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THE NEXUS BETWEEN CONFLICT AND DEMOCRATIC GOOD GOVERNANCE IN SIERRA LEONE

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PAPER PREPARED FOR PRESENTATION AT THE NATIONAL CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY (NCD) ON BUILDING A UNITED AND COHESIVE NATION, 20TH – 22ND MARCH, 2013, SIERRA LEONE BANK COMPLEX, KINGTOM, FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE

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1.0 Introduction

Mr. Chairman, all protocols observed. My task in this auspicious occasion is to do a presentation on the topic: ‘The Nexus between Conflict and Democratic Good Governance in Sierra Leone’. To thoroughly perform this task, I shall attempt to briefly analyse the concepts of conflict (from the psychological and sociological perspectives), democracy and good governance; and then proceed to establish the nexus between, particularly conflict prevention and democratic good governance in post-conflict Sierra Leone (Binneh-Kamara, 2004: 80). I shall further argue that the inevitability of conflict at the macro (or sociological) level is an ostensible weakness that can be transformed into a strength, through the politics of positive compromise, national cohesion and dialogue.

I shall also argue that the principles of democratic good governance are profound mechanisms for conflict prevention, but neither the mere entrenchment of democratic ideals in our statute books (democratic processes), nor the establishment of democratic institutions, can in themselves guarantee the prevention of a devastating conflict at the macro (or sociological) level. The paper robustly argues that conflict at the macro level can best be mitigated, when the established democratic institutions and structures, function in accordance with the democratic ideals (culture) for which they are created.

This paper shall also seek to critically analyse the concept of conflict in the face of democracy and good governance, from the standpoint of particularly the macro or societal (sociological) perspective. However, the conceptualisation of conflict at the micro, behavioural (psychological) or individual level in this analysis, is calculated to get the discussants to understand that conflict begins at the micro level and subsequently evolves at the macro level, as a result of the dynamics of human, structural and institutional interactions in society.
Finally, the paper concludes with the argument that the democratic trilogy mentioned above (democratic processes, institutions and culture) must co-exist for Sierra Leone to transform itself from a fledgling democracy, into a matured and advanced democracy, that has the propensity to mitigate a devastating conflict at the macro level and thus promote socio-economic, cultural and political developments.

1.1 Conflict, Democracy and Good Governance: Analytical Exposition

1.1.2 Conflict

There exist a plethora of theoretical perspectives which have been put forward by scholars to explain the concept of conflict. Scholars in the traditional school perceive conflict as a malfunction within society. Their argument is based on the idea that conflict is a disruption of social order and societal stability; and hence any phenomenon that threatens societal stability is perceived as a conflict that should be resolved (Huczynski & Buchanan, 1991:556). The pluralists, on the contrary, contend that conflict is a natural phenomenon that exists in any and every society; it is inevitable and therefore cannot be eliminated, but it must be studied, accepted, and used as a basis for social change and development (Salem, 1997: vii). This perspective emphasises the importance of the concept of conflict management in conflict analysis.

The interactionists’ perspective goes beyond the philosophy of conflict management as espoused by the pluralists. Proponents of this school argue for the stimulation as well as the resolution of conflict (Deutsch, 1973:9). The Marxian perspective starts with stability and lack of conflict as the problem and further contends that the existing social arrangements characterised by exploitative tendencies must be eliminated. As such, conflict is seen as a way of instituting revolutionary as opposed to evolutionary change in society (Huczynski & Buchanan, op.cit: 560-561).
The above conceptions clearly explain conflict from the macro or societal (sociological) level. Conflict has however been studied from the micro or behavioural (psychological) level as well. Metaphysical psychologists have attempted to explain conflict by rationalising the regular dissention that goes on between the ‘rational’ and ‘passionate’ parts of the human mind (Oniang’o, 1994:25). This is what Sigmund Freud has conceptualised as the conflict between the ‘id’ and ‘ego’ (Albery, Chandler, et al. 2004: 17). And it is what the behaviourists have called intrapersonal conflict (Deutsch, op.cit:10). When the conflict within the individual transcends the bounds of the human mind and collides with the interest of another person in society, then the conflict becomes interpersonal (ibid). Thus, it will be group conflict when the interests of other persons are affected as well (ibid).

Let me hasten to affirm here that the traditional, pluralist, interactionists and the Marxian perspectives, are indeed the basis for the study of conflict at the macro level. The existing literature on conflict analysis is replete with so many conceptual factors (analysed in 2.1 below) that can fuel conflict at the macro level, but the malfunctioning of state institutions and structures in Sierra Leone, caused by other notable debilitating forces (bad governance, corruption, greed, ineptitude, ethno-political & regional considerations, etc.) can again pose potential threat to the peace, stability, security and development of the state.

Essentially, scholars of the traditional school would perceive such threat as a catalyst for conflict, and would thus recommend ways of addressing them. The pluralists will argue that since conflict is inevitable, such threat should be accepted as ‘natural’ and ‘normal’, but should be managed in a way that would bring about social change and development. The interactionists would take the argument further by asserting that the conflict propelling forces should be stimulated and any emerging conflict can thus be accordingly managed (resolved).
The Marxian scholars would want the change of government to be revolutionary; to reverse the status quo. Alas! This Marxian perspective of conflict analysis, contravenes the constitutional principle of periodic free and fair elections, which is the basis for any change of government in democratic Sierra Leone (see Chapter Four of Act No.6 of 1991, hereinafter referred to as the Constitution, and the Compendium of Sierra Leone’s Electoral Laws, 2011).

1.1.3 **Democracy**

Democracy is a system of government that empowers the electors to freely and fairly elect their President, who is the Chief Executive, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and Fountain of Honour, and Parliamentary representatives, who enact and amend laws, which are to be interpreted by the judiciary, to uphold the supremacy of the Constitution and maintain social order, preserve society, protect fundamental freedoms and human rights, and settle disputes within the state.

The above definition entails a number of political and jurisprudential concepts that should be analysed at this stage.

First, the definition alludes to the powers of the citizens to elect their President and Legislators, through the conduct of periodic, free, fair and credible Presidential and Parliamentary elections; as determined by the state’s supreme law, which is the Constitution (see the whole of Chapter Four & Section 171(15) of the Constitution). Hence, in Sierra Leone sovereignty belongs to the entire citizenry from whom government through the Constitution derives its powers, authority and legitimacy (see Section 5 (2) of the Constitution). Thus, the citizens’ power (sovereignty) to elect their President and Legislators, justifies the centrality and inextricability of the ideals of freedom and diversity in a democracy.
Invariably, to be free is the desire of everyman. No man wants to be imprisoned, enslaved or prevented from enjoying his inalienable fundamental human rights and freedom. Every man wants to enjoy the beauties of freedom of expression, movement, assembly, conscience, association etc. The liberty of any man is paramount. Every man prices his life and liberty higher than anything else on earth. No man is desirous of being treated unjustly in society. No region, ethnic group or district in a multi-ethnic country like Sierra Leone is desirous of being discriminated against in the allocation of the country’s economic resources. Thus, freedom upholds human dignity and sanctity (Binneh-Kamara, 2010: 48-50).

Meanwhile, the right to freely elect a state’s governing authorities presupposes the right to freedom of conscience (see section 24 of the Constitution); which also entails the concept of diversity; hence in a multi-party democracy, there are always several contestants with different manifestoes, for whom the electors may cast their ballots on the basis of their ideologies or political interests.

This entrenched constitutional process (the electioneering exercise) is the embodiment of the legitimacy of the Office of the President and the Institution of Parliament. And as mentioned above, the functions and limitations of the said institutions are accordingly enshrined in the Constitution (see chapters Five and Six of the Constitution). The issue of the limitations of the powers of the said institutions partially explains the concepts of separation of powers, checks and balances. The third limb of the definition completes the explanation of the said concepts, by bringing in the judiciary, which is the third arm of government.

It is the judiciary that administers justice within the state. And it is the process of administering justice that encompasses upholding the supremacy of the constitution, protecting fundamental human rights and the settlement of disputes. This conception underscores the significance of the rule of law, which is guaranteed by the Constitution in a
democracy. The Constitution is the basis for the creation and legality of other powerful institutions and structures within the state. The armed forces, police, civil service, and other commissions and institutions for example, are a creation of the Constitution. Thus, the Constitution is the embodiment of the state and its functions.

1.1.4 Good Governance

Good governance within the democratic context is conceptualised as the willingness and commitment of a government to give effect to the fundamental principles of state policy. The state policy of Sierra Leone for example is founded on the principles of freedom, justice and democracy (see section 5(1) of the Constitution). And Sierra Leone has its political, economic, social and cultural objectives, which are based on the altruistic principles of unity, freedom, justice; equality and national development (see Chapter Two of the Constitution).

Paradoxically, these fundamental principles upon which the functionality of governance institutions and structures, should be evaluated, to determine the extent to which an elected government is responsible, accountable and transparent to the people of Sierra Leone; is not Justiciable, within the broader context of section 14 of the Constitution. This lives the government with practically no legal, but moral responsibility to uphold the fundamental principles of the state policy of Sierra Leone. So whether or not an elected government chooses to respect and uphold the said principles, the electors are left with no remedy, but to get that government off the corridors of power come the next democratic elections. That is principally why the conduct of periodic, free, fair and credible Presidential and Parliamentary elections is a sine qua non for any functional democracy.
Significantly, the criteria for good governance (participation, consensus, equity, inclusion, rule of law, accountability etc.), developed by the United Nations Economic and Political Commission for Asia and the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, dovetailed with the fundamental principles of the state policy of Sierra Leone mentioned above.

2.0 Critical Context

2.1 Establishing the Nexus between Conflict Prevention and Democratic Good Governance in Post-Conflict Sierra Leone

The theoretical and conceptual frameworks of conflict, democracy and good governance are accordingly discussed in 1.1.2, 1.1.3 and 1.1.4 above. Adopting the pluralists’ perspective, conflict at the macro level already exists in the country’s body politic. And the mechanisms through which the conflict can be resolved, the traditionalists and to some extent the interactionists, will essentially argue are the institutionalisation of the principles and processes of democratic good governance, which are generically discussed in both 1.1.3 and 1.1.4 above, but specifically elucidated, in this critical context.

Though the Marxian perspective is scorned by the legal and regulatory frameworks of Sierra Leone’s electioneering processes, it is the tendency for the existing conflict in Sierra Leone’s body politic, to metamorphose into a violent revolution, which is of common concern here. Thus, the above theoretical and conceptual contentions of the traditionalists, pluralists and interactionists’ on conflict analysis, constitute the basis for the argument that the existing conflict in democratic Sierra Leone is an inevitable and ostensible weakness that can be transformed into strength, through the politics of positive compromise, national integration and dialogue.
Ethnicity is a socio-cultural problem that is intertwined with African politics (Chazan, Mortimer et al., 1992: 106-116). And Sierra Leone is a multi-ethnic post-conflict country that is divided on tribal and regional lines. That is why the country’s body politic is fraught with tribal and regional divides (Hirsch, 2001: 24-25, Penfold, 2012: 25). A significant proportion of Sierra Leone’s south-eastern population is affiliated or sympathetic to the Sierra Leone People’s Party (SLPP) and majority of the people in north-western Sierra Leone, is considered supporters and sympathisers of the All People’s Congress (APC) (The Democrat, December 3, 2003; Global Times, Tuesday, September 28, 2010; New Vision, Friday, October 8, 2010; see also the pattern of voting in 2002, 2007 and 2012 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections Results; Hirsch, ibid; Penfold, ibid).

It appears that ethno-political and regional tensions and considerations have crept into the activities and operations of every functional institution and structure in Sierra Leone (Global Times, ibid). This has the tendency to transform the already conflictual situation in the country’s body politic, into a violent and debilitating crisis, that could undermine Sierra Leone’s post-conflict recovery efforts. It is evident in the literature of conflicted-affected states in contemporary Africa, that it is easy for a state that is emerging from a brutal conflict to be plunged into a more devastating crisis; the situations in Liberia and Mozambique being the notable examples.

The politics of positive compromise, inter alia, presupposes the efficient allocation of the state’s natural and structural resources. No one region, ethnic faction or district, should dominate the dynamics of the post-conflict governance structures in democratic Sierra Leone; as that in itself constitutes a recipe for a devastating conflict; since it breeds a burning and serious resentment that can foster national disintegration, because the state’s resources which are meant for all and sundry, could be seen to be only trickling down to just the selected few, who are closer to the national cake.
Thus, the formation of a broad based government on the understanding that post-conflict governance should not be driven by the winner takes all paradigm (which is being invariably pioneered by cronies of the government), should be frowned at, to give national integration a chance; as that can mitigate conflict at the macro level. Dialogue is both a tool for conflict resolution and a fundamental pre-requisite for democracy. Genuine dialogue, inter alia, fuels understanding of the ideologies of the political players at all levels; it strengthens tolerance, diversity and respect for the contentious views of political opponents; it bolsters positive compromise, fosters national cohesion and thus prevent the occurrence of a disastrous conflict that could breed national disintegration.

The other principle of democratic good governance which is germane to the concept of conflict prevention is the conduct of periodic, free, fair and credible elections. Elections are the only means through which the electors can register their disapproval and disdain against an incumbent government that chooses not to uphold the fundamental ideals of democratic good governance; as government functionaries do not have any legal obligation to uphold the said ideals, found in Chapter Two of the Constitution. The National Electoral Commission (NEC) and its Commissioners must appreciate this basic fact and strive towards the conduct of free, fair and credible elections, which outcomes should reflect the wishes and aspirations of the electors, who may have legitimately cast their votes in favour of those who should rule them (Berewa, 2011:256-260).

However, if NEC Commissioners in their wisdom choose not to be impartial, incorruptible, and neutral in the conduct of elections, that can result in conflict at the macro level; and thus pave the way for the reckless destruction of lives and property. Sierra Leone’s history is replete with examples of how electoral frauds, had occasioned serious devastating conflicts for the country (Bundu, 2001:65-67). The improper conduct of elections should be
discouraged if Sierra Leone as a nation is to journey into the end of the second decade of the twenty-first century, without threats of violence and national disintegration.

In a democracy, the judiciary is the bastion of justice; it is the symbol of judicial sovereignty. The centrality of the administration of justice to the workability of any democracy cannot be overemphasised. Thus, its neutrality in the political dynamics of the state is assessed by the credibility, reliability and independence of its decisions, rulings, orders and judgments, based on the rule of law as opposed to any other considerations in the state (Binneh-Kamara, 2009: 149-151). The Constitution guarantees judicial independence (see Section 120 (3) of the Constitution), but critics of the judiciary are of the view that judicial independence is compromised by a number of factors, including, political interference, corruption, inappropriate conditions of service for judicial officers etc. (Kargbo, 2010:18-20, Zack-Williams, 2012:137).

From the Marxian perspective, the judiciary is one of the superstructures of the state that is used by the powers that be to protect and maintain the ideals of the status quo, which are seen as ordeals for the ordinary man. This has the propensity to fuel serious disenchantments and conflicts at the macro level, when ordinary men are denied justice and access to justice. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (TRC) report is very categorical about the extent to which the improper administration of justice, contributed to the internecine war that plunged Sierra Leone into constructive anarchism during the 1990s.

Democratic ideals like the rule of law, separation of powers and checks and balances, are a sine qua non for democratic efficacy. Thus, section 171(15) of the Constitution espouses the supremacy of the Constitution; Chapter Three of the said Constitution affirms the extent to which the fundamental rights and freedoms of the citizens are recognised and protected; this also entails the notion of equality before the law.
Chapters Five, Six and Seven of the Constitution respectively and respectfully deal with the legality and constitutionality of the institutions of the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary. The said chapters clearly espouse the jurisdictions of the said institutions; and thus further explicate their separation in terms of personnel and control. Large swaths of legal and institutional checks in relation to the functionality of all three institutions are also explicated in the said chapters. What is of essence here is the extent to which the said institutions are functional, consonant with the said democratic principles and processes for which they are created. Maladministration on the part of any of the said institutions can fuel conflicts at both the micro and macro levels.

Decentralisation of the system of state administration is also essential to this discourse of conflict and democratic good governance. The existing literature on state administration in Sierra Leone is fraught with enormous convincing arguments about how over-centralisation of state administration (particularly during the era of the one-party APC oligarchy) affected decentralisation, which is cognate with the good governance argument. Centralisation of state administration can fuel bad governance and discrimination against a large swath of the population in the allocation of scarce resources (Kargbo, ibid: 31-44).

This will further breed massive urbanisation, unemployment and other socio-economic problems that may form the combustibles for the blazing flames which could engulf society, when the conflict at the macro level reaches its pinnacle. The Local Government Act (2004), and its amendments and other statutory instruments, were enacted to address the undemocratic principle of centralisation of state administration. Districts and Chiefdom Councils have been reconstituted and they have been functioning since their inauguration, after the first Local Councils Elections, conducted under the new democratic dispensation in 2004. Whether the establishment of Districts and Chiefdom Councils, and the entire
decentralisation processes, have positively impacted the lives of the people of Sierra Leone, are issues which experts in governance and development studies should look into.

Financial mismanagement, misapplication and misappropriation in the public sector are nefarious forces that can cripple any economy and fuel conflict at the macro level. When the state’s resources are irresponsibly misallocated and mismanaged, governance institutions will be left in ruins as they will be unable to perform the functions for which they are established. Even rampant bribery and corruption, can undermine the efficacy of state institutions and structures. The Auditor-General’s report of 2012, coupled with the numerous cases which have been charged to court by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), can account for the level of widespread corruption, in Sierra Leone’s body politic. The panoptic and pertinent questions that should be raised in this discourse on financial mismanagement, misapplication and misappropriation, are how serious is the government in the fight against corruption? And how effective is the ACC?

Corruption which is seemingly endemic and almost uncontrollable is now a systemic problem that can be robustly addressed when a holistic approach is adopted by the powers that be. In as much as the government has legitimated the payment of a fabulous emolument to the Anti-Corruption Commissioner at the end of every month, that unprecedented positive stride, should be replicated to the other functionaries and institutions that are also playing a very serious role in the fight against corruption in Sierra Leone. The Anti-Corruption Commissioner is just an investigator and a prosecutor of corruption and corruption related offences, for which it is only Judges of the Superior Court of Judicature, that can convict or acquit persons accused of such offences.

So what value has the payment of the fabulous emolument to the Anti-Corruption Commissioner added to the tireless fight against corruption, when the Judges whose
responsibility it is to convict or acquit accused persons of corruption are paid less than forty percent (40%) of what the ACC Commissioner earns monthly? What about the Police who help in enforcing the Court’s orders against persons, who are convicted of corruption? What about those in the prisons service, who should ensure that remanded and convicted persons are kept in safe custody, until they are needed by the Courts or have completely, served their sentences?

What about the University’s tutors and lecturers, who are the social engineers of the state? What about the other civil and public servants (including employees of the Audit Service), who are the state’s administrators? The tireless fight against corruption in the body-politic of Sierra Leone will succeed, when every player in that exercise is comforted by the state. And the ACC itself should not be seen letting some civil and public servants off the hook, by adopting the non-prosecutorial posture, while others are hounded and prosecuted for virtually the same offences for which some are asked to make refunds to the state. That itself is tantamount to ‘selective justice’, and can disturb and distort the anti-corruption tempo.

The inauguration of the National Procurement Board to scrutinise the procurements of the requisite logistics for state governance is a legal and an institutional mechanism which has been put in place to minimise financial mismanagement, misapplication and misappropriation. But again the efficacy of the said institution is what matters to Sierra Leoneans, in whose interests the items are procured. Even issues relating to the leakages in the country’s monetary and fiscal policies and systems, are cognate with the improper handling of state finances.

When those who have access to state finances do not handle them well, their actions and omissions can as well form the basis for conflict at the macro-level. The legal and regulatory frameworks of Sierra Leone’s public finance should be further tightened to minimise the
wastage and looting of state funds. Effective and sound macro-economic policies, including trade liberalisation principles, can play a role in mitigating the conflict, which bad economic governance can occasion for the state.

Two other ingredients of a robust democracy that are essential for conflict prevention are a free and independent media and an active civil society. The media as well as civil society can play a positive role in enhancing post-conflict justice and governance, and thus prevent the re-occurrence of another devastating conflict in Sierra Leone. The development of the concept of civil society is not unconnected with the triumph of democracy over tyranny. I adopt Habermas’ conception of the public sphere to reflect the notion of civil society (Marris & Thornham, 2000: 92-96). That is, a sphere of social interaction distinct from the state and its economy (characterised by voluntary associations, civic publics and communications media) in which citizens can participate in a wide range of fundamental political, social and economic affairs (Kargbo, 2011: 193-196).

Media presupposes print, broadcast (in its various forms of delivery) and computer technologies (Biagi, 2003: 19-20). The successful convergence of communications media and information technologies in this era of democratisation and globalisation, has undeniably expedited the dissemination of information to virtually every part of the globe (Crocker, Hampson, et. al., 2003: xvii). Significantly, the impact of the media in the modern World has been divided into what has been termed as the functional and conflict perspectives of social institutions (Schaefer 2003: 159). Whereas the functional perspective explores how the media can construct society; the conflict perspective examines how it may destroy society (Ibid).

In a democracy, the media acts as a public sphere by socially constructing reality and giving meanings to events that interest the public (Croteau & Hoynes 2006: 23). The media is a conduit for the communication of democratisation to civil society and the entire citizenry to
build a fuller and better democracy (Schudson, 1996: 204; Gilboa, 2005: 32), characterised by popular participation, equity and access to information, freedom of expression, accountability and transparency, etc.

When the media functions within this context, in accordance with the principles of diversity of content and plurality of ownership, it can influence post-conflict opinion and decision-making by echoing the aspirations of civil society and reflecting the views of the victims of violence and war, but this is predicated on how democratic and liberal the country’s legislative and regulatory frameworks of communications media are (see the Independent Media Commission Act, No.12 of 2000, as amended in 2006 & 2007, Sections 11 & 25 (1) of the Constitution, the Defamation Act, No.32 of 1961, the Public Order Act, No.46 of 1965 etc.).

The media can, however, play a conflictual role when journalists and propagandists put out hate content that divides society and threatens ethnic harmony (Thompson, 2007: 6). This has the potential of further wrecking stability and fomenting renewed conflict. Interestingly, the literature on the media’s impact of ‘hate’ speech is fairly limited, with most of the documented examples on the subject, taking place in the 1990s, apart from the Julius Streicher case.

The lessons of the genocide in Rwanda and the subsequent convictions of journalists, has heightened the need to monitor and evaluate the operations of the media in war torn countries to prevent it being exploited in the service of ethnic or religious propaganda. The International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), Search for Common Ground (SFCG), the Institute of Media Policy and Civil Society (IMPC) and the BBC Media Action (BBCMA), have devised and run ‘media development’ projects in Sierra Leone to train and provide
journalists with the requisite materials and technology to uphold the fundamental tenets of post-conflict justice, governance and democracy.

Basically, post-conflict/transitional justice (TJ) is the process by which a state seeks to redress the violations of a prior regime; but it requires more than just the creation of accountability for past abuses; it also demands the civic and social transformations needed to ensure that abuses are not repeated in the future. Thus, the prosecutorial and non-prosecutorial approaches to TJ, which are now features of African geopolitics, are discernible in the foregoing definition.

Arguably, the civic and social transformations needed to ensure that abuses are not repeated, partly relies on the existence and functionality of a free and non-partisan media and an active and dispassionate civil society that can robustly monitor the workability of the entire TJ process. TJ aims at ending impunity, upholding the rule of law, and protecting human rights and other democratic ideals. Even though the prosecutorial approach to TJ challenges notions of impunity, it has been suggested that the indirect promotion of democratic ideals might be it more achievable and durable long-term legacy.

3.0 Integrative Conclusion

The analysis in 2.1 above, inter alia, establishes the fact that Sierra Leone has institutionalised quite a good number of democratic institutions and processes that have been seemingly sustaining its post-conflict recovery efforts and her strive towards the attainment of democratic good governance ideals. However, the establishment of democratic institutions and processes in Sierra Leone is necessary, and it is indeed a positive step in the right direction, but that is grossly insufficient in sustaining Sierra Leone’s fledgling democracy, characterised by ethno-political and regional considerations, and a host of other setbacks.
Sierra Leone’s democracy needs to be strengthened by the requisite democratic culture, which is actually lacking in her body-politic. It is the democratic culture that will enhance the proper functionality of the democratic institutions, consonant with the requisite democratic processes. This is how the democratic trilogy works. And that is what will transform Sierra Leone’s fledgling democracy into a matured and advanced democracy in which every Sierra Leonean will be relatively secured and protected against the perilous forces of conflict and underdevelopment. The workability of the democratic trilogy is what separates the matured and advanced democracies from the fledgling or even pseudo-democracies that are always prone to conflict at the macro-level.

In a fledgling or pseudo-democracy, the judiciary, media, civil society and other institutions that should respectfully and respectively uphold the law, and hold the government accountable, responsible and transparent to the people, are seen as the forerunners, defenders and projectors of the interests of government and government functionaries for personal gains and other considerations, devoid of merits. Thus, the entire citizenry of such a democracy is left at the mercy of the powers that be. With no future, no hope for prosperity and development. When this frustration is heightened or rather exacerbated by the twin economic malaise of inflation and unemployment, the threat of instability and conflict at the macro-level, begins to loom. It should be noted that most of the factors that gave birth to the horrendous conflict that destroyed every fabric of Sierra Leone are far from being addressed. And some of the critical TRC recommendations are yet to be implemented.

The spate of violence across the country is rife. The country’s democratic social capital is fragile; as most of its citizens are yet to imbibe the democratic culture of diversity, peaceful coexistence, and the legal and peaceful means of resolving conflicts. Illiteracy is astronomically high, making it excruciatingly painful for the vast majority of the illiterate (and some so-called educated) people to understand and appreciate contrary and critical
views, without demonising the persons, who may have genuinely expressed such views. Unhealthy political rivalry is virtually the order of the day. And corruption and financial misappropriation are on the loose.

Thus, the paucity of actual and potential human capital has prevented Sierra Leone from even attracting enough Direct Foreign Investment (DFI). The country has not even benefited much from the ongoing boom in the mining sector, because of this lack of human capital; hence regular capital flight is quite conspicuous in the activities and operations of the Multinational Corporations (MC) and their functionaries, that have dominated the investment climate in the country’s mining sector.

As a post-conflict country, Sierra Leone should not under any circumstances relapse into war. The country’s post-conflict governance structures and institutions must function in accordance with the ideals for which they are created without fear or favour, affect or ill-will. Sierra Leoneans should pre-occupy their consciences with the question of the lessons which they learnt from the ten years internecine war and how such lessons, if at all they have learnt, have impacted their attitudes at the psychological and sociological levels.

The multi-dimensional socio-economic, cultural and political forces (Zack-Williams, op.cit: 3-12; Hirsch, op.cit:21-32; Strauss, 2002: 93-96; Gberie, 2005:70-96; Francis, 2001: 107-110; Musah & Fayemi, 2000: 80-86 etc.) that caused the reckless destruction of lives and property in Sierra Leone, between 1991 and 2002, should be comprehensively addressed within the context of the TRC report and other positively emerging conflict resolution mechanisms. National cohesion and inter-political dialogue (being the notable of such mechanisms) will foster better understanding of our political ideals and differences, history and culture, and the need to make Sierra Leone a better society, that can properly manage its conflict at the macro-level.
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4.1 Legislation Construed

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The Anti-Corruption Act No.1 of 2008

4.1.2 Newspapers

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4.1.3 National Electoral Commission’s Results