situation, the then opposition, New Patriotic Party (NPP), disputed the election results of December 2012 which was declared in favour of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) by the Electoral Commission (EC). But, rather than resort to violence, the party took

the matter to the Supreme Court for interpretation of some the electoral rules which they felt were violated in the course of the tabulation of the election results. The entire adjudication process was quite painstaking, and it lasted for eight months. In the end, the Court ruled against the party and upheld the results of the EC.⁶¹ However, many analysts believe that the legal action triggered some critical reforms that strengthened Ghana's electoral processes.

In the same 2013, Odinga and his Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) rejected the outcome of the presidential election in Kenya in which Uhuru Kenyatta was declared winner. The matter ended up in the country's Supreme Court. But, just like the Ghanaian scenario, the Supreme Court upheld the results as announced by the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC).⁶² Quiet interestingly, the 2017 presidential election also ended up in the Supreme Court and this time the Court upheld the case of the petitioners, Odinga and the National Super Alliance (NASA). The Court in a historic ruling ordered a rerun of the elections.⁶³ The basis for the annulment was the fact that the IEBC announced the final result before the entire results from the over 40,000 polling stations were received by it. This, according to the Supreme Court, was a violation of the constitution and it therefore had no option than to cancel the results.⁶⁴ It was the first time such a ruling was given on the African continent and, as it was to be expected, it heightened political tensions in the country. What saved the situation, however, was the fact that Odinga, who had lost the first round by about 1.4 million votes, declined participation in the rerun which was massively won by Kenyatta (98.2%).⁶⁵

2.6 Challenges of Multi-party Elections in Africa

Multi-party elections in Africa have not been without issues. On record, there are several conflicts which can be traced to elections and their outcomes. East Africa's pride, Kenya, in

the year 2007 experienced what some have described as one of the most horrendous electoral outcomes on the African continent. This is how Stefan Dercon and Roxana Gutiérrez-Romero put it:⁶⁶

Kenya was left with deep scars by the violence that erupted in the aftermath of the disputed Presidential election of 27 December 2007. In just a matter of weeks, Kenya was transformed from one of Africa's most stable democracies into chaos. Political and ethnic violence left more than a thousand people dead and over 350,000 people were forced to flee their homes as violence and machete-wielding gangs roamed the streets.

Out of that violence Kenya was forced to constitute a power-sharing government between incumbent president, Mwai Kibaki, and opposition leader, Raila Odinga, in February 2008.⁶⁷ For a moment, that arrangement restored calm and the country forged ahead in fragile peace as Kibaki continued to serve as president and Odinga was offered the post of prime minister.

In Southern Africa, Zimbabwe also found itself in a web of violence following the first round of presidential and parliamentary elections that were held in March 2008. As per the results that were released after several weeks of waiting, Morgan Tsvangirai of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) was announced to have received 47.9% while Robert Mugabe (ZANU-PF) scored 43%.⁶⁸ This meant that there had to be a run-off between the two as none of them garnered more than 50%. But that was when the violence started. In fact, the violence was so intense that Tsvangirai pulled out of the context, citing intimidation and incarceration of his supporters, as well as a supposed hatched plot by the ZANU-PF to rig the elections, as his reasons. Nevertheless, the runoff was held in June 2008 and it was won by Mugabe. As it was to be expected, MDC supporters denounced the results and more violence followed. Under the circumstances, Zimbabwe was forced to go the way of Kenya by also establishing a power-sharing arrangement between Mugabe and Tsvangirai in February 2009 as explained by Nie Cheeseman and Blessing-Miles Tendi.⁶⁹

Two years after the Zimbabwean violence, the Ivory Coast also erupted in election-related violence when Laurent Gbagbo refused to concede defeat to Alassane Ouattara following the presidential election of 2010. According to the electoral commission, Ouattara got 54% while Gbagbo got 46%. But, contrary to that, the country's constitutional court annulled some of the results from the northern part of the country where Ouattara had his largest support base and rather declared Gbagbo winner with 51% and Ouattara 49%.⁷⁰ The international community had before the announcement of the constitutional court congratulated Ouattara because the election had been adjudged to be free and fair. Therefore, the reversal of the results, not unsurprisingly, sparked some violence across the country that took the lives of more than 3000 people and rendered about one million others internally displaced or as refugees.⁷¹ Given the intractable nature of the conflict, some people suggested a power sharing arrangement in the mould of the Kenyan and Zimbabwean examples. But, both Gbagbo and Ouattara would have none of that. They both took separate presidential oaths and that set the stage for the violence.⁷² There are other election-related violence across the continent even though they may not be on a large scale. For example, Gabon in 2016 experienced some electoral violence when incumbent Ali Bongo received 49.8% of the vote while his main challenger, Jean Ping, scored 48.2% - a margin of 5,594 votes. Ping alleged that the polls had been rigged because in Bongo's strongholds there were voter turnout as high as 99.3%. The resultant dispute over the results turned violent and the national parliament was set ablaze by angry Ping supporters.⁷³

Besides the violence that sometimes occur before, during and after multi-party elections, another major constraint is that of cost. In most situations, when countries come out of wars or other forms of conflict, they become cash-strapped and therefore have to rely on donor support to conduct their elections. Examples include Sierra Leone which has been receiving donor support for their elections since the end of the civil war.⁷⁴ Cote d'Ivoire also received enormous

donor support in the run-up to the 2010 elections.⁷⁵ But, it has to be mentioned that even for countries like Ghana that have remained stable in the last three decades, donor support still flow in to support the conduct of elections. That goes to show the dire need for financial support for fragile states venturing into multi-party elections in post conflict situations.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter discussed an overview of conflicts in Africa. Conflict was defined as a struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, or goals. It was established that there have been many conflicts in Africa in the past which were extremely violent. These conflicts impacted negatively on the continent, leading to loss of lives and the stagnation of the process of development. It was however seen that with the reinvigoration of democracy through multi-party elections, especially in post-conflict situations, a lot of strides have been made in restoring peace and stability on the continent. The fledgling democratic culture now encourages disputants to seek legal redress; rather than resorting to violent conflicts. Thus, multi-party elections and multi-party democracy are serving as effective mechanisms to resolve conflicts in Africa and to promote a culture of peaceful coexistence.

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CHAPTER THREE

POST-CONFLICT MULTI-PARTY ELECTIONS IN SIERRA LEONE

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses multi-party elections in Sierra Leone with regard to the pre and post conflict eras. It begins with a brief political history of the country from the time of independence through to the outbreak of the civil war. It then focuses on the reforms in the post conflict era that led to the reintroduction of multi-party democracy and elections. Special emphasis is placed on all the elections that have been held in the post conflict era from 2002 to 2018. The views of Sierra Leoneans who were interviewed are also presented in this chapter in an attempt to answer the four research questions posed in chapter one.

3.1 Brief Political History

The people of Sierra Leone are a mixture of indigenous Africans and freed African slaves from the United Kingdom. The country's capital, Freetown, was so named to depict the freedom that the freed slaves enjoined once they were repatriated from abroad.¹ During the era of colonization in Africa the country was colonized by the British but finally gained independence in April 1961. The country was led to independence by Milton Margai on the ticket of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP). Unfortunately, Margai died in 1964 and he was replaced by his brother Albert Margai. Some historical accounts have it that Albert Margai could not lead the SLPP the same way Milton Margai did, and this caused some affection in the party's support base, causing them to lose the presidential election of 1967 to the All People's Congress (APC). The APC was a breakaway party from the SLPP, and they were led by Siaka Probyn Stevens.²

The elections were deemed free and fair a smooth transfer of power between the SLPP and APC was anticipated. But as it turned out the SLPP had misgiving about handing over power to the APC. This caused Brigadier General David Lansana (a loyalist of Albert Margai) to stage a coup d'état (first in the history of the country) in 1967 to prevent Stevens from assuming the reins of government.³ Under the circumstances, Stevens went into exile in Guinea for about 13 months before a group of non-commissioned soldiers organized a coup and upheld the earlier presidential election results. Thus, Stevens returned to the country to assume his presidency.⁴

Quite regrettably, the rule of Stevens did not turn out to be any better than that of Albert Margai in terms of development and governance. Under his rule, the country adopted a one-party system and multi-party democracy died off. This sparked off many agitations by opposition politicians. But he remained in office until 1985 when he handed over power to Major General Joseph Saidu Momoh. It was during the era of Momoh that the civil war broke out in 1991, led by Foday Sankoh and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF).⁵ Dissatisfied with the turn of events, Captain Valentine Strasser staged a coup in 1992 to topple the Momoh government, with a promise to end the war.⁶ However, he also failed and that led to a palace coup staged by Brigadier Julius Maada Bio in 1996.⁷ Within three months, Maada Bio organized presidential elections which were won by Ahmad Tejan Kabbah on the ticket of the SLPP.

Kabbah's government was later toppled by Major Johnny Paul Koroma in 1997 but the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring (ECOMOG) soldiers intervened and Kabbah was reinstated. With the support of the international community Kabbah was able to eventually bring the war to an end in January 2002.⁸

3.2 Post-Conflict Electoral and Peace Architecture

3.2.1 *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*

The work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Sierra Leone was critical in the restoration of peace and stability in the country. The TRC arrangement was part of the Lomé Peace Accord which was signed in 1999 by Kabbah and Sankoh. However, the commission started sitting in November 2002 and completed its work in 2004.⁹ It received testimonies from various groups of people including victims and perpetrators of the war. At the end of its sitting, it made recommendations which can be broadly captured as follows:

- Protection of human rights and Rule of Law
- Promoting Good Governance, fighting corruption and Mineral resources
- Women, Children and Youths
- Reparations
- Follow up mechanism

In 2001, the government created the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA) through an act of parliament to assist with the restoration of peace. Some of the works of the commission in the early years included:

“...closing the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps; concluding the movement and resettlement of IDPs and refugees; completing the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants; and scaling up the provision of social and economic infrastructure and services in communities across the country.”¹⁰

Subsequently, the country’s Parliament enacted the National Human Rights Commission Act in 2004 and the new commission has since then the role as the de facto Follow-up Committee for the implementation of the recommendations of the TRC.¹¹

It has to be mentioned, however, that the TRC worked side by side with the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which was tasked with the responsibility of trying “those with the greatest responsibility” for international crimes during the conflict.¹² This also helped in bringing

justice to those who felt aggrieved, strongly, by the atrocities of the war. It also helped to strengthen the security of the country.

3.2.2 National Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone

The National Electoral Commission (NEC) draws its mandate from Section 33 of the 1991 Constitution, Act No. 6 of 1991, and Section 28 of the Chieftaincy Act, 2009. It is the sole authority with the mandate to prepare and conduct all public elections and referenda in Sierra Leone. The vision of the NEC-SL is to be an “independent, credible and well-resourced institution which promotes democracy and good governance by continually administering credible elections that meet international standards and best practices.” It is made up of five commissioners with tenure of five years.¹³ Since 2002, the commission has been in charge of all elections in the country.

3.2.3 Political Parties Registration Commission

The Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC) was established in accordance with Sections 34 and 35 of the 1991 Constitution. The powers of the commission are further enhanced by the Political Parties Act (Act, 2002). As a matter of fact, the functions of the PPRC dovetails into the functions of the NEC as both institutions complement each other in the management of election processes. According to the PPRC, there are now more than a dozen registered political parties in Sierra Leone and they include the Sierra Leone’s People Party (SLPP), All People’s Congress (APC), Peace and Liberation Party (PLP), Alliance Democratic Party (ADP), Citizens Democratic Party (CDA), National Democratic Alliance (NDA), National Progressive Democrats (NPD), Republic National Independent Party (RNIP), People’s Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC), Revolutionary United Front (RUF),

United National People's Party (UNPP), United Democratic Movement (UDM), Unity Party (UP), National Unity and Reconciliation Party (NURP).¹⁴

3.2.4 Political Parties Liaison Committee

The Political Parties Liaison Committee (PPLC) is a creation of the NEC. The committee serves as a platform for engagement between the political parties, on one side, and NEC on the other. Through the platform, the political parties and NEC have been able to resolve a lot of issues relating to electoral violence, voters' registration, biometric cards, printing of ballot papers, election timetables and several others. This mechanism has proven to be quite effective in preventing electoral conflicts and violence, as it provides the opportunity for jaw-jawing.¹⁵

3.2.5 All Political Parties Association

The All Political Parties Association (APPA) was established in 2001 ahead of the first post-conflict general elections in 2002. It started as a coalition of all the opposition parties that were contesting against the then SLPP incumbent government. They impressed upon the NEC to ensure a level-playing field for all the parties. Through a process of dialogue, they were able to secure some concessions that encouraged the opposition parties to participate in the election.¹⁶ However, in the years thereafter, the association became dormant, until the year 2015 when it was revived. Since then, it has become a central rallying point, especially for opposition parties in engaging with the government and NEC.

3.2.6 All Political Parties Women's Association (APPWA)

The All Political Parties Women's Association (APPWA) was established in 2011 by the then active political parties in the country namely: All Peoples' Congress (APC); Sierra Leone Peoples' Party (SLPP); Peoples' Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC); and National

Democratic Alliance (NDA). Since then, however, the membership has grown to include other political parties. The association works in collaboration, firstly, with their political parties as well as electoral management bodies and national and international organizations concerned with issues of women and governance. Over the years, the association has contributed in capacity building programmes for women in political parties in order to sustain peace, stability and non-violence. The association has also advocated for adherence to the principles of good governance through the implementation of policies for the inclusion of women in politics, decision making and governance at all levels.

All Political Parties Youth Association

As part of its recommendations, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission proposed that governments should accord youths ten percent of appointments at the national level for decision-making.¹⁷ As a result, all political parties have over the years endeavored to strengthen their youth wings. From time to time, APPYA members meet to deliberate on issues of common interest to the youth of the country, especially regarding youth participation in national governance. Current membership of APPYA includes youth members from the following political parties: Alliance Democratic Party (ADP); All People's Congress (APC); Citizen's Democratic Party (CDP); National Democratic Alliance (NDA); National Progressive Democrat (NPD); National Grand Coalition (NGC); Peoples Democratic Party (PDP); Peace and Liberation Party (PLP); People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC); Revolutionary United Front Party (RUFP); Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP); United Democratic Movement (UDM); United National People's Party (UNPP); and Unity Party (UP).¹⁸

3.2.7 National & District Code Monitoring Committees

The 2006 Political Parties Code of Conduct (revised and amended in 2012 and 2017 respectively) established the National Code Monitoring Committees (NCMC) as well as the Districts Code Monitoring Committee (DCMC). The committees were created by the Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC) and their purpose is to discuss issues of common concern, including breaches in the political parties' code before, during and after elections. Whereas the NCMC operates at the national level, the DCMC operates at the district level in all the 14 districts in Sierra Leone. The committees have been instrumental since their establishment, especially during election periods, in ensuring that all political parties abide by the rules of conduct in the interest of peace and stability.

3.2.8 National Security Coordinating Committee Group

The National Security Council Co-ordinating Group (NSCCG) is made up of senior representatives from the police and armed forces through the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and other security agencies. The group is responsible for the collation of information from a wide range of sources and this affords the departments and agencies of government the opportunity to co-operate more effectively in matters of national security.¹⁹

3.2.9 Joint Intelligence Committee

The Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) is mandated to analyze policy decisions of the National Security Council and transform them into formal intelligence requirements for the intelligence and security services. It is chaired by the National Security Coordinator who is also the principal advisor to the president and government on security issues. The committee is supported by the Joint Assessment Team (JAT) which is responsible for collating and assessing

intelligence on subjects of national security concern. The work of the PROSECs, DISECs, and CHISECs also feed into the information needs of the JIC.²⁰

3.2.10 PROSECS, DISECS & CHISECS

In 2005, the Office of National Security (ONS) as part of mechanisms to strengthen the security of the country established the Provincial Security Committees (PROSECS); District Security Committees (DISECS) and Chiefdom Security Committees (CHISECS). These committees are tasked to serve as early warning systems that trigger alerts on potential issues of conflict or violence at the local or grassroots level. The ONS operates from the Office of the President and that shows the importance attached to the committees. They provide a mechanism for both diagnosing and dealing with a wide range of security and local problems. In addition to that, they also ensure central control and response when required. It has to be mentioned that there are sub-national representatives of central ministries and commissions and of the police and military who are represented on the committees.²¹

3.2.11 Eminent Persons Group

The Eminent Persons Group is quite new to the peace architecture of Sierra Leone. It was established in 2018 ahead of the general elections with the mandate of diffusing potential electoral conflicts and violence through a mechanism of tackling and resolving confrontations before, during and after the elections. The five-member group, quite significantly includes representatives from the Christian and Islamic councils, Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ), National Children's Commission, as well as the Market Women Association.²²

According to the PPRC which formed the group:

*The objective for the establishment of the EPG is to provide preventive action support to the PPRC with regards engaging top political leaders and other key actors to ensure a peaceful and violence-free election and to mediate high-level conflicts as requested by the Commission.*²³

3.3 Role of the International Community

The role of the international community, starting with ECOWAS to the African Union and the United Nations was fundamental in the restoration of peace and stability in Sierra Leone. From 1999 to 2006 the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was present in the country and they assisted with the process of maintaining the peace after the war ended.²⁴ In August 2008, the United Nations and the Sierra Leonean government implemented a one-year project that was aimed at building institutional capacity for the implementation of the recommendations of the TRC. The United Nations Peacebuilding Fund made available a total of \$3 million USD for the exercise which oversaw the registration of a total of 29,733 victims. In 2010 some of the victims of the war including amputees, war wounded, and victims of sexual violence received \$100 each. The NaCSA was then tasked to implement other reparative measures in education and health care, through the Victims' Trust Fund.²⁵

The international community also assisted with the electoral reform process quite significantly by contributing financially and technically towards the work of the PPRC and the NECSL.²⁶ In addition, ECOWAS, African Union, European Union, Commonwealth and the United Nations have also been sending election observer missions to participate in elections in the country since 2002.²⁷

3.4 Role of Civil Society

3.4.1 Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone

Formed in 1997, the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRC-SL) is a chapter of the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP). It exists to promote co-operation between the two main religious communities in Sierra Leone (Christianity and Islam) and in order to

ensure a culture of peace and respect for human rights. The IRC-SL came into existence around the same time the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) junta overthrew the democratically elected SLPP government.²⁸ This invariably got the council involved in the politics of the country. It issued statements condemning the coup and calling for the restoration of democracy. As part of efforts to bring the war to an end, the council organised consultative meetings with the government, RUF leaders, paramount chiefs, SLTU, National Union of Sierra Leone Students (NUSS) and the Sierra Leone Labor Congress (SLLC). These consultations, ultimately, culminated in the Lome Peace talks where peace was finally brokered in conjunction with ECOWAS, OAU, and UN. Since then, the council has generally been involved in the promotion of peace and reconciliation through workshops, and radio and television discussions.²⁹

3.4.2 Sierra Leone Association of Journalists

The Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) was established in 1971. This was during the period the country was declared one-party state by Stevens. The association, therefore, immediately became the unofficial opposition to the government. It criticized the excesses of the government and agitated for a return to constitutional rule.³⁰ When the military took over the country in 1992, the association continued to call for a return to democracy. Some of its members were arrested and incarcerated but that did not deter them from their defence of democracy. Since 2002, the SLAJ has continued to be at the forefront of efforts to promote good and accountable governance in Sierra Leone. It is one of the CSOs that have acted as a vanguard for the defence of the rights of citizens. For example, it is currently at the forefront of the campaign for the abolition of the criminal libel and other seditious laws.³¹

3.4.3 *NUSS National Union of Sierra Leone Students*

The National Union of Sierra Leone Students (NUSS) was among the groups that agitated for the return to democracy. During the one-party-rule years, the Fourah Bay College Students Union in 1977, a branch of NUSS, was particularly vociferous in its campaign against the abuses of the government.

In his article titled, “Students Shake the Pillars of Power” published in the book titled “Ripples of Hope: How Ordinary People Resist Repression Without Violence,” Robert Press gives account of how students from the Fourah Bay College resisted the rule of Stevens.³² During the military years, the union continued to resist the oppression of the soldiers and called for constitutional rule. They were among key stakeholders who participated in processes that led to the return of democracy and have since then remained a mouthpiece for the youth except that, in recent years, its front is weakened because of leadership crisis. Members of the union have accused the current government of attempts to frustrate the quest of the union to elect a new leadership.³³

3.4.4 *Sierra Leone Teachers Union*

During the heady days of military rule in Sierra Leone in the 1990s, the Sierra Leone Teachers Union was one of the Labour unions that prevailed on the soldiers to return to the barracks. Leaders of the union were among the participants at the famous Bintumani Conference – the first national consultative conference on the electoral process that was organized by the Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC) in 1995.³⁴ Indeed, to all intents and purposes, the outcomes of that conference were instrumental in shaping the future course of democracy in Sierra Leone.³⁵ Between 1997 and 1998 when the military took deposited the government of Kabbah, the SLTU embarked on a sit-down strike for the entire nine-month period and this

significantly hampered the junta's operations as a government.³⁶ Subsequently, they have continued to serve as a check on democratically elected governments and advocated for good governance in the country.

3.4.5 *SLLC Sierra Leone Labor Congress*

The Sierra Leone Labour Congress (SLLC) was founded in 1976. It is the umbrella organization of all trade unions in Sierra Leone. As at 2015, the SLLC had a membership of about 72,000 and affiliations from 27 unions and organizations.³⁷ Since its formation, the SLLC has constantly been in tango with governments over issues of workers' rights and wellbeing. During the war years, the SLLC was significantly affected, as its membership dropped from more than 150,000 to about 40,000.³⁸ This meant that it had to take an active role in the efforts to restore peace and stability. As noted by the World Bank, the SLLC was one of the foremost institutions that participated in the negotiations for peace and restoration of democracy.³⁹ Since then, it has continued to engage government on the rights of workers, including those in the informal sector who have become unionized.

3.4.6 *Chiefs and Traditional Leaders*

Since pre-colonial years, chiefs and traditional leaders in Sierra Leone have been an integral part of the governance of the country.⁴⁰ It is significant to note that the 1991 Constitution of the country makes provision for paramount chiefs from each of the districts in the country to be represented in Parliament. There are currently fourteen districts. As a matter of fact, chiefs played critical roles in the negotiations for the Lomé Peace Accord and they still continue to work with all political parties across the country to maintain peace. Chiefs are viewed as the moral compass of the society and they are well-respected.⁴¹

3.5 Post-Conflict Multi-Party Elections

After the war in Sierra Leone, the country adopted multi-party democracy, through multi-party elections, as a system of government. Political parties were required to register with the PPRC whilst the NECSL, as mentioned already, was mandated to have since 2002 been in charge of the conduct of multi-party elections in the country. According to the NECSL there are 132 constituencies in Sierra Leone. For a candidate to emerge as president, he or she must win 55 percent of the popular votes while parliamentary candidates win on first-past-the-post basis. Both presidents and parliamentarians serve for five-year tenures, but presidents can serve for only two terms while parliamentarians can serve for limitless terms.⁴² In comparison with most countries in West Africa, these tenures are common.

3.5.1 First Post-conflict Election: 2002

The first general election that took place in Sierra Leone after the war was held on May 14, 2002. It was the first-time multi-party elections was being introduced in the country after it was declared one-party state in 1978.⁴³ The stakes were really high as the rivalry between the SLPP and the APC was rekindled. The SLPP, however, had a huge advantage in the sense that they were incumbent and President Kabbah had fulfilled his promise to end the civil war with the 1996 mandate he won. The APC had performed poorly in 1996 because they were then still in the process of recovering from their ouster from office in 1992.

The APC's candidate in the 2002 presidential election was Ernest Bai Koroma who until then was little known in the political circles. Other contestants included Johnny Paul Koroma who decided to be part of the multi-party process on the platform of a new political party he formed, the Peace and Liberation Party (PLP). His participation in the election and that of Alimamy Pallo Bangura on the ticket of the Revolutionary United Front Party (RUF) was quite

significant because it was an indication that, truly, the warring factions had put down their bullets for the ballot. The contest was fierce during the campaign period but, in the end, it turned out to be a landslide victory for Kabbah who was contesting for his second and final term of office. The results as shown in Table 3-1 was a first-round victory for Kabbah who scored 70 percent of the votes. In the parliamentary elections, the SLPP won 83 followed by the APC with 27 and the PLP with two.⁴⁴ As per the constitution of Sierra Leone, some seats are reserved for chiefs. In 2002, the number was 12.

Table 3. 1: Results of 2002 Presidential Election

Candidates	Political Parties	Votes	%
Ahmad Tejan Kabbah	Sierra Leone People's Party	1,373,146	70.1
Ernest Bai Koroma	All People's Congress	426,405	22.4
Johnny Paul Koroma	Peace and Liberation Party	54,974	3.0
Alimamy Pallo Bangura	Revolutionary United Front Party	33,084	1.7
John Karefa-Smart	United National People's Party	19,847	1.0
Raymond Kamara	Grand Alliance Party	11,181	0.6
Zainab Bangura	Movement for Progress	10,406	0.6
Raymond Bamidele Thompson	Citizens United for Peace and Progress	9,028	0.4
Andrew Duramani Turay	Young People's Party	3,859	0.2
Total		1,941,930	100

Source: African Elections Database (2019)

3.5.2 Second Post-Conflict Election: 2007

Sierra Leoneans experienced the beauty of multi-party democracy in 2007 when the country, for the first time in its history, witnessed smooth political transition from an incumbent government to an opposition party. With the help of the international community, the country organised free and fair elections in which the incumbent SLPP, led by Solomon Berewa, vice-president of Kabbah, lost to Bai Koroma and the APC. Berewa got 38 percent of the votes in

the first round while Bai Koroma got 44 percent. Charles Margai of the People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC) made a good showing by placing third, with 13 percent of the votes.

In the second round of voting, Bai Koroma increased his tally to 54 percent while Berewa managed 45 percent. There was a lot of acrimony and violence in some parts of the country where some of the results were annulled. The SLPP even attempted to seek a court injunction to prevent the NECSL from announcing the results. But all the attempts ended up futile and the NECSL chairperson, Dr. Christina Thorpe, went ahead to declare Bai Koroma as the winner.⁴⁵ Tensions remained high until Berewa finally conceded defeat and it became easier for the entire country to reconcile and forge ahead. Bai Koroma took the oath of office on September 17, 2007 for his first term.⁴⁶ The APC gained majority in Parliament with 59 seats followed by the SLPP's 43 seats and the PMDC's 10 seats.⁴⁷

Table 3. 2: Results of 2007 Presidential Election

Candidates	Political Parties	1 st round		2nd round	
		Votes	%	Votes	%
Ernest Bai Koroma	All People's Congress	815,523	44.34	950,407	54.62
Solomon Berewa	Sierra Leone People's Party	704,012	38.28	789,651	45.38
Charles Margai	People's Movement for Democratic Change	255,499	13.89		
Andrew Turay	Convention People's Party	28,610	1.56		
Amadu Jalloh	National Democratic Alliance	17,748	0.96		
Kandeh Baba Conteh	Peace and Liberation Party	10,556	0.57		
Abdul Kady Karim	United National People's Party	7,260	0.39		
Total:		1,839,208	100	1,740,058	100

Source: African Elections Database (2019)

3.5.3 *Third Post-Conflict Election: 2012*

The second term bid of Bai Koroma was quite smooth as he scaled over the 55 percent constitutional requirement. In the presidential election that was held on November 17, 2012, he garnered 58 percent in the first round to win an outright victory over his closest rival, Julius Maada Bio, who contested on the ticket of the SLPP. Charles Margai still placed third except that, this time around, his share of the votes dropped to a single digit (as shown in Table 3-3). There were nine parties that contested in the election. A new party, the Citizens Democratic Party (CDP), appeared on the ballot for the first time and it placed fourth ahead of others like the PLP and RUFP. Perhaps, the abysmal performance of the PLP and RUFP was a subtle message from the voting public that they did not want to reward former rebels and warlords with the benefits of democratic dividends. But, be that as it may, the continuous participation of the PLP and RUFP was significant for the consolidation of democracy in Sierra Leone. The APC maintained its leadership of Parliament by increasing its seats to 67 while the APC lost one seat. Interestingly, the PMDC lost all its 10 seats.⁴⁸

Table 3. 3: Results of 2012 Presidential Election

Candidates	Political Parties	Votes	%
Ernest Bai Koroma	All People's Congress	1,314,881	58.7
Julius Maada Bio	Sierra Leone People's Party	837,517	37.4
Charles Margai	People's Movement for Democratic Change	28,944	1.3
Joshua Albert Carew	Citizens Democratic Party	22,863	1.0
Eldred Collins	Revolutionary United Front	12,993	0.6
Gibrilla Kamara	People's Democratic Party	8,273	0.4
Kandeh Baba Conteh	Peace and Liberation Party	6,144	0.3
Mohamed Bangura	United Democratic Movement	5,069	0.2
James Obai Fullah	United National People's Party	5,044	0.2
Total		2,459,524	100

Source: African Elections Database (2019)

3.5.4 Fourth Post-Conflict Election: 2018

An unprecedented number of political parties, 16, participated in the 2018 presidential elections in Sierra Leone. If any proof was needed to demonstrate that Sierra Leoneans have embraced multi-party democracy and multi-party elections, then the sheer numbers of political parties on the ballot was ample testament. Bai Koroma was not on the ballot because he was then completing his second and final term in office. He was succeeded by Samura Kamara, a former minister of foreign affairs and international cooperation, who came face to face with Julius Maada Bio. Also on the ballot was a first-timer, Kandeh Yumkella, who contested on the ticket of the National Grand Coalition (NGC). Another first timer was Samuel Sam-Sumana who was vice-president of Bai Koroma from 2007 until he was sacked in 2015.⁴⁹ He contested on the ticket of Coalition for Change (C4C). Before the elections there were expectations that Yumkella and Sam-Sumana could cause an upset by breaking the dominance of the SLPP and APC.⁵⁰ Yumkella broke away from the SLPP while Sam-Sumana broke away from the APC. However, tried as they did, they could not break the duopoly of the SLPP and APC. In the first round of voting Maada Bio led with 43 percent of the votes followed by Kamara who polled 42 percent. Yumkella and Sam-Sumana followed in distant third and fourth positions with six and nine percent, respectively. This forced the election into a second round as none of the candidates could meet the 55 percent requirement.

In the second round of voting, Maada Bio got 51.8 percent while Kamara got 48.2 percent as shown in Table 3-4. In spite of the closeness of the results, the SLPP conceded defeat and this paved the way for Maada Bio to take his oath of office on April 4, 2018. It has to be mentioned, however, that the APC maintained its majority in Parliament even though it was later overturned by the SLPP under controversial circumstances.⁵¹ What was significant, though, was the fact that the C4C won eight seats, followed by the NGC which won four and three

independent candidates won three seats. Importantly, it has to be added that the number of chiefs appointed to Parliament, as per the constitution of Sierra Leone, increased from 12 to 14 in 2018.⁵²

As a matter of fact, the victory of Maada Bio was highly significant. It marked the second time an opposition party had successfully wrestled power from the hands of an incumbent government.

Table 3. 4: Results of 2018 Presidential Election

Candidates	Political Parties	First round		Second round	
		Votes	%	Votes	%
Julius Maada Bio	Sierra Leone People's Party	1,097,482	43.3	1,319,406	51.8
Samura Kamara	All People's Congress	1,082,748	42.7	1,227,171	48.2
Kandeh Yumkella	National Grand Coalition	174,014	6.9		
Samuel Sam-Sumana	Coalition for Change	87,720	3.5		
Mohamed Kamaraimba Mansaray	Alliance Democratic Party	26,704	1.1		
Gbandi Jemba Ngobeh	Revolutionary United Front	12,827	0.5		
Musa Tarawally	Citizens Democratic Party	11,493	0.5		
Charles Francis Margai	People's Movement for Democratic Change	9,864	0.4		
Mohamed Charnoh Bah	National Democratic Alliance	8,344	0.3		
Mohamed Sowa-Turay	United Democratic Movement	5,695	0.2		

Patrick John O'Dwyer	National Progressive Democrats	4,239	0.2		
Kandeh Baba Conteh	Peace and Liberation Party	4,233	0.2		
Femi Claudius Cole	Unity Party	3,825	0.2		
Saa Henry Kabuta	United National People's Party	3,061	0.1		
Beresford Victor Williams	Republic National Independence Party	2,555	0.1		
Jonathan Patrick Sandy	National Unity and Reconciliation Party	2,318	0.1		
Total		2,676,549	100	2,578,271	100

Source: National Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone (2019)

3.6 Nature of Multi-party Elections in Post-conflict Sierra Leone

The interviewees for this study were asked to comment on the nature of multi-party elections in Sierra Leone in the post-conflict era, starting with the role of the NECSL. In the words of the first interviewee, a civil society organization (CSO) member, who was interviewed for this study, *NEC has so far discharged its functions well. It has not been accused of impartiality.*

The teacher further noted:

Elections are tensed moments for everyone in this country. Anytime elections approach everyone gets scared that violence may erupt. For those of us who are older and witnessed the war, we know what happened and we don't want that to happen again. That is why some of us are satisfied with the work of the electoral commission so far.

Another interviewee, a journalist, shared his perspective on the NECSL this way:

We are all happy about the performance of the NEC. They are seriously under-resourced but, within their constraints, they have done their best to preserve the peace of this country. To the extent that we have witnessed government change hands on two occasions we can say that they are doing their work fairly. In fact, I applaud their efforts. But we also need to appreciate the support of the international community including ECOWAS, African Union and the United Nations. They have all assisted us in the running of free and fair elections in this country.

But not everyone is happy about the NECSL. A lawyer who was interviewed expressed concerns that under the Sierra Leonean Constitution, it is the president who has to approve the appointment of the chairperson of the NECSL with approval from Parliament. She said:

My only concern about NEC is the fact that the president has to appoint the chairperson. I suspect this might create problems in the future if we are not careful. I am also not happy about the fact that the current commission is made up four men and one woman. This is not gender balance. We need to increase the participation of women at the highest levels and these are the areas I think we should be pushing more women. Women are peacemakers and we need more of them at the board to douse the tensions that sometimes characterize our elections. I think we should increase the current number of five to seven and create more space for women.

A member of the ruling party who was interviewed agreed that the NECSL has lived up to expectations but called for increased government support to the commission. He said:

All our elections are donor supported. Many people don't see anything wrong with that, but I think it undermines our independence as a country. We are thankful to the international donor agencies for their assistance. But I think we have to reduce the corruption in the country so that we can save part of the money to sponsor our own elections. Democracy is expensive but it has brought us peace and so we must be willing to pay the price of democracy, including our elections.

Commenting on the election of presidents, opinions were divided on the fact that a candidate has to attain 55 percent before he or she can be elected president. Some people felt it was a good constitutional provision whilst others felt it was cumbersome. For those who were in favour, they argued that given the history of the country it was important a president commanded significant support before ascending to the presidency. For those who oppose it, their argument was that the same requirement was not necessary for the runoffs and so there is no point having it in the first place. Below is the view of an opposition politician:

I seriously think that we need to take a second look at that provision in the constitution. In most jurisdictions in the ECOWAS sub-region candidates are required to get 50 percent plus one vote and so I don't know why ours is so complex. If the argument is that it is because of the war, we are not the only ones that experienced war. The Liberian constitution requires 50 percent and so why are we different?

Another interviewee, a development worker, who shared the position of the opposition politician, had this to say about the 55 percent constitutional requirement:

Political competition in this country is mainly between the SLPP and APC. The SLPP wins in the south and the APC wins in the north. The margins are usually not big. The first time we experienced a smooth changeover in the history of this country was in 2007. We had to go into a runoff. It was between Bai Koroma and Berewa. Koroma got about 44 percent of the votes to win the first round against the 38 percent of Berewa. This forced the election into a second round of voting as per the constitution. Bai Koroma then got about 54 percent of the votes. Do you see the problem? Even when they were only two none of them was able to get 55% so how can we expect a first-round victory of 55 percent? That is the unrealistic constitutional requirement.

Indeed, an analysis of the development worker's argument against the 55 percent is underscored by the outcomes of the 2018 elections in which none of the candidates who participated in the runoff, Maada Bio and Kamara was able to score 55 percent. For Maada Bio who scored 43 percent in the first round, he only managed 51.8 percent in the second round while Kamara who scored 42 percent in the first round also garnered 48.2 percent. The implication of this is that, with the gap decreasing between the two main parties the 55 percent requirement will only be setting up the country for runoffs in all future elections.

However, for those who support the 55 percent requirement, it is a very important constitutional provision that has to be preserved. Below is the explanation that the pro-government interviewee gave:

Our country has a long chequered history of political violence. It predates the independence era and got worse after independence. We have gone through a bitter one-party system, a bloody coup and civil war before arriving at where we are today. Those who made our constitution were therefore guided by history. They were looking at a situation where it would be so difficult for a political party to have an outright win unless it is extremely popular. Where there is no outright winner, it presents an opportunity for consensus building among a coalition of parties. And that is where the unity process begins. And that is the wisdom behind the 55 percent constitutional requirement.

3.7 Socio-political Effects of Multi-party Elections on Post-conflict Sierra Leone

The interviewees were also asked to comment on the socio-political effects of multi-party elections on Sierra Leone and they expressed varied opinions. While some felt that the country has chalked a lot of successes after the war, others felt the country still has a long way to go in terms of growing its democracy for meaningful development. A victim of the war who was interviewed shared her experiences and compared it with the current situation. She spoke in her local Mende language which is translated here as:

The experience during the war was harrowing. I lost all my family members. I was then a teenager and I still remember the night the rebels attacked our home. We had to run away. I was lucky I escaped with one of my neighbours into the bush. We walked a long distance into the forest for several days. When we came back, my entire family was gone. I am happy we are no longer fighting. I pray we never fight again. It is better for us to elect our governments peacefully in a democratic way.

Another interviewee, a taxi driver, shared his perspective on the sociopolitical effects of multi-party elections. He also spoke Mende which is translated below:

Since 2002 I have participated in every election. I always encourage our union members to go and vote. Voting is what has brought peace into this country. Some of the people who fought in the war are now political party activists. I know them. I see them all the time. They are all not in the same political party. So I can say that they now prefer politics to war. I always advise the youth against violence. At some point during the war I became a refugee and the experience was horrible. So I prefer elections even if there are problems with it.

A former combatant who fought during the war also commented:

There is nobody in Sierra Leone today who does not like the current democratic dispensation. Even if there are imperfections with the system it is better compared with the situation in the 1990s during the war. Today, government is not spending money on weapons and ammunitions to fight rebels. Those monies are being channeled into helpful social interventions. Today nobody is getting amputated because of war. Our children are now in school studying for a better future. I was lost many of my colleagues during the war. Those of us who survived have retired into misery but we are happy about the peace our children and grandchildren are enjoying.

Thus, it was obvious from the interviewees that Sierra Leoneans have embraced multi-party democracy and, with it, multi-party elections. It was generally agreed that multi-party elections

have brought peace to the country. The point of departure, however, was when interviewees were asked whether multi-party democracy and elections have brought development. Not surprisingly, the pro-government interviewee sounded very optimistic:

This current government is only one year in office. We came to meet a lot of mess. The previous administration messed up everything. There were constant reports of corruption in the media and that is why they lost the elections. The current government is now trying to put the country back on track. Patience is required but unfortunately many people have high expectations. Poverty levels are high and so we understand the agitations but the government is on track.

An unemployed graduate who was interviewed was less charitable in his response on the issue of government being on track. He said:

The SLPP and APC are all the same. They are corrupt. They give scholarships to their children and people like us without political connection have to roam the streets. I am tired of these two parties. They promise so much but they don't deliver. We only see the lives of politicians improving. Poor people are still poor. I haven't been able to find a job after school. As you can see, I am now assisting my mother in her trade. Democracy is good but it is not benefitting the poor.

3.8 Successes of Multi-party Elections in Post-conflict Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone is often showcased by the international community as one of the success stories when it comes to post-conflict countries that have been to democratize. After the war ended in 2002 the country, with the help of the international community, pursued the path of peace through multi-party democracy and it has since remained so. Some of the interviewees who were interviewed for this study expressed satisfaction that the country is making strides with democracy and multi-partyism.

In the view of the ex-combatant the country is on track:

These days when you listen to international news you don't hear of fighting in Sierra Leone. There is peace now and everyone is happy. When we were in the jungle we used to listen to the BBC and all the news about Sierra Leone was bad. The country's image became negative. But that is not the situation now. In this era of democracy everything is peaceful.

A domestic election observer shared the following views:

We have come a long way with democracy. Our country has received a lot of donor support because of democracy. I don't know what would have happened if we were still fighting and not practicing democracy. Under this system, everyone gets the opportunity to be part of our politics and so no one has an excuse to pick up arms again. I am not sure we want any other system.

The pro-government interviewee also shared this perspective:

Those who know the history of this country very well know that we have been through a one-party system before. It didn't help this country. It is part of the reasons why we went to war, but many people forget that. You know that system further divided the country along ethnic lines because of the nepotism. Nobody wants that again. Democracy is a better option.

3.9 Challenges of Multi-party Elections in Post-conflict Sierra Leone

Some of the challenges facing the country's experiment with multi-party democracy and elections were also discussed with the interviewees. Many of them expressed concerns about the prevalence of election-related violence. A teacher who was interviewed shared the following experience:

During the 2012 elections I got injured at the hands of some party hoodlums. I had gone to a polling station to cast my vote and fighting broke out whilst the elections were still ongoing. A group of machete-wielding youth invaded the polling station and there was a clash between them and the police who fired gunshots. There was pandemonium and whilst I was running away, I fell into a gutter. For three weeks I could not get to work.

The graduate interviewee also shared his experience on election-related violence. He revealed that, *during last year's election I was recruited as an observer and my experience was terrible.*

According to the teacher:

When the results were announced at the polling centre where I was stationed, some of the youth in one of the parties rejected the results and demanded a recount. The other party's youth insisted that the results were okay and so there was no need for a recount. This resulted in an explosion of violence and everyone had to run for cover. But for the timely intervention of the security agencies the situation could have gotten out of hand. I had to take cover in a moving truck. As a matter of fact, I have decided that I will not observe any elections again because this happened in a district which is far from here.

Indeed, the issue of electoral violence is one that has been a common feature of elections in Sierra Leone. For example, in 2018 the international community, represented by the United States and the European Union (EU) issued statements on the issue of violence in Kambia District of the country during the local council elections.⁵³ Reports of election observer teams to the country's elections have also frequently flagged the issue of violence. Many people believe that the high unemployment rate in the country increases the stakes for young people who see their participation in the elections as their only means of survival in an economy in which more than 70 percent of the population live on less than \$1.25 day.

But besides, political violence, there are other challenges that include logistics. A staff with an international donor agency revealed that, the greater part of the cost of elections in Sierra Leone is borne by donor partners. He explained:

The UNDP has been leading the effort to mobilize funds for elections in this country with support from DfID, the European Union and the United States. As a matter of fact we have been receiving multi-donor budgetary support in all aspects of our economy. And that is because the economy is still fragile. Our only foreign exchange earnings are from diamonds and you know commodities are not doing so well on the international market these days. So, we rely on donors.

On technical side the elections observer also had this to say:

Part of the challenges we faced in the 2018 elections at the polling centres were due to the fact that we did not use biometric cards unlike the 2012 elections. The cost of biometric cards was about \$24 million, and we could not afford it. We are a poor country. The NEC had to rely on the National Civil Registration Authority for the compilation of the voter's register. So, the cost of elections is very expensive, and we are struggling.

Most of the interviewees concurred that elections are quite expensive for the country and often the poor get priced out. For example, in the 2018 elections the registration fee for parliamentary candidates was \$1,300 and \$13,000 for presidential candidates. That was a fee fixed in 2012 and it generated a lot of controversy. Many people groups including civil society organizations (CSOs) decried the fact that the amount did not reflect the economic realities of the country.

An attempt was made to revise the figures to \$400 (parliamentary) and \$4,000 (presidential) in October 2017 but due to some delays in the process, it could not be effected before Parliament rose in December 2017.⁵⁴

Under the circumstances, the government had to subsidize the amount just like the 2012 situation. But, even then some groups, particularly the women and youth groups, and people with disability still complained about the subsidized fees. There is a conspiracy theory that the bigger parties influenced the NECSL to peg the filing fee at a high rate to deter the smaller parties from participating in the elections.⁵⁵ There are those who believe that the incumbent party adopted the strategy to win the patronage of the smaller parties as it did in the 2012 elections where it won by 58 percent in the first round.

According to the unemployed graduate:

Elections in this country are for the rich and privileged. How many ordinary people can raise the financing required to go around this country campaigning? Elections here are for the highest bidder because, out of hunger and poverty, many people take money before they vote. That explains why there are less than 20 women parliamentarians and the youth are missing. I am interested in politics, but I don't have the means.

The teacher also complained about the influence of money in Sierra Leonean politics. She lamented:

I once contested in the district elections and lost because I did not have money. My main opponent was uneducated, but he had money. He cannot even write his own name properly, but he won. He distributed a lot of items to the electorates and I could not afford that.

Besides the money factor the teacher also lamented the fact that some of the socio-cultural beliefs and practices in the country put women at disadvantage. She explained that:

This is a male dominated society. Women are not respected that much. That is why only few women are in Parliament. We were the most affected by the war. Most women are poor and do not own any property. There is limited space for our participation in politics which is considered as a male dominated area. You know, because of what happened during the war; the rapes and sex slavery and all that, most women prefer

not to go near politics. Therefore, I can say that there is a big barrier to women's participation in multi-party elections.

3.10 Future of Multi-party Elections in Post-conflict Sierra Leone

Interviewees for this study were also asked to comment on the future of multi-party elections in Sierra Leone. They were all unanimous that the country will continue to operate on the path of multi-party democracy and multi-party elections because it has so far augured well for the country. Some of them, however, highlighted some challenges that must be overcome in order for the country to continue with multi-party elections.

A university lecturer who was interviewed was very optimistic about the future even though she had concerns about the participation of women. She said:

Rule of law is now entrenched in this country and that for me is significant. It shows that democracy has a future in this country. We are still building institutions. Every now and then the Supreme Court is called upon to interpret one constitutional provision or the other. That is good. I am sure that if we continue the way we are going now, Sierra Leone will be a model democracy in Africa in the next decade. But, as I have said before, my biggest concern is about the participation of women. We need to remove barriers that impede the participation of women. We need to see more women in Parliament and also in high positions.

The pro-government interviewee also shared in the optimism of the lecturer. He noted that:

We have been stable since 2002 and we have changed government twice. That never happened even once in the period before the war. So, it tells you that we are making progress in the post-war era. I am positive about the future of this country. We are laying the right foundation for the future, but it will take time because we don't have the resources. The international community must continue supporting us and as a country we must also work hard to minimize the corruption. We need every Leone to develop this country. But the future is bright. I am sure about that.

The unemployed graduate did not sound so optimistic in his assessment of the future of democracy in Sierra Leone. In his view, the rate of unemployment in the country is causing many young people to lose faith in the political system. He rather expressed caution that if the unemployment situation was not brought under control it hurt the future of the country. He bemoaned:

My uncle was a rebel fighter for the RUF, and he tells me that in those days he and his friends joined the rebels out of desperation. He tells me the economy was bad and unemployment was very high. Meanwhile, the politicians and their families were enjoying themselves and that provoked the youth. If you look around today, the same thing is still going on. We are all shouting democracy. Yes, that is good but if it does not solve our problems then I don't know how the future would look like. Do you see how aggressive the party boys are? It tells you they are ready to do anything for survival. So democracy must solve our problems and that is what will give real hope for the future.

The final comment came from one of the development workers:

From where I sit, if I look into the books, I think we are doing fairly well. Rome, as they say, was not built in a day. So, in spite of the challenges confronting this country, I think we are on course. Democracy is expensive I must be honest . There is a perception in the public domain that too much money is being spent on our politicians, particularly the parliamentarians. Many people complain about that. So, I think that going forward, efforts must be made to deliver development to the people. That is the only way the future of democracy can be secured in this country.

3.11 Analysis of Field Interviews

Firstly, based on the analysis of the feedback from the interviewees, it can be established that majority of the Sierra Leonean people have now accepted multi-party elections as a better alternative to a one-party system or military governments which are generally seen to be undemocratic. Sierra Leone, in its past history has experienced one-party and military regimes and from all the analyses it is obvious that they were factors that contributed to the outbreak of the civil. It is therefore encouraging to observe that the vast majority of the people now embrace multi-party elections and multi-party democracy. For example, since 2002 the average turnout in general elections in the country currently hovers around 78.28 percent and, surely, this is empirical evidence that multi-party elections are popular with Sierra Leonean voters.⁵⁶

Secondly, the feedback from the interviewees shows that the socio-political effects of multi-party elections on Sierra Leones are mixed. While some people believe that the country has immensely benefited from the peace and stability that have been associated with elections and

democracy, it appears many are not too happy with the economic situation in the country. It is pertinent to point out that the population of Sierra Leoneans living below the poverty line is more than 60 percent. The country is currently ranked number 14 among the top 25 poorest countries in the world (with a GDP per capita of \$576).⁵⁷ The rate of unemployment is also

Thirdly, the feedback from the interviewees also shows that there are a lot of challenges with the practice of democracy, especially in the areas of representation. Presently, there are only 18 women in the country's Parliament out of a total of 124 (14.5 percent).⁵⁸ This is a clear demonstration of huge under-representation given the fact that the country has a female-male ratio of almost 1:1.⁵⁹ A second challenge the interviewees made reference to is the constitutional requirement that a presidential candidate must score 55 percent in the first round in order for him or her to be elected. From all indications, the country seems to be the only one with such a requirement in the West African sub-region and some of the interviewees feel there is need for a constitutional amendment to reflect the sub-regional standard.

On the way forward for multi-party elections, the interviewees were quite positive about the future of the country. As stated already, many of them have embraced multi-party elections. The only proviso is that some of the challenges identified with the practice of democracy must be addressed to reduce poverty and inequalities among the population, as well as the need for constitutional reforms to reflect the aspirations of the people. Again, the representation of marginalized groups must be addressed seriously much the same way as youth unemployment.

3.12 Conclusion

This chapter looked at the political history of Sierra Leone from the independence era through to the civil war period. It then discussed the reintroduction of multi-party democracy and multi-party elections in the aftermath of the civil war. It was established that the country has

organized four general elections after the war, and this has resulted in political power exchanging hands on two occasions (2007 and 2018). The politics of this era has been dominated by the SLPP and the APC even though some of the smaller parties have also won seats in Parliament. It was found out that the country has received a lot of international support in its efforts to pursue the path of democracy. Some of the interviewees who were interviewed for the study expressed satisfaction with the practice of democracy in the country. They have pointed out that the levels of poverty are so high and there is therefore the need for democracy to be made to work for ordinary people else they would lose hope in the system. Generally, majority of the interviewees sounded positive and optimistic about the future of the country.

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CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.0 Introduction

This concluding chapter presents all the findings that were made in the course of the study. It also includes some recommendations on how multiparty democracy and multiparty elections can be sustained in Sierra based on the feedback that was obtained during the field interviews.

4.1 Summary of Findings

This study was carried out to assess multiparty elections in post-conflict countries with special focus on Sierra Leone. The main objectives were to examine the nature, socio-political effects, challenges and future of multi-party elections in Sierra Leone. The study was hinged on the concept of multi-party democracy. This is for the reason that multiparty elections are framed within the context of multiparty democracy. Also, this conceptual framework was chosen because Sierra Leone is currently practicing multiparty democracy. At the end of the study, five main findings were made as elaborated below:

Firstly, it was established that after the war in 2002, Sierra Leone has made a lot of efforts to maintain the path of peace and stability through the adoption of multiparty democracy and the periodic holding of elections to elect presidents and parliamentarians. It was found out that the NECSL has been a major player in the organization of elections over the period. The number of political parties has also grown over the period starting with eight in the first post-conflict election in 2002 to nineteen in the last election in 2018. This shows that multiparty elections have yielded positive results in Sierra and therefore a testament of the fact that post-conflict countries can adopt multiparty elections and use the process to promote peace.

Secondly, it was established that a total of four general elections (2002, 2007, 2012 and 2018) have been organized since the introduction of multiparty elections and these elections have been hotly contested. It is significant to mention that the elections have resulted in two peaceful changeovers of governments (2007 and 2018). Furthermore, it was also found that the former warring factions have all been part of the democratic process and they have participated in the elections even though they have not made much impact through the ballot box. So far, the elections have been dominated by the SLPP and APC which were the two rival parties at the time of independence.

Thirdly, the study found out that the multiparty elections have had positive socio-political impacts on the people of Sierra Leone. To the extent that multiparty elections have helped the country end the bloodbath and ushered in peace, many people tend to believe that elections are a better choice. As it was discussed, one of the remote causes of the civil war was the declaration of the country as a one-party state in the 1970s. This created ethnic tensions that deepened until the explosion in 1991. Thus, many people are now more comfortable with the current democratic dispensation where there is pluralistic participation of all and sundry in the political process.

The fourth finding of the study related to the fact that besides the positive impact of multiparty elections and multiparty democracy, there are some challenges that have to be resolved. These include the high rate of poverty and unemployment among the youth, especially. Increasingly, the impression is being created that democracy is for the highest bidder and this appears to be causing some form of resentment among the youth, women and others who feel marginalized by the political system because they do not have money.

The fifth and final finding of the study is the fact that many people are quite optimistic about the future of multiparty elections in Sierra Leone in spite of the challenges. This is encouraging, in the sense that, if the leaders of the country could put their acts together to surmount the current setbacks of the democratic experiment, the country would maintain its newfound peace for a long time to come.

4.2 Conclusions

This study has sought to contribute to the body of literature on post-conflict elections in Africa with emphasis on Sierra Leone. The general findings show that a lot of countries that experienced various forms of conflict in the 1990s through to the 2000s have now retraced their footsteps back to multiparty elections. These include Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire and several others. With the specific case of Sierra Leone, the pursuit of democracy has been worth the while, especially because the country has achieved two electoral turnovers. This holds a lot of promise for the future and, if the current progress is sustained, there is every hope that Sierra Leone would sooner than later become a model democracy for post conflict countries.

Though, as attested in the interview response, challenges abound such as funding to run elections and heavy dependence on external support, the stability and peace that multiparty elections have brought the country cannot be underestimated. This the citizens in the country appreciate and desire to see such peace in the foreseeable future.

Again, with the success chalked so far with two electoral changeovers of governments, the citizens now expect much more than stability, and also for the National Electoral Commission to organize peaceful and credible elections in the future. Furthermore, the citizens also expect

successive governments to work to stem the tide of unemployment and support the economic especially the youth with jobs.

With the recent elections in 2018, many more political parties put forward candidates, to reduce the strength of the duopoly of APC and SLPP. Though not much was done to break the duopoly, it further re-enforced the relevance of multi-party elections and the importance of democracy in modern-day world politics. It is expected that in future elections, many more political parties will put forward candidates and this may challenge the current duopoly of APC and SLPP.

4.3 Recommendations

- Address Concerns of the Youth

The first recommendation is that the political leaders of Sierra Leone ought to take the concerns of its young people seriously when it comes to the issue of unemployment. As established in this study, part of the reasons why many youths participated in the civil war was due to the high rate of unemployment among the youth. Therefore, the leaders have the onus to address the current economic challenges that confront the youth. Leaders could setup Technical and Vocational institutions to train the youth with hands-on skills/expertise in carpentry, masonry, tailoring/dressmaking. These skills are usually less capital-intensive and could be set-up in all provinces across the country. Additionally, the government could partner local and international development bodies to support young people to develop entrepreneurial skills. Brilliant youth can be sponsored to higher academic institutions especially in the maths and sciences to further their education on scholarships. Such significant and more evident endeavors will boost the confidence of the youth in their leaders. Also, governments should work at creating conducive business environment for multi-national manufacturing firms to invest in the country, as well as support local manufacturing business to enable them to recruit

the youth in their firms. All this will ensure decline unemployment rates, with less attraction by the youth to engage in political violence.

- Involvement of Smaller Groups in the Political System

Secondly, political leaders of Sierra Leone must initiate processes to increase the participation of marginalized groups in the current political system. These include youth and women groups, as well as people with disabilities. Put differently, the government must ensure inclusiveness socially, economically and politically. Every effort must be made to minimize barriers to political participation, particularly ethnic and financial barriers.

- Review of Election Victory Criteria

Thirdly, the aspect of the Sierra Leonean constitution that requires candidates to score 55% before they can be elected president appears to be cumbersome and must be reviewed. To start with, Sierra Leone appears to be the only country in the ECOWAS region, for example, that has that kind of constitutional requirement. Besides, apart from the 2012 election where Bai Koroma had 58 percent, no other presidential candidate has ever attained that kind of percentage. And, to the extent that the second round of voting does not have the same requirement, it appears the country could dispense of it and adopt the popular 50% plus one vote system which is the commonest on the African continent. In doing this, it saves the country some funds, which will have been used for 2nd-round voting, for other development projects in the country.

- Forming Alliances by Smaller Parties

The fourth recommendation is that smaller parties in Sierra Leone may have to consider closing their ranks to form a formidable third force as an alternative to the SLPP and APC whose

dominance in the country's politics presently appears to be unassailable. The 2018 parliamentary elections for example, saw two parties, the C4C and NGC winning eight and four seats respectively. This was in addition to three seats won by independent candidates bringing the total non-SLPP-APC seats to 15. For starters, if these 15 parliamentarians could work together independently, they could become the fulcrum for a bigger alliance. These parties would have to draw lessons from the 2007 situation where the PMDC became an appendage of the then ruling APC and lost all their ten seats in 2012. By forming alliances, it provides a 3rd formidable political force in the country, which could eventually grow to compete with the two (2) big parties (SLPP and APC) in the country. A 3rd force (through an alliance) will provide the citizenry a 3rd alternative during elections, which will also contribute to growing the democracy in the country.

- Support from International Organizations

The final recommendation goes to the international community which has assisted the people of Sierra Leone to weather the storm to this point. There is still so much to be done in Sierra Leone to consolidate democracy and multiparty elections. ECOWAS and the African Union must continue to send election observers while international donor partners must continue to foot the bills of the country's elections till its economic fortunes improve. What this also means is that leaders of the country must eschew corruption and the seemingly dissipation of resources on politicians.

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Interview Guide:

An assessment of Multi-Party Elections in Post-Conflict

Countries in Africa: The Case of Sierra Leone

By Paul Dowuona

(Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy, University of Ghana)

Interview Details	
Date of Interview:	Time of Interview:
Place of Interview:	Type of Interview:
Respondent	
Name of Respondent: (optional)	Title of Respondent:
Designation of Respondent: (optional)	Expertise of Respondent:
Questions	
1. How well have elections been organized in Sierra Leone in the post-conflict era?	
2. How has the holding of multi-party elections contributed to the social, political and economic stability of Sierra Leone?	

3. What have been some of the challenges associated with the holding of multi-party elections in Sierra Leone?
4. What kind of support has Sierra Leone been receiving from the international community (including ECOWAS & AU) for the conduct of elections?
5. How independent is the National Electoral Commission (NEC) of Sierra Leone?
6. How formidable or viable are political parties in Sierra Leone?
7. What is the level of voter interest in elections in Sierra Leone?
8. How strong are democratic institutions in Sierra Leone (particularly legislature, judiciary and the media)?
9. What mechanisms does Sierra Leone have in place for the resolution of electoral disputes?
10. What is the future of multi-party elections in Sierra Leone like?