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## The Post-Conflict Environment

Monk, Daniel, Mundy, Jacob

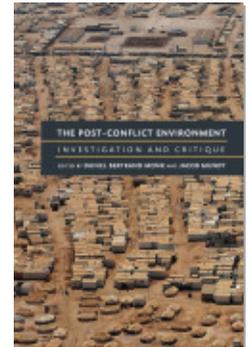
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## CHAPTER I

# Statebuilding

## *Statebuilding in a Vacuum*

### Sierra Leone and the Missing International Political Economy of Civil Wars

CATHERINE GOETZE

#### ABSTRACT

This chapter looks at the way the commonly propagated standard narrative of civil wars contributes to the constitution of post-conflict spaces and illustrates this analysis with frequent references to the case of Sierra Leone's civil war and post-conflict environment. The standard war narrative is based on three interrelated arguments which will be looked at one by one. First, it contends that post-colonial states, particularly African states, are and probably always were doomed to fail because of dysfunctional politics and deadly competition among groups, notably ethnic groups. The state, as well as ethnic groups, are hereby reified categories which take on absolute value to which real-life politics is compared; the obvious finding of gaps between ideal and reality is then taken as proof for "state failure." A second aspect of the standard narrative, namely, that of greedy warlords and material incentives for violence, is closely associated with the state failure and ethnic competition narrative. This narrative's logic follows from the state failure narrative as it proves the national elite's incompetence, the immaturity of the population, and the general lack of "politics" in the country at war. A third aspect of this common war narrative is the individualization of acts associated with the war. War is not seen as the expression of a collective grievance or social conflict but as an amalgam of individual acts; particularly acts of violence have become considered as individual, decontextualized, and isolated acts which are motivated by greed, brutality, or terror, in some accounts

even by madness, but which are never part of *longue durée* processes of the social construction of collective history. There are not symptoms of collective agency in social conflicts but acts of criminal intent and energy.

The chapter also argues that this standard war narrative—state reification, greed, and individualization—subscribes to a neo-liberal agenda of global governance. Neoliberalism is understood as containing three essential aspects: (a) economics are dissociated from society, politics, and culture as the capitalist production mode is presented not as a socio-political choice but as “naturally” legitimate and efficient; (b) as economics are dissociated from society, politics, and culture, the negative consequences and side effects of the capitalist production mode such as dispossession, impoverishment, social disruption, environmental damage, and so forth are presented as being individual and isolated incidences which only require individualized but not collective or political responses; (c) this leads to a depoliticization of the capitalist economic order and the disappearance of debate over its legitimacy.

The standard war narrative and the Neoliberal agenda are connected through the stakeholders’ interest in shaping the post-conflict environment to their worldview. I identify three such groups of stakeholders: politics, notably governments; transnational enterprises and their defendants; and Western academics. I analyze the shaping of the post-conflict environment through these stakeholders with a social field analysis which is inspired by Pierre Bourdieu’s social analytical “thinking tools.”<sup>1</sup> The field analysis demonstrates how the logic and rationale of the stakeholders’ respective social fields make them disposed to view armed violence in a country through this particular, Neoliberalism standard narrative as it is the only narrative that fits their own positioning in the world.

## INTRODUCTION

A typical Hollywood film, *Blood Diamond* (2006, directed by Edward Zwick) offers an overly stereotyped yet popular narrative of the civil war in Sierra Leone. The bad guys are the ruthless rebels of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF): sweaty, shouting, drunken brutes who force an abducted boy, Dia, to mine diamonds for them through torture, drugs, and brainwashing; the perversion of Dia’s fate is so deep that he will later point his weapon against his own father. Dia seemingly reflects the dramatic opening sentence

of Bernard J. MacCabe Jr., the CEO of Sandline International Executive—a private security company that had its hands deep in the Sierra Leonean war—in a hearing on that conflict in the US Congress: “The child terrorists of Sierra Leone know only one life: violence, prosecuted upon them through fear and intimidation by their rebel masters.”<sup>2</sup> Conveniently, *Blood Diamond* also concurs with MacCabe’s view that the mercenaries in Sierra Leone were only there to help. In the film, a white, self-identified “Rhodesian”<sup>3</sup> mercenary, Danny Archer (Leonardo DiCaprio), turns out to be a good guy in the end when he helps Solomon (Djimon Hounsou), Dia’s father, rescue his son. Solomon represents the black, helpless, and innocent victim of war who only becomes empowered when a Western journalist (Jennifer Connelly) arranges for him to speak before the international NGO-business conference at Kimberly, South Africa. There the “international community” decides to fight against so-called blood diamonds. But the film does not tell how the story continued after the Hollywood happy ending. Most probably, Dia returned to his miserable job of diamond mining for two handfuls of rice per day under the whip of drunk and brutish foremen, yet this time on the account of some international diamond mining company or some local patron. His father, Solomon, likely returned to his miserable life as rural worker, unable to remarry after the death of Dia’s mother, given the control local patrons often exert over unmarried women in Sierra Leone.<sup>4</sup>

Most stereotypes superficially resemble what we see, and so, in this case, the film is not factually wrong when giving the impression that diamonds played an important role in the civil war in Sierra Leone. However, the role and importance of diamond mining in the Sierra Leonean war is much more complex and multifaceted than presented in this film. The Sierra Leonean Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in any case, refuses to grant diamonds a causal role in the war when it is stating: “There is a widely held belief in the western world that the conflict in Sierra Leone was initiated and perpetuated because of diamonds (. . .) In the Commission’s view, this version of the conflict is simplistic.”<sup>5</sup>

If diamonds have, indeed, deeply shaped the country since their commercial discovery in the early 1930s, they have done so in a much more intricate, ubiquitous, and profound way than the standard narrative of “rebel greed” can adequately capture, whether that narrative is expressed in mainstream films, the statements of private security contractors, or prevailing theories of contemporary armed conflicts. The question arises then, why does this narrative remain so powerful as to fuel not only the phantasm of

Hollywood script writers but also to shape in large extent the post-conflict environment of Sierra Leone? I argue this narrative is essentially supported by important stakeholders in the post-conflict environment because it is a narrative that best suits their own social positions and dispositions, that shapes their interest in Sierra Leone (and other post-conflict environments as discussed in further chapters of this book), and that guides their actions and practices. Hence, this chapter takes a closer look at the narrative on civil wars in Africa generally, and in Sierra Leone particularly, in order to analyze how the standard narrative of war has shaped the post-conflict environment.

Although the war in Sierra Leone is not itself subject of analysis here (this has been done otherwise more or less well),<sup>6</sup> a short recounting of events seems appropriate to guide the reader through the subsequent analysis.

The Sierra Leonean civil war started in 1991 and was officially declared over in 2002. Sierra Leone, about the size of Scotland, is a relatively small country in West Africa with approximately five million inhabitants. It is, similar to neighboring Liberia, a colony where former slaves settled and encountered the “indigenous” populations. Until the discovery of diamonds and other precious metals, Sierra Leone participated in the world economy through the trade of slaves (until abolition), timber, palm oil, and cocoa, commonly under the direction of non-African merchants. After independence the country continued on the local level the administrative system of local chiefs and patrons which had been established by the British colonial rule, and on the national level slowly but firmly transformed into a one-party state, first *de facto* then, since continuous changes to the constitution by President Siakah Stevens in the 1970s also *de jure*. When the war broke out, Sierra Leone had been under one-party rule for twenty years, first under Stevens and, since 1987, under his successor, Josef Momoh. After the RUF had started its attacks in the east and south of the country, Momoh was removed in April 1992 by a military putsch led by a dissatisfied young captain of the Sierra Leonean army, Valentine Strasser. Allegedly the RUF attacks were supported logistically and strategically by Charles Taylor from Liberia, who is said to have met and befriended Foday Sankoh, the RUF leader, in training camps in Libya in the 1980s.<sup>7</sup>

Strasser’s National Provisional Ruling Council called for elections for 1996 in which the RUF was invited to participate but did not. The elections were won by Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, who was also considered by the United Nations and the former colonial power, Great Britain, as the lawful and legitimate president of Sierra Leone. In May 1997, however, Kabbah was over-

thrown by another military coup, this time by Major John Paul Koroma who accused the Strasser and Kabbah regimes of enriching themselves with the budgets that should go to the army and self-defense militias, and of prolonging the war to that purpose. Koroma invited the RUF to participate in the government, and Sankoh became Minister of Minerals. The United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)—engaged there since 1992 with its Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) under the leadership of Nigeria—disapproved of the coup and put the country under sanctions. In 1998, the Koroma regime was overthrown by ECOMOG troops, supported by local militias, and the RUF took to the bushes again. Kabbah was reinstated, and the United Nations lifted the sanctions. In 1999, the United Nations helped negotiate the Lomé Peace Agreement between the Kabbah government and the RUF. In the struggle over political posts, advantages, demobilization, and amnesty, the RUF resorted to fighting again (indeed it had never lost control of the hinterland), and in May 2000 it captured a large contingent of peacekeeping forces from the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), which had been deployed in 1999 first to support and then to supplant ECOMOG.<sup>8</sup> At this moment, Great Britain unilaterally intervened with 1,200 troops (Operation Palliser),<sup>9</sup> freed the captured UNAMSIL troops, pushed the RUF back, and captured Sankoh. In 2002, the war was declared over.

There is no simple way of explaining the war. Even the basic facts are disputed, such as the number of dead and displaced. Counts range between 20,000 to 200,000 killed and half to all of its population suffering displacement.<sup>10</sup> This chapter will not attempt to offer an account of the reasons, causes, and dynamics of the war but instead explore the way this post-conflict environment has been constituted by the existing narratives, and among them it will look at those that translate into global patterns of domination. The war in Sierra Leone is dominantly explained by a narrative in which state failure is imputed to the greed of political elites and rebels, in cases provoked by poverty, and where violence is seen as individual acts of brutality due to traumatising, particularly in the case of child soldiers, and individual criminal strategies of warlords. The common narrative recounts the Sierra Leonean war as result of the actions of greedy politicians and warlords (Stevens, Momoh, Sankoh, Koroma, etc.) who would undermine state institutions and make them violently collapse while at the same time leading a disparaged and disoriented youth, which has been overwhelmed by the force of globalization, into chaos.<sup>11</sup> Although strongly disputed by a large

array of very differentiated studies, testimonies, and analyses, this narrative has largely survived among various stakeholders over the past ten years since the official end of war.<sup>12</sup>

Their popularity among stakeholders in post-conflict environments can be explained by the way they suit the actual practices and policies during the war and in post-conflict settings. Expressed in various shades by international organizations,<sup>13</sup> governments,<sup>14</sup> or “observers” (e.g., journalists and academics),<sup>15</sup> this narrative has shaped Sierra Leone’s post-conflict environment by opening up and delimiting spaces of action, enabling repertoires of action and assigning roles to international and local actors. It ties international actors to these environments as they determine respective social positions in the field of international statebuilding. The narrative is sustained by this international authority that makes local actors position themselves with respect to the international discourse. Stakeholders should, in this case, be understood quite literally as those groups of actors who have stakes, that is, something to gain from participating in the shaping of the post-conflict environment. Obviously, some stakeholders have something to gain from contesting the dominant narrative (like me, constructing my intellectual and ethical identity, yet less my university career, through this exercise in critical thinking) but these are less shaping the post-conflict environment itself; the chapter here looks therefore exclusively at those stakeholders whose actions have a visible, tangible effect on the post-conflict environment in Sierra Leone, and who notably grant effectively legitimacy to act politically in the post-conflict environment to some actors and refuse it to others.

A social field analysis helps reveal how global patterns of economic, political, and cultural dominance translate into the constitution of the post-conflict environment through the processes of legitimizing and delegitimizing specific actors’ groups and their actions based on the common narratives of civil war. I will not discuss the accuracy with which these narratives capture the conflict dynamics (although a lot will be said about how they partly fail to do so) but how these narratives influence very basic choices by stakeholders in the post-conflict environment like the identification of “good” politicians or spoilers, of legitimate economic activities, or, even more generally, the definition of “politics” per se. This analysis draws on Pierre Bourdieu’s notions of social fields and capital, so as to allow the mapping of relationships of domination and power that make up the post-conflict environment.

## POST-CONFLICT PEACE AND STATEBUILDING AS SOCIAL FIELD

Post-conflict statebuilding allows certain groups to gain capital, in both the material and intangible sense, whereas it deprives others of these opportunities. These shifts in capital configurations can indicate the scope and structure of the transnational fields of post-conflict statebuilding. The notion of capital is derived from Bourdieu's work on social fields, and it encompasses more than simply material resources. Capital is, in Bourdieu's work, a generic term designating all kinds of "exchange values," hence also immaterial goods (such as prestige, honor, or knowledge), "investments" of the past (e.g., going to school) and future expected returns on investments (e.g., sending one's children to school).<sup>16</sup>

Exchange value is, in turn, not solely defined by the nature of the product and production process per se (e.g., education) but by the commonly shared dominant value structure in a given social field (e.g., education in a "good" university). This value depends, in turn, on the "stakes" of the field; that is, the right knowledge and the right way to produce scientific results in the case of universities<sup>17</sup> and from the power distribution among the actors in the field. Capital is therefore a relational and processual concept as much as the "right" capital configuration of a social field is subject to dispute, struggle, and conflict among the actors in the field. The important difference between Bourdieu's notion of field versus the standard economic notion of market, and Bourdieu's notion of capital versus the standard economic notion of capital, is this subjective and socially constructed element of exchange value. Even though economic capital may represent objective wealth, it only becomes useful capital if this objective wealth is commonly accepted and sought for as exchange value in a social field. If many divergent types of capital forms and capital (re)production processes exist, then social actors will struggle over imposing their view of what "good" capital is.<sup>18</sup>

Domination in the field arises from the capacity of certain actors to impose their specific capital(s) over others. They can do so if their capital and their strategies in using it and reproducing are more efficient, and they are so if they can draw on a large array of resources which have value in many different social fields (some types of capital are even almost entirely ubiquitous such as money); capital types are also more powerful if a generalized, undisputed view exists that this is, indeed, the best and right capital configuration for this given field, hence, some capital forms are self-reproducing.

This recognition or commonsense understanding of "right" or "good" is

what Bourdieu called symbolic capital; owners of symbolic capital have the capacity to define the “right,” the “good,” the “pure,” etc., or, in a more canonically inspired language, the “orthodoxy.” Capital is therefore structuring, and it is structured by the past experience and power distribution among actors at the given moment of the analysis. It cannot be understood without analyzing at the same time the field, what is at stake in the field, the actors and their social positions, and the ways certain capital configurations are justified, imposed, defended, and propagated as orthodoxy. It is this process of defending specific capital configurations and structuring the post-conflict environment according to dominant patterns of capital that is taking place between and among international actors. The standard narrative of war is an important discourse of legitimation and delegitimation of specific actors, practices, and institutions; that is, of specific capital holders and their forms of capital (re) production. In the following, this discourse will be taken as a starting point to look out for the stakeholders in these fields and the effects that they have managed to obtain in the post-conflict environment as well as in their respective fields by thinking in the terms of the standard narrative of war.

THE STATE IS DEAD, LONG LIVE THE STATE:  
THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE POLITICAL IN  
THE POST-CONFLICT ENVIRONMENT

One common narrative of civil wars, particularly in Africa, is the story of the violent collapse of the state. This narrative exists in different shades from hysteric catastrophism<sup>19</sup> to extremely detailed analysis how specific actors have used their institutional and political power for their private ends.<sup>20</sup> In all cases, the state failure literature is based on a similar argument, namely, that political institutions such as the Western state have been imported to the former colonies in Africa and have not “naturally” grown out of these societies’ history as they have in Europe.<sup>21</sup> Consequently, state institutions have not taken root in society and have been subverted, undermined, distorted, exploited so that many states exist barely through the force of their international recognition<sup>22</sup> and through global patronage in the Cold War.<sup>23</sup> They were likely to collapse once recognition and patronage would start failing them in the post-Cold War era and “bad” economic policies brought the economies down.<sup>24</sup> This story occasionally perpetuates the lament over weak manpower at the eve of decolonization, where Africans were said to be

lacking education and skills and, hence, were devoid of the capacities for self-government.<sup>25</sup>

Most state failure narratives are based on the ontological assumption that nation-states are the natural and basic units of analysis because they are natural containers of societies and quite naturally constitute the limits of the political. This assumption is, in turn, based on a reified understanding of the state. States are taken as given systems of territorially bound, legally founded, and bureaucratically organized institutions, and politics is conceived as taking place solely within these entities. There are few if any differentiations between different types of institutional arrangements which have, in history and present times, constituted “real” political communities, and there is especially very little, if any reflection on how these institutions have shaped policies and politics, notably political economy choices.<sup>26</sup> The reification of the ideal image of the nation-state actually avoids analyzing the variety of formal and informal socio-economic configurations over which and within which politics take place. State failure is then simply equivalent to the failure of politics per se. Consequently, conflicts are depoliticized, as politics is not seen to be exactly about the question of what form the political community will take and how it should be regulated within an existing formal-institutional and informal, social, and normative framework, and with respect to the social, cultural, political, and economic history of a society.<sup>27</sup>

Much of the state failure genre implicitly or explicitly reproduces images of African states torn by tribalism and pre-modern savagery, lacking civilization and modernity.<sup>28</sup> Precolonial and colonial African societies are considered as having existed without political structures and institutions or with extremely dysfunctional ones, already torn by ethnic warfare.<sup>29</sup> The nationalist struggles of independence are commonly denigrated as manipulation of a handful of elites, as aberration in a liberal world, or as, in the end, insufficient to overcome “traditional” cleavages such as tribal and ethnic affiliations or religious conflicts.<sup>30</sup> Those narratives rarely miss out on accounting for the ethnic and religious cleavages of the societies under analysis; however, far less, if anything is said about social and economic stratifications and structures.<sup>31</sup> Ethnicity is commonly reified in those accounts as groups, and their distinctions are taken for granted, and it is seen as the basic and unvaried feature of African societies. So strong is the view that the reality of ethnic groups is indisputable that Brubaker argues that they are treated as “as substantial entities to which interests and agency can be attributed [. . .] unitary collective actors with common purposes.”<sup>32</sup>

Such reifying perspectives understand all ethnic conflict as being about ethnic identity; in fact, they often understand all conflict in Africa as being a conflict about ethnic identity. They take the public display of discourses about ethnic identity for granted without considering that ethnification of politics might be only a framing; that is, an assembling and consensus-building speech act of a social conflict where actual causes might lay elsewhere.<sup>33</sup> The reification of ethnicity conceals conflict dynamics more than it explains them, as the process of creating identities is not the subject of the analysis. Social and political conflicts especially are hence taken out of the picture.

The image of artificial states torn in parts by ethnic groups or greedy warlords (see below for a discussion) is easily repeated in policy circles, from Robert Kaplan's (in)famous new barbarism thesis to parliaments of Western states. Reference to state failure and ethnic groups has, consequently, gained almost ritual status. Even in the case of Sierra Leone where large agreement exists that ethnicity did not play a major, or any, role at all, the large majority of analyses set out to discuss the ethnic composition of the country and include some reference to possible "tensions" that might have influenced the war.<sup>34</sup> Generally speaking, state failure and ethnicity have become synonymous for politics in Africa and a general key for explaining all sorts of problems. Hence, Lord Wallace of Saltaire (William Wallace, a Liberal Democrat and former Director of research at the Royal Institute of International Affairs) is able to state knowingly and confidently the following in the House of Lords' deliberation on conflict prevention:

We should recognise that, after all, African countries are attempting in two generations to move through stages of economic and social growth and state-building that took European states several centuries to go through. Our states went through many disastrous wars and internal conflicts and massacres before we emerged from that period. So it is not surprising that a continent that was in a pre-modern, tribal state—as with clanned Scotland not that long ago—should find it difficult to cope with that rapid transition.<sup>35</sup>

The reification of the state image and of ethnic groups allows the conclusion that one solution to conflicts is to import the state once again, yet to do so better this time by "rooting" it deeper in society.<sup>36</sup> Means to that end are seen in anti-corruption measures and so-called good governance as it is assumed in these narratives that it is corruption, fraud, embezzlement, nepotism—

that is, conscious efforts of destruction and criminality of parts of the political elites—that have undermined *the* state. This argument again denies that those acts which are considered by outsiders' eyes as corruption or nepotism might be, for others, politics, and, as Joel Migdal points out, even moral politics as it corresponds to the social convenience of community life.<sup>37</sup>

As a consequence of the failure of the first round of state importation, it is the role of the international community, writ large, to reintroduce state-ness again into these countries. Fukuyama argues: "Thus 'stateness' has to be begged, borrowed, or stolen from other sources, ranging from multilateral agencies like the UN or the World Bank in such places as East Timor or Sierra Leone, to the European powers running the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia, to the United States as an occupying power in Iraq."<sup>38</sup>

The main flaw of the argument, as Fukuyama himself and others have observed, remains that only states (as ideal-type images, not as realities) are considered legitimate institutional arrangements of which sovereignty is the central characteristic; yet, sovereignty forbids external interference into the internal affairs of the state. The Responsibility to Protect Report proposed a solution to this conundrum and was consequently adopted by the United Nations in the General Assembly's 2005 World Summit Outcome Declaration and through Security Council resolutions 1674 (2005) and 1894 (2009). In the Responsibility to Protect Report, sovereignty is defined as the capacity of states to protect their own populations from harm, which is, in turn, defined as human rights violations.<sup>39</sup> The World Summit Outcome Declaration mellows this claim down by reaffirming national sovereignty as non-interference and respect for territorial borders. However, it also puts the protection of human rights at the same level as the protection of territorial integrity and explicitly interprets the UN Charter as authority of the UN to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms (para 119). The Declaration therefore calls upon states to actively protect human rights as part of their legal obligation as members of the UN. The Declaration finally explicitly states that a state has the "responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity," even the incitement to such crimes, and that if a state fails to do so, the UN can act under chapter VI and VII, that is, such failure is tantamount to threatening world peace (para 138 and 139).

It is henceforth the existence of violence of the kind that is labeled "human rights violations" by the United Nations Security Council (and sometimes simply regional arrangements such as the European Union) that makes

a state a “failed state.” The vagueness of the term and the utter confusion that exists over the cause-effect relationships in state failure allows for an enormous elasticity to the narrative, such that it is easily applied to Sierra Leone but far more difficult to argue, in the UN Security Council, for conflicts like Russia’s war in Chechnya.

The analytical weaknesses of the concept are largely compounded by its political utility. In narratives on civil war, it permits explanations that hold the huge advantage for international ordering policies to categorize groups of actors and to impute them responsibilities in the conflict and post-conflict environment, namely, by distinguishing those who allegedly undermine or have attacked the state, and those who are likely to save it. Hence the crucial question for post-conflict environments is the identification of “spoilers” and the means of coercing them into the statebuilding exercise.

The criteria for distinguishing state supporters from state attackers (“spoilers”) are, as the elasticity of the narrative shows, less the actual policies of the actors. Indeed, the simple fact of using violence might be sufficient. The identification of a spoiler is primarily based on these actors’ compatibility with the dominant political capital in the global order and with their compliance with the economic, social, and political project of the statebuilders.

Stakes are high, as the dominant principle of global order itself is a matter of dispute between the members of the United Nations Security Council with a deep rift growing between, on the one side, the United States, Great Britain, and France who advocate the human rights and responsibility to protect interpretation of sovereignty (all but for themselves, of course) and, on the other side, China and Russia who cling to a traditional understanding of sovereignty as state of non-interference. Around this Security Council struggle, a wider competition is going on between states and international agencies, foremost the United Nations for whom the responsibility to protect interpretation is an excellent inroad to expanding its authority in world politics, and between a larger and variable group of states outside the UN Security Council, including Germany, Japan, Brazil, India, and to a certain extent countries like Nigeria, Egypt, Israel, or Canada who, each, dispose of some particular form of capital that bestows it with a crucial position in the social field of international politics and shapes its interest in either interpretation of sovereignty.

In the case of Sierra Leone, as in most post-conflict environments, it is the human rights and responsibility to protect discourse that represents the dominant symbolic capital. Bourdieu defined symbolic capital as socially shared recognition of dominant actors’ capacity to author(ize) the “right”

way of interpreting the world: “Symbolic power is the power to construct a reality which follows a gnoseological order.”<sup>40</sup> Following this concept, the definition of state failure and of political groups which are legitimate to participate in the re-introduction of the states is nothing less than a sideshow of a larger dispute over how much intervention is admissible in the current world system and what constitutes acceptable and legitimate forms of violence and what does not—an archetypical symbolic power struggle according to Bourdieu.<sup>41</sup>

Symbolic capital gains its value from the recognition of its authority through a large number of other actors (like all capital); others integrate the dominant discourse as part of their capital configuration (if they can) and strategy to develop their social positions. In the case of the Sierra Leonean war and post-conflict environment, this mimicry strategy has allowed states like Nigeria to gain international standing as defenders of the human rights and responsibility to protect norms despite its own internal human rights violations. Nigeria thereby bridged the difficult gap that has opened between the understanding of sovereignty as being predominantly based on territorial integrity and the responsibility to protect understanding. During the war, Nigeria became a pillar of the external “peacekeeping” through ECOMOG in Sierra Leone, hence, presenting itself in the United Nations and ECOWAS as the image of a strong state with strong institutional capacities (that is, a military), and one overly dedicated to the new interventionism norm. By playing up as a defender of human rights in another country and proposing at the same time its good services as peace broker (one of the many peace agreements in the war was signed in Nigeria), Nigeria warded off nosy questions about its own human rights records and border stability. The latter position had the additional advantage of reaffirming the post-colonial order of West Africa by excluding any peace solutions that foresee border changes.

Nigeria’s position, which would have been otherwise considered extremely difficult to hold, fits perfectly well with the interventionism-versus-sovereignty ambiguity within the international community, and hence benefitted extensively from the dominant global order.

#### NARRATIVES OF GREED AND DIAMONDS: LEGITIMIZING AND DELEGITIMIZING ECONOMIC ACTORS

Another dominant narrative of civil wars locates the most important enabling condition of armed conflict in poverty and underdevelopment where

strongmen will try to gain economic advantages through the use of armed violence and particularly by illegitimately and violently exploiting natural resources.<sup>42</sup> This discourse has been mostly propagated by development bodies like the World Bank or Western governments' foreign aid agencies.<sup>43</sup> Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler's greed explanation is the best known of these: civil wars will break out if the material profits that can be gained from violently exploiting natural resources outweigh the costs of violent appropriation.<sup>44</sup> Hence, violence entrepreneurs have strong incentives to wage war in order to gain access to the riches of natural resource exploitation. The two authors tried to prove that "objective grievances" measured by the Gini coefficient as proxy for social inequality, an ethno-linguistic index as proxy for social fragmentation, and the country's Polity score as proxy for political repression do not correlate significantly with the outbreak of civil wars. However, resource wealth seemingly leads to a higher risk of civil war and so, the authors conclude, greed is more important than grievances. In a similar study, a number of researchers found that diamonds particularly are significantly and positively correlated with the outbreak of civil wars.<sup>45</sup> These studies were complemented by others which argued that poverty-stricken populations will join armed factions for booty and loot if other sources of income fail, for instance due to external price shocks.<sup>46</sup>

Economic war analyses have been widely criticized for their methodological problems.<sup>47</sup> For most of their "proxies," the available data are, to say the least, patchy, given that the collection of reliable data on business revenues and taxes (necessary for the estimation of the GDP of a country), of individual revenues and taxes (necessary for the estimation of income and income inequality), and of the geographical and social distribution of economic activity is already difficult in most developing countries, yet even more so in the context of wars. In the time and country range used by Collier and Hoeffler in their 2004 study, only in four of seventy-nine cases was the Gini coefficient of actual good quality according to the original source.<sup>48</sup>

However, the most striking failure of these economic analyses is their incapacity to tell us anything about the production structure of a country that leaves individuals confronted with a binomial choice between farming (or mining) and fighting.<sup>49</sup> They do not investigate how an armed conflict is embedded in a social order that is shaped and reproduced by the economic opportunities on which it is built. Economies of countries considered at risk of war are predominantly based on agricultural or mining monocultures with a small manufacturing sector while commonly lacking services, communica-

tions, and a high-end technology sector. Such thin production structures can produce polarized and vulnerable social orders, which are already, even without outright war, upheld by violence, yet they do not have to, and these orders will take very different forms from one society to another. Additionally to the failure to analyze the official economic structure of a country, these analyses fail to account for the informal economy. It is perceived as part of the criminal economy but very seldomly, if ever, as a correlate and complementary to the official economy.<sup>50</sup> Informal economies develop over long time periods and are not causally related to civil wars. In most countries black markets constitute a means of survival for individuals and communities. In oppressive states, they can also offer spaces of resistance.<sup>51</sup> Hence, informal structures can have stabilizing effects because they offer employment and income where the formal and official sectors do not and because they replace failing public structures. Notably, and confusingly for anyone who wants to use a distinction between the formal and informal (shadow and light), they do so at the same time and often by the same actors, as they are grounds of government corruption, large-scale embezzlement, money laundering, or rebel-movement financing.

Under the condition of failing industrial development, declining rural sectors, and growing informal economies, accumulation and the formation of social classes take particular forms. New social classes emerge and others sink into poverty, most often in rural populations.<sup>52</sup> This can lead to violent disruptions of social hierarchies and create major social conflict, but again, it does not have to. There is no clear and linear causality that can be established between social change and civil wars. Social conflicts can take various forms, and it all depends very much on the social mobilization processes, on leadership and opportunities, as well as on the political and socio-economic context. Richards and Chauveau, for instance, point out that similar dysfunctions of patron-client networks in Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire have led to civil war in the former and to xenophobic politics in the latter case.<sup>53</sup> It is only by a careful study of the local economic opportunities, their interactions with global structures and processes, and how these shape social orders that the risk and type of violence can be evaluated through which discontent and conflict might erupt; it also needs local specific analysis, which includes local transnational analysis as well as the local impact of global structures, in order to evaluate by which trajectories which actors will gain or lose from a civil war. The over-aggregated approach of quantitative grievance studies generally misses out on all these differentiations.

What the greed narrative does, however, is to criminalize all economic activities, which can be, by near or far, associated with a rebel movement and, henceforth, legitimizes exactly the same activity for other governmental and other “legal” actors. The simple fact that every armed movement will need to procure and pay for weapons somehow becomes blurred by the focus on the “greed” motive and the inversion operated by identifying primary resources as inciting rebellions and not rebellions inciting the exploitation of natural resources. Legitimacy or illegitimacy, right or wrong of an economic activity does not result from the production mode as such but from the actor pursuing this economic activity. In the Sierra Leonean case, for instance, it is not diamond mining for two handfuls of rice per day which is exploitative, nor the structure of global diamond markets where profit margins of several hundred percent are realized (without diamonds having any real use value, as even industrial diamonds can be nowadays replaced by ceramics),<sup>54</sup> but the fact that the RUF, the rebel movement, has used diamonds to purchase weapons.

The greed hypothesis contends that the rebels’ modes of enrichment are more predatory than other forms of natural resource exploitation in Sierra Leone (or in Africa in general) and that, generally speaking, the brutality displayed by these actors is more serious than the brutality displayed in the “legitimate” exploitation of resources. Hence the international narrative does not condemn mining in its exploitative form per se but only if it is not the state or multi-national firms pocketing the profit. It is the definition of international-socially acceptable economic actors that is at stake. During the Sierra Leonean war and in its post-conflict environment, rebels or former rebels were and are clearly not acceptable. The UN Security Council’s Resolution 1306 embargoed all diamond trade from Sierra Leone except for diamonds certified by the Sierra Leonean government,<sup>55</sup> even though it was evident that the government had also financed its war efforts by paying private security companies with shares in diamond mining. Rumors persist that ECOMOG troops were involved in diamond trading too.<sup>56</sup>

The United Nations and the Kimberley Certification Scheme made a general rule out of this distinction between legitimate diamonds certified by governments and illegitimate diamonds, mined and sold by “opponents” by stipulating:

Conflict diamonds are diamonds that originate from areas controlled by forces or factions opposed to legitimate and internationally recognized gov-

ernments, and are used to fund military action in opposition to those governments, or in contravention of the decisions of the Security Council.<sup>57</sup>

A number of reports were decisive in shaping the United Nations' and other agencies' views on the diamond mining sector in Sierra Leone: "The Heart of the Matter" report by the Canadian NGO Canada Africa Partnership, financed by the Canadian Ministry of Development;<sup>58</sup> the report of the Expert Panel on Diamonds pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1306;<sup>59</sup> the World Bank report "Conflict Diamonds";<sup>60</sup> and the report "Sierra Leone Diamond Policy Study," sponsored by the UK Department for International Development.<sup>61</sup> These reports concur in one shared view of Sierra Leone's diamond industry. Sierra Leone's diamond sector became dysfunctional because of government corruption<sup>62</sup> yet this does not pose any fundamental problem that needs new arrangements of the mining industry. The end of the war, in fact, offers the possibility to restart anew by supporting the post-conflict government—which is "good" because elected—in licensing foreign investors.<sup>63</sup>

Those who had played a major role in the exploitation of the country's natural resources in the past—namely, multi-national companies registered in South Africa, Canada, the United Kingdom, or Israel and the international merchant networks—were exempt from being imputed any responsibility for the breakdown of Sierra Leone's economy or even politics. Neither the global diamond market nor the principles of cartel trade underlying it were critically examined for their contribution to the impoverishment and the retarded economic development of Sierra Leone. Economic alternatives to the mining sector or to foreign licensing of the mining sector, for instance, nationalization or the creation of local cooperatives, were not considered in these reports.

Meanwhile, the welfare function of minerals trade for Sierra Leone's society remains a thing to be proven. Before the war, the minerals industry in Sierra Leone contributed to 70 percent of the total value of exports but made up only 14 percent of the GDP and employed just 3.5 percent of the total labor force.<sup>64</sup> The global mineral sector is peculiarly structured as it is largely dominated by a very restricted number of multi-national companies, which are fully integrated vertically into cartels in those areas that are of concern for Sierra Leone (rutile, bauxite, diamonds). In other words, these multi-national companies control the entire production and distribution chain: prospecting, exploitation, trade, distribution, and sales. The entirety of raw

diamonds (and of other raw minerals) is exported, and none are treated in Sierra Leone itself; there is no “trickle down” effect, so to speak, into other sectors of the Sierra Leonean economy.<sup>65</sup> Within the global minerals market, the diamond market is particularly concentrated as it is controlled up to 75 percent by the South African firm De Beers. In some economic theories, the cartelization of the minerals industry is justified by the risks involved in prospecting and exploitation, which require great financial flexibility and, hence, price control.<sup>66</sup> However, the value of diamonds is rather the result of a conscious marketing strategy for a mineral that has little use-value, which had not figured on the list of precious gems before the twentieth century, and that, from the outset, has been marketed as luxury good by controlling strictly its scarcity. The role of the South African company De Beers was crucial for this marketing not only by creating the slogan “Diamonds are forever” but also by establishing the still dominant cartel system by which almost all of the world’s diamond production is bought and resold by De Beers—at their conditions and prices, obviously.<sup>67</sup>

In Sierra Leone, however, the upfront costs associated with prospecting are largely minimized as the territory is nowadays fully prospected, including the deep pipes (commonly referred to as “kimberlite mines” as their geological pattern was first described for the diamond mines of Kimberley).<sup>68</sup> Most of the mining in Sierra Leone has, in the past anyway, taken place on the surface (commonly referred to as “alluvial mining”—mining in the waterbed). Alluvial mining is more labor-intensive than capital- and technology-intensive. Only recently, where most alluvial sites are being depleted, does the problem of technology-intensive deep mining appear.

In fact, it is the easiness with which alluvial diamonds can be mined that is, by the above cited reports, seen as the main problem of regulating the mining sector in Sierra Leone.<sup>69</sup> Anyone can become a diamond miner by means of water, spade, sieve, and hard work. It is estimated that more than 50 percent of the country’s diamonds are mined in this artisanal fashion. Artisanal mining provides a much greater share of jobs than do the multinational companies, yet, its largely anarchic existence is seen as the main problem of Sierra Leone’s economy and recovery. In most international reports, artisanal mining is described as the main reason for Sierra Leone’s failing state income.

Most of the artisanal mining takes place without governmental license, diamonds are smuggled out of the country, and, obviously, miners and mine owners do not pay any taxes on income achieved. Miners are not protected

in any way and are commonly not collectively organized or members of existing labor unions. Mine owners are usually local chiefs who have “inherited” their presumed right to mine from their empowerment in colonial times. They eagerly and jealously defend their alleged privileges by violent means, by using and abusing local legal customs, notably bride services or penalties imposed on young men for “unruly” behaviour, and by manipulating national and international stakeholders. From this ambivalent position of being quite often the only local job provider and, on the other side, commonly extremely exploitative, many international agency reports have mainly retained the latter part, imputing some of the responsibility for the war to the greed of these local chiefs.

Whether this analysis is correct or not is, in this chapter here, less of interest. Rather it is noteworthy that this focus on artisanal mining fits well into the standard narrative of civil wars (the greedy local chiefs) and suits even better the international ideas of restructuring the mineral mining sector of Sierra Leone to allow greater foreign investment. Artisanal mining is a thorn in the side of international mining interest for two reasons. First, the value of diamonds is not intrinsic but dependent on their scarcity. This is one of the main reasons why De Beers from the outset aimed at controlling the entire sales flow of the mineral and, hence, the quantity available. Illicit mined diamonds, however, are not sold to “official” dealers; their quantities are not controlled, nor are their prices; they risk flooding the market, hence, depreciating the prices of diamonds elsewhere.<sup>70</sup> This risk has been recognized not only by De Beers but also by other diamond producers<sup>71</sup> and is probably one of the major reasons why these actors cooperated in the establishment of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme.

Second, illicit mining questions both the state’s authority to control its territory as well as the principles of state-guaranteed private property rights. Mining on other companies’ concessions has been a practice since diamonds were discovered when Sierra Leone was still a British colony. The first (and for a long time only) official mining company, the Sierra Leone Selection Trust (SLST), a subsidiary of the American Selection Trust Ltd., very early on employed private security forces to keep illicit miners out of their concessions, yet without much success.<sup>72</sup> In the 1950s, the British undertook several efforts to ban illicit mining notably by “foreigners” (miners suspected to be from Guinea, Côte d’Ivoire, Senegal, etc.) and expelled them with the help of French authorities from Sierra Leone.<sup>73</sup> At its origin, illicit mining was already defined as mining on state property, which had been leased out

by the colonial authorities to a non-African, non-Sierra Leonean cartel-type mining company. Illicit mining therefore appears as the double problem of protecting state and private property (the land and the license) and enforcing the colonial authority's control of the territory.<sup>74</sup> For Sierra Leoneans on the ground, however, it seemed reasonable to argue that they were mining on "their" territory. The RUF seemingly referred to such feelings of collective possession to justify their mining activities. These were presented as rightful repossessions of profits by the miners and as acts of resistance against exploitative local chiefs, state agencies, or multi-national companies.<sup>75</sup>

This reading of the conflict between multi-national enterprises and artisanal mining as a case of colonial dispossession and rebellious repossession is rarely found in the literature and especially not in the literature produced and referred to by the main stakeholders in the post-conflict environment. The fact that foreign capitalised cartels, which are entirely oriented towards the global market, dominate the trade is rather presented as normalcy. All of the reports cited above argue that legal mining—mining through these companies—is central to economic development of the country, which has been lost in the past because of irresponsible policies and bad governance, but which, with the right policy management, can become the basis for development again.<sup>76</sup> None considers alternatives.

The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme has given legal leverage to both actor groups, governments and multi-national companies, notably those represented by the World Diamond Council. The certification scheme only allows certified diamonds to be sold to retail. The certificate of origin is solely issued by the governments of diamond-producing states. It is supposed to assure customers that they are not buying "blood diamonds" or "conflict diamonds" (diamonds mined by opponents of governments). Through the greed narrative, and its international agreement correlate of the Kimberley Certificate, illicit mining and artisanal mining became associated with rebel diamonds. It is not the exploitation of mineral resources for the private account of a very limited number of companies and company shareholders that is at stake in the post-conflict environment but what is seen as infringement on their activities, artisanal mining.

To summarize, the civil war narrative that focuses on greed shapes and constitutes the post-conflict environment by ascribing legitimacy to certain economic activities but, more importantly, to certain categories of economic actors. As rebels have been entirely delegitimized as economic actors, so have illicit miners more generally as they have been, rightly or wrongly, as-

sociated with rebels' "blood diamonds." Sierra Leone's underclasses have hence been deprived of any legitimacy to talk economics and social rights associated with an active participation in economic production processes. Multi-national companies and those government and international agencies who deal with them in the diamond (and mineral) mining sector have re-established their legitimacy to represent the economic development opportunities of the country.

OF WARLORDS, VICTIMS, AND ANGRY YOUNG MEN:  
METHODOLOGICAL INDIVIDUALISM AND THE  
ESTABLISHMENT OF ARCHETYPES

The construction of legitimate and illegitimate economic actors is underscored through another common trait of the three dominant war analyses, namely, their methodological individualism. A central figure in all three strands of war analysis is the archetypal individual, whether *the* warlord, *the* victim child soldier, or *the* angry young man. In econometric studies, it is a methodological necessity to treat data as aggregation of individual preferences. In state failure analyses, collapsing state institutions are seen as the prey of the greedy politician or the greedy warlord who (if not the same as the politician) "confronts national governments, plunders their resources, moves and exterminates uncooperative populations, interdicts international relief and development and derails peace processes."<sup>77</sup> The warlord is seen in the figure of the rebel leader, such as Foday Sankoh in the case of Sierra Leone, or in those pre-war political leaders who out of greed and incompetence have more or less deliberately led their countries into war in order to preserve their personal riches and power (Yugoslavia's Milosevic would ideal-typically exemplify this species). In any case, warlords are directly responsible for the collapse of state institutions, as attacking them is, according to the common narrative, part of their larger strategy of personal enrichment.<sup>78</sup> Already the notion of warlord denies them any legitimacy and implies that any authority this person might have relies solely on the use of violent means. These individuals are commonly presented as rational criminals as the search for material gains has crowded out ideology.

The focus on individuals in common civil war narratives constitutes the post-conflict environment as a field of external intervention. As already discussed above in the section on the responsibility to protect, violence is set

equal to individual human rights violations and hence deprived of its political and social aspects. In this reading, violence is not born out of collective political movements<sup>79</sup> neither do they constitute acts of social ordering through punitive violence, vengeance, or disciplining,<sup>80</sup> nor do they result from psychological moves such as transgression, herd behaviour, or collective hysteria<sup>81</sup>—just to name some alternative interpretations that can be made of violence.

Consequently to this individualization, post-conflict environments are spaces where *identities* have to be protected, groups reconciled in order to pardon (an individual act) misbehaviour of some (always individuals). Some individuals have to be dealt with on specific terms, either for their criminal behaviour, as trauma victims, or as any other “vulnerable group,” depending on the category they are ascribed to by the interveners. Rebellions and acts of war are thereby stripped off their political and social meaningfulness and even their military sense as they are reduced to individual responsibilities and to the status of “crimes” and “human rights violations.”<sup>82</sup> This narrative corresponds to actual global governance policies that privilege individual human rights over collective and social rights, and which, in turn, promote a Western vision of retributive justice and reconciliation over local forms of justice seeking, and which press for the intensified codification of international criminal law.

The Security Council Resolution 1315 on the capture of UNAMISL troops by the RUF in 2000 in Sierra Leone neatly illustrates this criminalization and individualization process. Here the top UN body declares that it is “deeply concerned at the very serious *crimes* committed within the territory of Sierra Leone against the people of Sierra Leone and United Nations and associated personnel and at the prevailing situation of impunity.”<sup>83</sup> This little masterpiece of guerrilla strategy is presented as a criminal and not a military act, committed by an individual who already before has been depicted as a greedy warlord. The military-strategic aspect of this act and of its context disappear, namely, Lomé Peace Agreement negotiations, where the RUF was keen on striking a favourable bargain on issues like disarmament, demobilization, and soldier reintegration amnesties for rebels and their leaders, and the political offices in a future government.

The depiction of Charles Taylor as being the *éminence grise* behind the RUF for personal motives, namely, access to Sierra Leonean diamonds, had similar functions. It allowed key actors in the region, particularly President Obasanjo of Nigeria and Lansan Kouyaté of Guinea (both neither exactly

shining examples of respect for human rights and the rule of law), to enhance their roles as rightful representatives of states by establishing a terrific horror mirror image in Taylor's role as warlord.<sup>84</sup> The warlord narrative conveniently concealed the realpolitik power interests of the regional actors. As already discussed above, it has also allowed actors (like Nigeria) to position themselves with respect to debates over the international and global codification of criminal law by re-affirming that human rights violations can only be the act of individuals, of warlords and rebels but not of (however defined) legitimate representatives of states (like President Obasanjo). In the same vein, government actors in Sierra Leone were able to connect Charles Taylor to the RUF through the greed narrative, hence implying that the illegal diamond trade through Liberia would be only on the account of the RUF, the rebels, and their warlord allies,<sup>85</sup> not on the Sierra Leonean government, the militias, the private security companies, or even ECOMOG, hence, reaffirming that only governments are legitimate economic actors (see above).

In sum, just as the greed explanation of civil wars distinguishes legitimate and illegitimate economic actors not on the grounds of the economic production mode but on the grounds of who gains the profit from production, the individualization of the civil war narratives identifies legitimate and illegitimate military and political actors by ascribing a priori legitimacy to specific roles rather than to the acts and their context themselves; human rights abuses by so-called warlords are dealt with differently than human rights abuses by presidents of countries whose support is needed for conflict resolution (even Charles Taylor benefitted from this governmental prerogative before he lost the elections of 2003 and then, "private" person again, was accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity).

The overarching logic of these ascriptions is not rooted in the concrete atrocities committed, and even less in a differentiated analysis of the political motivations, strategies, and interactions behind certain acts of violence and war. These narratives rather have to be seen as part of the struggle over human rights and the legalization of humanitarian interventions on the global level as already discussed for the ascription of legitimacy to political actors through the state failure narrative. If individuals are made responsible for violence as private persons rather than as politicians, and if war is defined not as a political act but as a criminal one then this has the effect of safeguarding the state sovereignty norm of the international system on the one hand (as the state remains the only legitimate locus of politics) and of providing arguments to justify "just wars" and humanitarian interventions to

“stop human rights abuses,” on the other hand. In a larger sense the individualization of the standard narratives of war assign legitimate *agency* just in the same way as the state failure aspect of the standard narrative does (see above). By individualizing acts which are the result of collective, relational, and processual politics, the standard narrative of war categorizes the actors, and it attributes right or wrong, acceptable or unacceptable motives to their acts. How this ascription works can be well seen with the treatment of the category of child soldiers.

One figure that clearly has no right to appear in the category of political actors are children, and among them particularly girls. In current civil war narratives, child soldiering and particularly girl child soldiering is therefore treated as an exception. They are considered to be a category apart from all those involved in the war. Child soldiering is commonly considered to be an aberration to the norm. Its existence requires special explanation, and, hence, violence and traumatisation are pointed out as main causes of child soldiering. Children are generally considered as victims who do not take up weapons and use violence out of their own agency. In the standard narrative children do not fight because they reproduce roles and aspirations of the social world they are growing up in, or because they pursue goals or even an explicit political agenda; they only become fighters because they have been forced to. They have been abducted and are instrumentalized by adult interests.<sup>86</sup> Girls in particular are regularly depicted as having been abducted and sexually abused rather than having acted out of their own will. The standard narrative often does not even admit that these children, at least, make their own destiny out of what has happened to them.<sup>87</sup>

The victimization of child soldiering does not only deprive them of being perceived as agents of their destinies but it also treats them as isolated from the societies and cultures they grow up in and in which they are taking over roles within the group (roles that might already include fighting or sex).<sup>88</sup> It does so not because of what these children did or did not do, but because of a certain image of childhood that, in the dominant international discourse on childhood, has been declared the norm which needs protection and promotion.<sup>89</sup> In this image, children go to school and play but do not affirm their being, personality, and social role by fighting in wars. With respect to Sierra Leone, Sweden’s then Ambassador to the United Nations neatly summarizes this dominant image:

Many of these young children were abducted long ago into the ranks of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), and they are now—some of them perhaps

at the age of only eight or ten—some of the fiercest fighters in the war. Of course, they are heavily traumatized, fed violence and destruction for a large part of their lives, and I think one of the biggest challenges ahead will be to integrate the surviving children of Sierra Leone into a society where identity is based on respect and common norms, and not on carrying a loaded rifle. These children should be able to go to school and to play with their friends. They should be able to be with their families and not grow up with fighters as their role models.<sup>90</sup>

This statement entirely neglects the fact that most of the underage soldiers in Sierra Leone have never enjoyed a peaceful childhood with schools, boy scout associations, football clubs, and Sunday family picnics. Neither did they have safe places to desert to or to return to after the war. Yet, acknowledging this would not only prove most of the child soldiering discourse to be hypocritical, it would also force the observer to analyse and recognize the grievances and war motivations of these groups.

The only category of people left who, by their very nature, are considered as an almost natural category of violent agents are angry young men. Yet, even if most civil war narratives recognize some legitimacy in the fact that young men can become frustrated up to the point of taking up weapons, this behaviour is still considered an aberration. Particularly in narratives of identity politics, these young men are understood as seeking sense in an anomic and chaotic world, and therefore easy prey for sectarian violence entrepreneurs. Mary Kaldor's new wars narrative notably focuses on these individuals:

The political goals of the new wars are about the claim to power on the basis of seemingly traditional identities—nation, tribe, religion. Yet the upsurge in the politics of particularistic identities cannot be understood in traditional terms. It has to be explained in the context of growing cultural dissonance between *those who participate in transnational networks, which communicate through email, faxes, telephone and air travel, and those who are excluded from global processes and are tied to localities, even though their lives may be profoundly shaped by those same processes.*<sup>91</sup>

For the Sierra Leonean case, Christopher Clapham draws a similar conclusion, in similar empathetic terms: "Perhaps the most fundamental source of the Sierra Leone malaise, difficult though this is to pin down, is a deeply rooted sense of cultural insecurity and dependence."<sup>92</sup> The narrative of angry young men in Sierra Leone has been mainly popularized by Ibrahim

Abdullah and his interpretation of the RUF as an assembly of urban and rural “lumpen” youth whose brutality is in direct relationship with their lack of education and ideological guidance in the post-Cold War era.<sup>93</sup>

In greed models too, these young men are seen as lured into war by promises of material compensation rather than fighting for a cause. Humphreys and Weinstein’s survey of ex-combatants in Sierra Leone in 2004<sup>94</sup> for instance use Weinstein’s dichotomy of “opportunistic” versus “activist” rebel organizations to explore the motivations for joining the RUF or civil defense forces.<sup>95</sup> In his model, Weinstein formulated that rebel movements that have access to rich resources will recruit mainly by promising material benefits which are acquired through excessive violence and looting, whereas organizations which have fewer opportunities to offer material incentives will recruit on ideological grounds and uphold tighter discipline than opportunistic organizations. Humphreys and Weinstein see this confirmed in the motivations of young men to join the RUF and CDF respectively:

But political motivations notwithstanding, the role of material incentives cannot be minimized. Material incentives were particularly important in motivating participation within the RUF. RUF combatants were promised jobs, money, and women; during the war, they received women, drugs, and sometimes more valuable goods. CDF combatants, on the other hand, were expressly forbidden from taking valuable goods. The CDF helped to meet their basic needs, but few expected much in the way of material benefits from their participation in the faction.<sup>96</sup>

While the survey also notes other motivations among RUF fighters such as “fighting corruption” and points out that, for the lower rank and file, diamonds were not important, it holds up the common image of the disoriented, uneducated, unemployed young man (little or no gender differentiation is made in this survey) who joins the rebels, the RUF in this case, because it is the easiest way to get food and sex, and because, as the authors argue, these men are more vulnerable to manipulation and abduction:

Most importantly, however, the vast majority of RUF recruits were abductees. For these individuals, common arguments about expressive motivations, selective incentives, and social sanctions are rendered irrelevant. A grievance account predicts the observed correlation between welfare and membership, but for abductees the interpretation is the wrong one: poverty and alienation

cannot reasonably be seen as a source of frustration that motivates political action. In this context, traditional indicators of grievance must represent something other than marginalization; for example, poverty or a lack of access to education might make individuals more vulnerable to manipulation by political or military elites.<sup>97</sup>

In short, as soon as a person (a child) has been abducted, he or she becomes a victim who has no agency over how and why he or she lives their lives as they do. And as these people have no agency, and especially no legitimate agency, they cannot in any sensible way represent political or social injustice and grievances. If their desire for fulfilling basic needs is commonly recognized—after all, this is what international agencies such as UNDP have been working for—their political agency is denied as these men are seen first of all as victims of greedy warlords, and second as limited to their basic needs (food and sex). The roots of the lack of “food and sex” conveniently drop out of the picture (in the case of this survey they were not asked for), and the authors do not offer any explanation as to why such a high percentage of young people in Sierra Leone are uneducated and impoverished, and what the connection between these circumstances and violence could be or how, in any case, uneducated and impoverished underclasses can collectively express grievances in alternative ways given the social, political, and economic circumstances of a country like Sierra Leone before the war. The individualization of standard narratives of civil war probably demonstrates the best how Neoliberalism mind-frames exert their framing power on the perception of the events on the ground. In these narratives, “Society does not exist,” as Thatcher famously said; people’s choices are not conditioned by socio-economic structures. The narrative restates in various forms that politics are not only unable to change anything fundamental about these circumstances; such changes are not even necessary given that the core of the problem is individual misbehaviour. Actors are either deprived of any view of agentic acting (notably children, but also angry young men as victims) or they are merely seen as criminals who break rules and use violence to become rich (warlords, angry young men).

This Neoliberal discourse can frame standard narratives because it has become a very deeply interiorized worldview that shapes not only the economic field but also other socio-professional fields, notably the field of academic and international organisations’ analysis.

THE WINNER TAKES ALL, THE LOSER STANDING SMALL:  
DOMINANT CAPITAL AND THE CONSTITUTION OF  
THE POST-CONFLICT ENVIRONMENT

If the post-conflict environment can be understood as a social field, then the most important struggle over legitimate economic capital will evolve around the problem of making the international interveners' capital—whether political, economic, or local—convertible. This, in turn, becomes a struggle over economic and political authority within the field of the post-conflict (re)construction process in which the narratives of war, whether academic or not, play an important role in offering perception frames and discursive elements of justifying policy choices, by emphasizing specific events, facts, and actors, and of taking others out of the picture, in short: in authoring and authorizing the post-conflict environment. This process does not only take place in the concrete field of peacekeeping and statebuilding but it is supported by evolutions and actors in other social fields, most notably in those overlaps between such other fields with the peacekeeping and statebuilding field.

Humphreys and Weinstein's study is revealing for the ways capital domination translates into the constitution of the post-conflict environment by transferring epistemologies gained in one social field, namely, the American academic field, into an entirely different one, namely, the peacekeeping and statebuilding field in Sierra Leone. The cultural capital of two American Ivy League scholars transforms into symbolic power to categorize entire spans of the Sierra Leonean population. Cultural capital can be, generally speaking, considered the dominant currency in academia.<sup>98</sup> The notion encloses not only specific knowledge, data, and information (i.e., various types of communicative symbols) but also more widely epistemological and ontological approaches to this world as they are produced, reproduced, sanctioned, and promoted in academia. Cultural capital can be made of tangible and intangible goods (certificates and knowledge) and can be gained, dissipated, invested, or inherited like any other capital. National differences notwithstanding, the academic field follows its own set of "rules" by which "right" or "wrong" cultural capital is authored and authorized. These rules are expressed in the institutions of doctoral theses, peer review processes in publishing and grant awards, etc., yet they often carry discipline-specific and national characteristics (for instance, in the acceptable methodologies, the acceptable language, and the acceptable presentation).

Consequently, Humphreys and Weinstein's cultural capital is not built on the Sierra Leonean social field but on the academic field in the United States, and it is also this cultural capital of theirs that gives their study relevance and national and international attention, rather than the inherent merits of the survey. As all fields, the academic field is tightly connected with other social fields, and the value of such capital is determined by its convertibility into capital in other fields. Hence, the reference for recognition of Humphreys and Weinstein's cultural capital is not primarily whether they capture accurately or not the spoken, tacit, and unspeakable grievances of rebels but whether authorizing authorities in the US academic field, specifically in the political science field, recognize their research and whether *other* institutions in the post-conflict environment, for instance the United Nations, acknowledge the authority which the academic recognition has bestowed them with.

The rules of the game of the American academic field (publications, grants, awards, tenure committees) are, however, barely compatible with the world in which Sierra Leonean combatants live. If in the US academic field a questionnaire survey of the model of US electoral research makes perfect sense (and has been honored by publications in the field's most recognized, peer-reviewed journals such as the *American Political Science Review*, tenure in their universities, and grants and awards from prestigious institutions such as the American African Studies Association), it is more than questionable that this is an appropriate method to understand what motivated a twelve-year-old to join the RUF or CDF in the midst of the Sierra Leonean civil war; already the survey's question "Which political group did you support before the conflict began?" is unanswerable for someone who is on average twenty-five years old in 2003, given that she or he would be, on average, barely thirteen years old when the conflict began in 1991. It is therefore not surprising that the survey finds that the interviewees did not support any particular political group before the war.

Detailing the situation of this research is helpful in order to carve out how inappropriate the survey approach is to understand the meaning that combatants in Sierra Leone would have given to their actions in a more carefully, sensibly constructed study. Two white, middle-class, middle-aged men, both trained as economists in prestigious Western universities (Oxford and Columbia), from New York and Stanford respectively, encounter Sierra Leonean ex-combatants of an average age of twenty-five years who, according to the two researchers, have spent the longest years of their lives in the bush

and in combat, a large percentage of whom have been orphaned (understand: the poorest segments in their communities) already before they became soldiers, and up to 30 percent of whom are drug addicts. These young men have spent their cognitive and intellectual skills at surviving a war; most have received not more than primary education. And yet, the two researchers ask them

What are the main political goals of your group? 1) to defend my community, 2) to bring an end to autocratic rule in Sierra Leone, 3) to bring peace to Sierra Leone, 4) to root out corruption, 5) to express dissatisfaction with the government, 6) to get power back from another group, 7) other.<sup>99</sup>

Without being condescending towards the ex-combatants, it is safe to assume that they knew not what to make of these answers (autocracy!) as much as our two political scientists would likely not know the difference in sound between an AK-47 and AK-49—a knowledge and skill the ex-combatants most certainly have.<sup>100</sup>

Similarly, the question that leads Humphreys and Weinstein to the conclusion that the strongest incentive for fighting was money is not only inappropriate in terms of asking questions about political motives but it is also methodologically flawed.

What did the group tell that you would gain for participating? 1) Money, 2) Diamonds, 3) Women/men, 4) Food, 5) A job, 6) Land, 7) A way to improve the situation in Sierra Leone, 8) That my family would be protected, 9) A possibility to get revenge, 10) other.<sup>101</sup>

This question is clearly biased towards material goods as they are mentioned in concrete terms and juxtaposed to an abstract aim vaguely formulated like “making Sierra Leone a better place.” This latter is also nothing that a person can gain from any activity, only something someone can hope to eventually result in the long term from events to which she or he is contributing. The answers proposed here (and which were additionally to be prompted, hence, giving verbally a certain order to them) are not of the same value and comparable importance.<sup>102</sup> Yet, this kind of research has inspired a similar survey in Liberia on the account of UNDP,<sup>103</sup> has been labelled as “pioneering”<sup>104</sup> and “groundbreaking”<sup>105</sup> for future combatant surveys, has received prizes and awards, has been widely published, has been frequently cited by interna-

tional agencies,<sup>106</sup> and both researchers are now consultants for the World Bank, the US Agency for International Development, the RAND corporation, and other organizations.

Its findings seem to neatly confirm Abdullah's disarray hypothesis of *lumpen* youth run wild, and it conveniently sidelines more fundamental questions to be asked about Sierra Leone's society, economy, and politics, and how it is embedded in the regional and global society, economy, and politics.<sup>107</sup> It also orders and categorizes the actors in the post-conflict environment in a way that is consistent with dominant narratives—greed, state failure, identity crises—and it conveniently delegitimizes the most uncomfortable group of citizens, namely, those whose sheer misery would otherwise throw up questions about the viability of the capitalist market economy and its multi-national corporations, about the colonial and post-colonial past with its political distortions, about external interferences and dispossessions since colonial times and with the current trend of individualizing justice and injustice and “privatizing” life chances. All this is not achieved by the analytical force of research on war alone but by the authority of the authors of the research to name the good and the bad in the war and post-conflict situation.

The conversion of academic capital into symbolic power replicates the international economic agencies' narratives of warlordism, greed, and illicit economic activities such as artisanal mining as described above. In both cases, the criminalization of rebels singles out behaviour that is not compatible with dominant international structures; it hence justifies the intervention of international agencies, and it creates a transnational development field with the aim of changing these behaviours. The authority to devise economic and social policies thus shifts from the local level to a triangle of global economic leaders, global development agencies (and their associated NGOs), and transnational as well as local elites who dispose of economic, social, and cultural capital which is similar to those proposed by the intervening actors.

## CONCLUSION

The convertibility of different capital forms of the various social fields involved structures the post-conflict environment. The dominant economic capital of international agencies and multi-national companies translates

into political capital for the Sierra Leonean government and parts of its elites. In an ironic inversion of the Marxist logic that the state backs exploitative economic relations, the Sierra Leonean case could be seen as economic power backing the state. All intervening actors converge in their narrative of state failure because of greed and frustrated, angry young men so that the “natural” solution to conflict appears to be development through foreign investment in most notably the mining sector. The power of this narrative is such that this policy advice is not questioned although little in Sierra Leone’s past can make one believe that such an economic policy will lead to “trickle down” effects and broad development.

Politically, too, Sierra Leone has returned to what could be called the proper state of the state. The government is elected, however marred by violence, fraud, and manipulation these elections are, and not one centimetre of the border has been altered. A Truth and Reconciliation Commission has been set up, war criminals have been tried at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, and the economic and social policy of the country is guided by international agencies. All is well.

The structuring effect of the global dominant capital configuration and how it has translated itself onto the Sierra Leonean post-conflict environment is such that Sierra Leone’s politics, society, and economy neatly beckon all these measures of the “liberal peace”: state institutions, liberal market economy, and a society of individuals whose entitlement to political participation is dependent on their social positions. It is mainly this latter point—the political denigration of the dispossessed—that renders the liberal peace a neoliberal one. It combines an unquestioned and unquestionable dominance of the private property and private economic exploitation model with an individualized yet hierarchical model of legitimate political participation: economic cartels are allowed, labor unions, notably “wild” unions, are not; labor and environmental exploitation for the account of the government and business companies are legitimate, labor and environmental exploitation for communities and collectives are not. Just like in the national context of neoliberal politics, most states have been producing legislations and policies that support the enrichment of some at the expense of social welfare and collective rights;<sup>108</sup> the post-conflict environment, a product of global governance in the ways international agencies, states, non-governmental organizations, and local actors work together, has been structured by policies and politics which allow some to enrich themselves at the expense of the large majority. The narratives by which those civil wars are

explained, which invite external intervention and such a (re)structuring of the post-conflict environment (an environment that remains largely conflictual), play an important role in legitimizing and delegitimizing actors and their policies in this process of neoliberal governance. Their popularity among international agencies, media, governments, etc., has to be located in the way they make the politics and society in these countries intelligible to global actors and hence how they structure the post-conflict environment rather than in their analytical merits alone. The standard narrative gives interveners a sense of doing what has been proved, scientifically in an ideal case, to be the right thing to do. The work of academic scholars like Paul Collier or Humphreys and Weinstein give international agencies, governments, the United Nations, and other actors means to translate their already existing material power into symbolic power and to authoritatively structure the post-conflict environment. Whether this indeed creates peace, however, can be doubted.

### Notes

1. Didier Bigo, "Pierre Bourdieu and International Relations: Power of Practices, Practices of Power," *International Political Sociology* 5, no. 3 (2011): 225–58.

2. "Prepared Statement of Col. (Ret) Bernard J. McCabe, Jr., Director, Sandline International, Before the House Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on Africa," *Federal News Service* (June 11, 1998), <http://www.lexisnexis.com>.

3. Sandline International and Executive Outcomes, the two private security companies hired by the Sierra Leonean government for training and protection, were largely staffed by former personnel of the South African armed forces, notoriously the "Civil Cooperation Bureau," covert special forces allegedly involved in the murders of anti-Apartheid activists. See for instance, "Executive Outcomes Has Commercial Operations in Many States—UN," *Business Day* (January 16, 1997), <http://www.lexisnexis.com>. "'We're Not Choirboys.' The Head of Executive Outcomes on Modern Warfare," *Newsweek International* (February 24, 1997), <http://www.lexisnexis.com>; or the memoir of Executive Outcome's CEO, Eeben Barlow, *Executive Outcomes: Against All Odds* (Alberton, South Africa: Galago Books, 2007).

4. Paul Richards, "To Fight or to Farm? Agrarian Dimensions of the Mano River Conflicts (Liberia and Sierra Leone)," *African Affairs* 104, no. 417 (2005): 571–90.

5. Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Witness to Truth: Report of the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, Volume 2 (Accra, Ghana: GPL Press, 2004), para 38–39.

6. For a more detailed account of Sierra Leone's post-colonial history and the

war see Paul Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest: War, Youth and Resources in Sierra Leone* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1996); *The Cambridge History of Africa. Volume 5. From C.1790 to C.1870*, ed. John E. Flint (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976); David Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone* (New York: Palgrave, 2005); Mariane C. Ferme, *The Underneath of Things: Violence, History, and the Everyday in Sierra Leone* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

7. The questions if, when, and how much Taylor supported the RUF remain hotly disputed; if for most accounts there is no doubt that the RUF could not have launched its attacks without Liberian support and that they could only sustain their war effort with the support of Charles Taylor, the Special Court for Sierra Leone (<http://www.sc-sl.org>) struggles to provide proof of such support, which Taylor denies.

8. The mandate was continuously extended until UNAMSIL was a “robust” peacekeeping mission; that is, when it was authorized to use force to achieve the aims set out in the UN Security Council Resolutions and not only for self-defense purposes. See the corresponding UN Security Council resolutions: United Nations Security Council, “Resolution 1306” (United Nations, New York, July 5, 2000). United Nations Security Council, “Resolution 1270” (October 22, 1999). United Nations Security Council, “Resolution 1181” (United Nations, New York, July 13, 1998).

9. A detailed account can be found in Andrew M. Dorman, *Blair’s Successful War: British Military Intervention in Sierra Leone* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009).

10. Contrary to other places (e.g., Bosnia and Kosovo) there have been no forensic studies in Sierra Leone; death counts and displaced figures rely on estimations derived from partial observations of NGOs, ECOMOG, the Sierra Leonean government, and the United Nations.

11. Ibrahim Abdullah, *Between Democracy and Terror: The Sierra Leone Civil War* (Dakar, Senegal: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, 2004); Lansana Gberie, *A Dirty War in West Africa: The RUF and the Destruction of Sierra Leone* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005); William Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1998).

12. The UCDP *Conflict Encyclopedia*, a reference tool for international organizations, media, and practitioners, for instance, summarizes the conflict using all the associated keywords of this narrative: “ineffective economic system,” “undermining the state’s capacity to deliver public goods,” “autocratic rule,” “wrecked by factionalism and ethnic patronage,” “systems of patronage and corruption” to come to the conclusion, “Thus the stage was set for trouble in the early 1990s, with a weak and factionalized army, a corrupt and unpopular autocratic government, plenty of opportunities for illicit natural resource extraction and hordes of unemployed and frustrated youth” (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, *Conflict Encyclopedia* (Uppsala University 2012), [www.ucdp.uu.se/database](http://www.ucdp.uu.se/database), accessed October 5, 2012).

13. Louis M. Goreux, “Conflict Diamonds” (World Bank, Washington, DC, February 2001); Paul Collier and others, *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and*

*Development Policy* (Washington, DC: World Bank and Oxford University Press, 2003); Simon Chesterman, "State-Building and Human Development: Background paper for the Human Development Report 2005" (Human Development Report Office, United Nations Development Program, New York, 2005); Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, "The DAC Guidelines: Helping Preventing Violent Conflict" (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris, 2001).

14. To name a few reports of governmental development agencies: Department for International Development, "The Causes of Conflict in Africa" (Department for International Development, London, March 2001); Department for International Development, "Building Peaceful States and Societies" (Department for International Development, London, 2010); Die Bundesregierung, "Action Plan: Civilian Crisis Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Post-Conflict Peace-Building" (Die Bundesregierung, Berlin, May 12, 2004); Michael Bratton, "State Building and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: Forwards, Backwards, or Together" (Institute for Democracy in South Africa; Ghana Centre for Democratic Development; Michigan State University, Cape Town/Accra/East Lansing, September 2004).

15. For instance, *Rescuing a Fragile State: Sierra Leone 2002–2008*, ed. Lansana Gberie (Waterloo, Ontario: Laurier Centre for Military, Strategic and Disarmament Studies, 2009); Christopher Clapham, "Sierra Leone: The Political Economy of Internal Conflict" (Netherlands Institute of International Relations Conflict Research Unit, The Hague, Netherlands, July 2003).

16. See Loïc J. D. Wacquant, "Lire 'Le Capital' de Pierre Bourdieu," in *Pierre Bourdieu, Sociologue*, ed. Louis Pinto, Gisèle Sapiro, and Patrick Champagne (Paris: Fayard, 2004).

17. Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1984).

18. This is a rough summary of Bourdieu's development of the notion of field and capital derived from his three works: Pierre Bourdieu, *La Noblesse d'état: Grandes écoles et esprit de corps* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1989); Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus*; Pierre Bourdieu, *La Distinction: critique sociale du jugement* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1979). For more explanations, see Pierre Bourdieu, *Raisons Pratiques: sur la théorie de l'action* (Paris: Seuil, 1994); Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc J. D. Wacquant, *Réponses: pour une anthropologie réflexive* (Paris: Seuil, 1992).

19. Robert D. Kaplan, *The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post Cold War* (New York: Random House, 2000); Hans Magnus Enzensberger, *Civil War*, trans. Piers Spence and Martin Chalmers (London: Granta, 1994).

20. William Reno, *Corruption and State Politics in Sierra Leone* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Jean-François Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (New York: Longman, 1993).

21. Bertrand Badie, *The Imported State: The Westernization of the Political Order*, trans. Claudia Royal (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000); Jeffrey Ira Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

22. Robert H. Jackson, *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Third World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

23. Christopher Clapham, *Africa and International System: The Politics of State Survival*, Cambridge studies in international relations (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

24. The argument that economic breakdown is the result of “bad” policies by inexperienced or greedy African leaders is presented in *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*, ed. I. William Zartman (Boulder, CO, and London: Lynne Rienner, 1995); Robert H. Bates, *When Things Fell Apart: State Failure in Late-Century Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

25. However, these accounts seldom mention that it was colonial policies which kept the large population in poverty and ignorance. Sierra Leone was no exception to the rule with merely a couple of thousand urban Blacks, out of an estimated population of more than two million, having obtained secondary education in 1955 (Kenneth Little, “Structural Change in the Sierra Leone Protectorate,” *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 25, no. 3 (1955): 217–34).

26. This is a striking difference to the differentiations that are made in neo-institutionalist approaches to the study of industrialized OECD states; see Gøsta Esping-Anderson, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); *Varieties of Capitalism: The Institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage*, ed. Peter A. Hall and David W. Soskice (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

27. The concept of state failure has been criticized commonly for its lack of analytical precision; see for instance Alexandros Yannis, “State Collapse and Its Implications for Peace-Building and Reconstruction,” in *State Failure, Collapse and Reconstruction*, ed. Jennifer Milliken (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003). However, only a few authors are concerned with the depoliticization effect of the concept; for thorough discussion of this aspect see *Politics Without Sovereignty: A Critique of Contemporary International Relations*, ed. Christopher J. Bickerton, Philip Cunliffe, and Alexander Gourevitch (New York: University College London Press, 2007).

28. For a critical reflection on the anthropology of ethnicism, tribalism, and savagery see Adam Kuper, *The Reinvention of Primitive Society: Transformations of a Myth* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

29. Paul Collier and Tony Venables, “The Political Economy of Fragile States and Implications for European Development Policy,” in *The Challenges of Fragility to Development Policy* (Barcelona, Spain: European Report on Development Conference, 7–8 May 2009).

30. Christopher J. Bickerton, “State-Building: Exporting State Failure,” in *Politics Without Sovereignty: A Critique of Contemporary International Relations*, ed. Christopher J. Bickerton, Philip Cunliffe, and Alexander Gourevitch (New York: University College London Press, 2007).

31. Basil Davidson, *The Black Man’s Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State* (Oxford: James Currey, 1992).

32. Rogers Brubaker, “Ethnicity Without Groups,” *European Journal of Sociology* 43, no. 2 (2002): 163–89.

33. *Ibid.*, 166.

34. See for instance Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone*; John L. Hirsche, *Sierra Leone: Diamonds and the Struggle for Democracy* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2000).

35. Lord Wallace of Saltaire, *Debate on Sub-Saharan Africa* (London: United Kingdom House of Lords, January 30, 2002), <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200102/ldhansrd/vo020130/text/20130-06.htm>, columns 266-70.

36. *Making States Work: State Failure and the Crisis of Governance*, ed. Simon Chesterman, Michael Ignatieff, and Ramesh Chandra Thakur (New York: United Nations University Press, 2005); Michael Barnett, "Building a Republican Peace: Stabilizing States After War," *International Security* 30, no. 4 (2006): 87-112; Volker Boege and others, "On hybrid political orders and emerging states: state formation in the context of 'fragility'" (Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, Berlin, 2008); John Dryzek, "Democratization As Deliberative Capacity Building," *Comparative Political Studies* 42, no. 11 (2009): 1379-1402; Shannon D. Beebe and Mary Kaldor, *The Ultimate Weapon Is No Weapon: Human Security and the New Rules of War and Peace* (New York: Public Affairs, 2010).

37. Joel S. Migdal, *State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another*, Cambridge studies in comparative politics (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 19.

38. Francis Fukuyama, "'Stateness' First," *Journal of Democracy* 16, no. 1 (2005): 84-88.

39. See International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, *The Responsibility to Protect: Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 2001).

40. Pierre Bourdieu, "Sur Le Pouvoir Symbolique," *Annales. Economies, sociétés, civilisations* 32, no. 3 (1977): 405-11.

41. *Ibid.*, 407.

42. See for instance United Kingdom House of Commons, International Development Committee Publications, International Development, 6th Report, 28 July 1999 with a special section on Sierra Leone.

43. Department for International Development, "The Causes of Conflict in Africa"; Collier and others, *Breaking the Conflict Trap*. See also the works of the World Bank's working group on the Economics of Conflict (<http://www.worldbank.org>), led by Paul Collier in the 1990s.

44. Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," *Oxford Economic Papers* 56, no. 4 (2004): 563-95; Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler, and Dominic Rohner, "Beyond Greed and Grievance: Feasibility and Civil War," *Oxford Economic Papers* 61, no. 1 (2009): 1-27; Päivi Lujala, Nils Petter Gleditsch, and Elisabeth Gilmore, "A Diamond Curse?: Civil War and a Lootable Resource," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 4 (2005): 538-62; E. Wayne Nafziger and Juha Auvinen, "Economic Development, Inequality, War, and State Violence," *World Development* 30, no. 2 (2002): 153-63; Michael L. Ross, "What Do We Know About Natural Resources and Civil War?," *Journal of Peace Research* 41, no. 3 (2004): 337-56; Mi-

chael L. Ross, "How Do Natural Resources Influence Civil War? Evidence from Thirteen Cases," *International Organization* 58, no. 1 (2004): 35–67.

45. Lujala, Gleditsch, and Gilmore, "A Diamond Curse?"

46. Edward Miguel, Shanker Satyanath, and Ernest Sergenti, "Economic Shocks and Civil Conflict: An Instrumental Variables Approach," *Journal of Political Economy* 112, no. 4 (2004): 725–53; Richard Snyder and Ravi Bhavnani, "Diamonds, Blood, and Taxes: A Revenue-Centered Framework for Explaining Political Order," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 4 (2005): 563–97.

47. Christopher Cramer, "Homo Economicus Goes to War: Methodological Individualism, Rational Choice, and the Political Economy of War," *World Development* 30, no. 11 (2002): 1845–64; Astri Suhrke, Espen Villanger, and Susan L. Woodward, "Economic Aid to Post-Conflict Countries: A Methodological Critique of Collier and Hoeffler," *Conflict, Security and Development* 5, no. 3 (2005): 329–61.

48. Klaus Deininger and Lyn Squire, "New Ways of Looking at Old Issues: Inequality and Growth," *Journal of Development Economics* 57, no. 2 (1998): 259–87.

49. To reproduce the title of an article dealing with this particular choice in Sierra Leone: Richards, "To Fight or to Farm."

50. For a different view, see Carolyn Nordstrom, *Shadows of War: Violence, Power, and International Profiteering in the Twenty-First Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

51. Reno, *Corruption and State Politics in Sierra Leone*.

52. Cramer, "Homo Economicus Goes to War."

53. Jean-Pierre Chauveau and Paul Richards, "West African Insurgencies in Agrarian Perspective: Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone Compared," *Journal of Agrarian Change* 8, no. 4 (2008): 515–52.

54. Debora L. Spar, "Markets: Continuity and Change in the International Diamond Market," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 20, no. 3 (2006): 195–208.

In the words of one of the reports on diamonds: "Sierra Leone's diamonds are highly prized both for their high quality and for the handsome margins afforded by their low production costs" (Chaim Even-Zohar, "Sierra Leone diamond sector financial policy constraints" (Management Systems International, Washington, DC, 2003), 1).

55. United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 1289" (United Nations, New York, May 19, 2000).

56. Chris McGreal, "Sierra Leone peace force accused of sabotage," *The Guardian* (September 9, 2000).

On private security companies and diamonds, see also Ian Douglas, "Fighting for Diamonds: Private Military Companies in Sierra Leone," in *Peace, Profit or Plunder?: The Privatisation of Security in War-Torn African Societies*, ed. Jakkie Cilliers and Peggy Mason (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 1999).

57. United Nations Department of Public Information, *Sanctions and War: General Assembly Adopts Resolution on "Conflict Diamonds"* (New York: United Nations Department of Public Information, March 21, 2001), <http://www.un.org/peace/>

africa/Diamond.html, accessed January 13, 2011; see also the official website of the Kimberly Process (<http://www.kimberlyprocess.com>).

58. Ian Smille, Lansana Gberie, and Ralph Hazleton, "The Heart of the Matter. Sierra Leone, Diamonds and Human Security" (Partnership Canada, Ottawa, January 2000).

This report was prompted by a similar report from the NGO "Global Witness" on diamonds in Angola: Global Witness, "A rough trade: the role of companies and governments in the Angolan conflict" (Global Witness, London, December 1998).

59. United Nations Security Council, "Report of the Panel of Experts appointed pursuant to Security Council resolution 1306 (2000), paragraph 19, in relation to Sierra Leone," UN Document S/2000/1195, December 20, 2000.

60. Goreux, "Conflict Diamonds."

61. Jim Williams and others, "Sierra Leone diamond policy study" (AMCO-Robertson Mineral Services Ltd, January 2002).

62. A somewhat more skeptical voice can be found in the a magazine published by EU Commission: David J. Francis, "Diamonds and the Civil War in Sierra Leone," *The Courier* (August 2001).

63. Williams and others, "Sierra Leone Diamond Policy Study," 11–13.

64. Data for 1985, Emmanuel A. Cleeve, *Multinational Enterprises in Development: The Mining Industry of Sierra Leone* (Hants, England: Aldershot, 1997), 35.

65. Even-Zohar, "Sierra Leone Diamond Sector Financial Policy Constraints," 4; Lansana Gberie, "Diamond industry annual review: Sierra Leone 2004" (Partnership Africa Canada and Network Movement for Justice and Development, Ottawa and Freetown, Sierra Leone, 2004); Lansana Gberie, "Diamond industry annual review: Sierra Leone 2006" (Partnership Africa Canada and Network Movement for Justice and Development, Ottawa and Freetown, Sierra Leone, February 2006); Lansana Gberie, "Diamond industry annual review: Sierra Leone 2005" (Partnership Africa Canada and Network Movement for Justice and Development, Ottawa and Freetown, Sierra Leone, February 2005).

66. Cleeve, *Multinational Enterprises in Development*, 17.

67. Spar, "Markets"; Ann E. Andrews, "A Diamond Is Forever: De Beers, the Kimberley Process, and the Efficacy of Public and Corporate Co-Regulatory Initiatives in Securing Regulatory Compliance," *South Carolina Journal of International Law and Business* 2 (2006): 178–214.

68. For a long time, the only mining company operating in Sierra Leone, Sierra Leone Selection Trust, had prospected most of the kimberlite mines in the 1970s and 1980s which are taken by the current license holders, Rex Minerals, as granted; see "Rex Diamond Mining Corporation," *Canada NewsWire* (January 31, 1997), <http://www.lexisnexis.com>.

69. Even-Zohar, "Sierra Leone Diamond Sector Financial Policy Constraints," 4.

70. Spar, "Markets," 206. Donna J. Bergenstock and James M. Maskulka, "The De Beers Story: Are Diamonds Forever?," *Business Horizons* 44, no. 3 (2001): 37–44.

71. Canadian producers notably showed a strong interest as large kimberlite diamond mines were discovered in Canada's Northwest Territory in the 1990s. Canada also financed the report "The Heart of the Matter," which helped launch the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme.

72. Clapham, "Sierra Leone."

73. Sylvie Bredeloup, "La fièvre du diamant au temps des colonies (Afrique)," in *Variations*, ed. Bernard Moizo (Paris: Éditions de l'Aube, 1999), 177.

74. *Ibid.*

75. Krijn Peters, *War and the Crisis of Youth in Sierra Leone* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011). For this argument, see Sigismund A. Wilson, "Sierra Leone's Illicit Diamonds: The Challenges and the Way Forward," *Geojournal* (2009): 1–22.

76. For instance, USAID has established an entire program for the development of the diamond sector in Sierra Leone from 1999 to 2007; see Jean Pierre Tutusaus, Sue Nelson, and Arthur Abadje, "USAID/Sierra Leone Diamond Sector Evaluation" (AMEX International, Washington, DC, July 20, 2007).

77. John Mackinlay, "Defining Warlords," *Building Stability in Africa: Challenges for the New Millennium*, ed. Jakkie Cilliers and Annika Hilding-Norberg (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, February 2000), <http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/monographs/no46/Defining.html>.

78. Münkler, *The New Wars*.

79. See Charles Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

80. See Georg Elwert, "The Socio-Anthropological Interpretation of Violence," in *International Handbook of Violence Research*, ed. Wilhelm Heitmeyer and John Hagan (Norwell, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003).

81. See for instance Jean Hatzfeld, *Machete Season: The Killers in Rwanda Speak*, trans. Linda Coverdale (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005).

82. For a thorough discussion see Martti Koskeniemi, "Between Impunity and Show Trials," in *Max Planck Yearbook of United Nations Law* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2002).

83. The same resolution continues:

reaffirming further that persons who commit or authorize serious violations of international humanitarian law are individually responsible and accountable for those violations and that the international community will exert every effort to bring those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards of justice, fairness and due process of law

which again, in this case, is clearly aimed at Foday Sankoh and his RUF.

84. The Security Council mission to Sierra Leone in 2000 reports: "Most of the mission's interlocutors (in the region) including those at the most senior levels, had no doubt that President Taylor exercised strong influence, even direct control, over RUF. In the assessment of many, the main objective of RUF was to maintain control of the diamond-producing areas."

85. The same mission report: "The view was firmly and frequently expressed within Sierra Leone that the cause of many of the country's problems lay in the support provided to RUF by President Taylor, motivated partly by his own political and security concerns and partly by his interest in profits from diamonds mined in Sierra Leone."

86. John-Peter Pham, *Child Soldiers, Adult Interests: The Global Dimensions of the Sierra Leonean Tragedy* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2005).

For the United Nations, see Graça Machel, "Report of the expert of the Secretary-General, Ms. Graça Machel, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/157" (United Nations, New York, August 26, 1996); Graça Machel, "The Machel review, 1996–2000: a critical analysis of progress made and obstacles encountered in increasing protection for war-affected children" (Government of Canada, Ottawa, 2000); UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, "Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict" (United Nations, New York, August 13, 2007).

87. Critically, see Yvonne E. Keairns, "The voices of girl child soldiers" (Quaker United Nations Office, New York, October 2002):

For example, it has been assumed that most if not all girl soldiers were raped and sexually abused by the armed groups of which they were a part. This study reveals that not all armed groups raped the girls. The stated position of some of the armed groups forbids sexually intimate relationships between men and women without the consent of the woman and the approval of a commander to enter into a relationship. In some armed groups contraception shots were required and abortions performed even when the girl opposed this action. (7)

88. Jean-Hervé Jézéquel, "Les enfants soldats d'Afrique, un phenomene singulier? Sur la necessite du regard historique," *Vingtième siècle*, no. 89 (2006): 99–108; Siobhán McEvoy-Levy, *Troublemakers or Peacemakers?: Youth and Post-Accord Peace Building* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006).

89. Similar struggles over the image of childhood can be observed in global debates about child labor. See Anna Holzscheiter, "Discourse As Capability: Non-State Actors' Capital in Global Governance," *Millennium* 33, no. 3 (2004): 723–46.

90. Speech of Ambassador Hans Dahlgren of Sweden, Chairman of the Sanctions Committee, before the United Nations Security Council (Meeting 3957) dealing with the third report of the Secretary-General on Sierra Leone, December 18, 1998.

91. Kaldor, *New and Old Wars*, 73, emphasis added.

92. Clapham, "Sierra Leone," 10.

93. Abdullah, *Between Democracy and Terror: The Sierra Leone Civil War*. Ibrahim Abdullah, "Bush Path to Destruction: The Origin and Character of the Revolutionary United Front/Sierra Leone," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 36, no. 2 (1998): 203–35; for a critical discussion, see Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*.

94. Macartan Humphreys and Jeremy M. Weinstein, "What the fighters say: A Survey of Ex-Combatants in Sierra Leone. June–August 2003. Interim Report:

July 2004” (The Post-conflict Reintegration Initiative for Development and Empowerment, Freetown, Sierra Leone, July 2004).

95. Jeremy M. Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

96. Humphreys and Weinstein, “What the Fighters Say,” 28–29.

97. M. Humphreys and J. M. Weinstein, “Who Fights? The Determinants of Participation in Civil War,” *American Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 2 (2008): 436–55.

98. See Bourdieu, *Homo academicus*.

99. Macartan Humphreys and Jeremy M. Weinstein, “What the Fighters Say: A Survey of Ex-Combatants in Sierra Leone” (Freetown, Sierra Leone: The Post-conflict Reintegration Initiative for Development and Empowerment, July 2004), Survey Instrument, Question 59, available at <http://www.columbia.edu/~mh2245/Survey.pdf>, accessed March 17, 2011.

100. Rosalind Shaw describes in the introduction of her book *Memories of the Slave Trade* a similar cross-cultural impossibility to communicate. She reports how Edward Ball came to conclude that memories of the slave trade in Sierra Leone are denied:

He (Ball) concluded his research with a trip to Sierra Leone [. . .] interviewing descendants of African slave traders. Most of these descendants were awkward, and sometimes irritated and evasive, at being confronted with the aggressively interrogative style of a Western journalistic interview, featuring such statements as “Your ancestor was a slave dealer.” (Rosalind Shaw, *Memories of the Slave Trade: Ritual and the Historical Imagination in Sierra Leone* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 1)

101. Humphreys and Weinstein, “What the fighters say,” Survey Instrument, Question 65.

102. Statistically, too, this answer is likely to be biased against answer seven as it is, in the given setting, entirely possible that respondents will answer randomly, hence even under the condition of multiple answers there will be a lower possibility that one of the answers will be seven and in any case this answer will be compounded by a larger number of “material” answers.

103. James Pugel, “What the Fighters Say: A Survey of ex-Combatants in Liberia” (United Nations Development Programme, New York, April 2007).

104. Birger Heldt, “Management of Civil Wars and Genocidal Violence: Lessons from Statistical Research,” *Genocide Prevention Advisory Network* (June 1, 2010), <http://www.gpanet.org/content/management-civil-wars-and-genocidal-violence-lessons-statistical-research>, accessed January 13, 2011.

105. Desmond Molloy, “DDR: A shifting paradigm and the scholar/practitioner gap” (Pearson Peace Keeping Centre / Centre pour le maintien de la paix, Ottawa, 2008).

106. See for instance Patricia Justino, “The impact of armed civil conflict on household welfare and policy responses” (United Nations Development Policy

Analysis Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York, 2007).

107. Given the little data available it is of course possible to argue that already this research is a step forward and that careful, contextualized reading of the answers does offer insights into motivations and causes of civil war. This is what Paul Richards tries in using the same data as Humphreys and Weinstein but contextualizing it a deeper analysis of Sierra Leone's society. See Richards.

A far more differentiated study of meanings attributed by "ordinary" people to the violence of the civil war can be found in Ferme, *The Underneath of Things*.

108. See Ulrich Brand and Nicola Sekler, "Postneoliberalism: Catch-All Word or Valuable Analytical and Political Concept?" *Development Dialogue*, no. 51 (2009): 5-13.