



Political Economy of an Armed Conflict: An Analysis of Civil War in Sierra Leone

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Abstract:

The political economy of armed conflicts creates many opportunities to examine any armed conflict from variety of dimensions, mark the underlying causes, and how many intervening variables influence the conflict resolution and peace building process. The political economy of a civil war like in Sierra Leone can be tough to study as there have been the domination of both political and economic factors, where diamonds turned out to be a resource curse. Meanwhile other significant factors such as ethno-religious dimensions, socio-economic injustice, and unstable political environment worked as catalysts for the armed conflict. This paper attempts to explore all fundamental dimensions and elements of armed conflict in Sierra Leone with a view to offering an in-depth analysis of its political economy. The paper uses the theoretical concepts from “greed versus grievance” and “rent seeking behavior” to build the framework; and analyzes the elements of ethnicity, culture and governance with regard to civil war. It shows the way diamonds became a resource curse in Sierra Leone.

Keywords: Sierra Leone, conflict, civil war, governance, resource, greed, grievance

INTRODUCTION

The end of the Cold War has seen a sharp rise in the armed conflicts that occur within the states' boundaries, known as civil wars. These civil wars are more frequent, destructive, protracted, and difficult to resolve owing to the fact that they have unique socio-economic, political and cultural contexts. These wars are also characterized by external involvement, existential struggle, low intensity, and more deaths of civilians. Any kind of political settlement seems difficult with the continuous insurgencies where most actors involved in the armed conflict prefer war to peace. The civil war in Sierra Leone is known as one of the most disastrous armed conflicts of Africa that resulted in killing an estimated 50,000 people and forced at least 4.5 million people to become internally displaced. What started as a conflict confined to the southern and eastern part of Sierra Leone, spread throughout the country within just three years.

The political economy of armed conflict is a significant aspect in the contemporary conflict analysis and policy development sector. Political economy of any armed conflict helps to understand the key dynamics of that conflict and offer a relatively systematic description of how these dynamics influence the conflict resolution and post conflict peace building. This paper is an attempt to delve

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into the analysis of the political economy of an armed conflict. Basic concepts from the understanding of the political economy of an armed conflict and its relation to the proposed case study will try to analyze the factors that influenced the political economy of that particular war the most. The case of Sierra Leone civil war is important in many ways. As for being the part of new wars after cold war, the major shifts in the nature of the new wars can easily be recognized. There are both economic and political motivations in a war but there is always one factor that overshadows the rest of them. Also, the external and funding factors are also crucial in determining the course of the war. This paper will thus attempt to provide a comparative analysis of these factors.

Background of the study

Sierra Leone belongs to the Western Africa region. The country has a population of nearly 6 million where diverse ethnic groups reside together. However, “Temne” and “Mende” account for the two dominant ethnic groups in Sierra Leone. From the religious perspective, Sierra Leone is mainly a Muslim country. One of the most important features of the country is that it is rich in natural minerals and diamonds. This country has been a trading point for the Portuguese, Dutch, and French traders since the early 15th century. After that, it became a British colony in 18th century and gained independence in 1961 (Asagna, 2017). However, the resources of Sierra Leone are largely known as the resource curse. This is because the country has large quantity of natural resource but poor economy along with mismanagement and corruption at governmental level.

The civil war in Sierra Leone started in 1991 and continued for the next 11 years. It resulted in around 70,000 casualties and the displacement of 2.6 million people. Apart from the casualties, the key characteristics of this civil war included kidnapping of children in order to use them as child soldiers. The internal armed conflict in Sierra Leone was determined by a state system that was largely exploitative, exclusion of youths, high dependency on mineral rents, and the role of regional neighbours (Kaldor, 2006). The country witnessed a decline of discipline within the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) as they were colluding during the civil war. The SLA also engaged in a few battles with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). After the 1997 coup, a group of the SLA even entered into a formal political alliance with the rebels of Sierra Leone. Because of this, majority of the victims of this civil war were civilians, not the soldiers (Bellows, 2006).

There were both economic and political motives for both the parties to enter into this civil war and that helps us understand the political economy perspective. The noteworthy events of the war are given below:

Year	Events
1991	Sierra Leone is invaded from Liberia by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) guerrillas along with Sam Bockerie.
1992	The United Movement of Liberia for Democracy, also known as ULIMO begins its function as guerilla group to hinder the cooperation between the rebel leader of Sierra Leone, Foday Sankoh and Charles Taylor.
1994	RUF takes over almost all areas of Sierra Leone enriched with diamonds. The state infrastructure breaks down leading to the death of almost 50,000 and displacement of 4.5 million people.

1995	The government rents a private army to fight the rebels.
1996	Brig. Julius Maada Bio overthrows the military ruler of Sierra Leone, Valentine Strasser in a nonviolent coup.
1997	After the rebel soldiers took charge of Sierra Leone, Major Johnny Paul Koroma invites the exiled rebel leader of RUF, Foday Sankoh to join the new government. President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, on the other hand, flees to Guinea.
1998	With the help of a Nigerian-led African force, Ahmed Tejan Kabbah becomes successful in taking over Sierra Leone again.
1999	President Ahmed Kabbah gets into a cease-fire agreement with the rival leader, Foday Sankoh. While protesting against this, the rebel soldiers start riots through Freetown.
2000	The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) decides on expanding the peacekeeping force in Sierra Leone from 6,000 to 11,100.
2001	In order to eliminate the arm supply to the rebel groups in Sierra Leone, the UNSC enforces an embargo on the trade in diamonds and weapons of Liberia.

Figure 1- Trajectory of the civil war in Sierra Leone (Global IDP Database, 2003)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature on political economy, armed conflict, and civil wars are aplenty. It helps in having a detailed analysis into various fields of peace and conflict studies. The literature presented political economy of armed conflict from different perspective while mentioning the dimensions, characteristics and intervening variables relating it to different case analysis. Attempts have been made by the scholars to identify the internal and external actors, existing governance and primary motivations in order to understand the trajectory. The aim of this literature review is to account for the literature concerning political economy of armed conflict that will be utilized throughout the entirety of this paper from the perspective of Sierra Leone.

Political economy in general will appear as the study of the interaction of politics and economics. But the definition remains vague with little focus on how political economy differs from direct economics and areas of economics related with policy choice. Economist Lionel Robbins defined economics as the study of optimal use of scarce resources (Robbins, 1932). Economics has been studied separately from politics in order to focus completely on analyzing individual and markets. Allan Drazen states that political economy operates within the political nature of decision-making and focuses on how politics affect the economic choices in societies (Drazen, 2000).

Armed conflicts taking place within the borders of a state are assumed to be political conflicts, where citizens of that particular state fight for internal changes. William Ayres (2000) mentions that even though post-cold war era hoped for a world without wars, during the period 1989-1997, 103 armed conflicts occurred in 69 locations across the world and most of them have been intra-state conflict. This refers to a change in the patterns of conflicts and a new phase of world security. Peter Wallensteen (1998) defined armed conflict as a political conflict where the armed combat involves at least one state's armed forces or in which one or more armed groups try to gain control over the state. He also added that, in an armed conflict at least 1,000 people are killed as a result of an ongoing fighting during the conflict. Mark Gersovitz and Norma Kriger (2013) defined civil war as a politically organized conflict within a state that is violent, sustained, and large-scale. It happens

primarily among the central armed groups or the citizens for gaining monopoly of power or force within the state.

Armed conflict is a social activity that is well organized and no armed group can participate in such activity without the use of economic and other kinds of resources. This is why in case of an internal armed conflict within a state, both the state parties and non-state actors choose to offer valuable and often scarce resources to continue fighting. Civil wars, on the other hand are difficult to identify as dimensions and characteristics of civil war vary in every country. Traditionally speaking, the political economy of armed conflict or war indicates towards the relationship between state building and mobilizing economic ways to ensure the survival of states. P. S. Douma describes how after some major changes in the world politics after the Cold War, new wars and its related economic pursuits revealed interconnected relationships among political decision-making, industrial capacity and economic performance of major industries. In case of internal conflicts, it is considered that economic means pave the way for the onset of conflicts but contemporary world politics have shown how internal conflicts becomes a way of collecting economic assets for the conflicting parties (Douma, 2003).

Christopher J. Coyne (2011) describes that, from the standpoint of political economy the chances of an armed conflict to occur increases only when the benefits of engaging in the conflict surpass the costs for at least one or more political actors. So, if we want to examine the logic behind any political violence, it is imperative to incorporate the tools of public choice economics. The political economy of an armed conflict can be interpreted in different forms and ways but for the sake of the accuracy of the paper, this study will limit its understanding to some specific criteria. Daron Acemoglu (2003) states that the incentives, opportunities, restraints, and revenues faced by different political actors such as leaders, rebels, military personals, terrorists, diplomats and the role of constitutions, governance, and legal systems of the state are the determinants of the political economy of any armed conflict. The institutional factors are important because ineffective political institutions cannot provide constraints or restrictions over the declaration of war.

During the course of literature review some key points have come forward regarding the nature, characteristics of armed conflict and civil wars. Authors have tried to discuss the political economy of armed conflict from many perspectives while identifying its different political actors: both internal and external, existing socio-political system and governance, corruption and primary motivations. However, some variables and perspectives have been less focused. There is not sufficient research on how the concepts of greed and grievance, resource scarcity or abundance and even rent seeking behaviour contribute to the whole understanding of political economy in any armed conflict. Also, the presence of child soldiers has huge implications for this political economy, which has not been discussed properly. This study will thus try to focus on these phenomena with a theoretical framework from the perspective of the civil war in Sierra Leone. The paper specifically attempts to answer: What are the dimensions of political economy that influenced the civil war in Sierra Leone? How did greed and grievance guide the trajectory of such civil war?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study builds its theoretical framework by extracting from two concepts that are relevant to the political economy of any armed conflict. These two are “greed versus grievance” and “rent seeking

behavior.” As mentioned earlier, sharp increase in terms of intra-state armed conflicts during the post-cold war era has unfolded many underlying characteristics of what is known as the new wars. Understanding the political economy of such armed conflicts involves taking many perspectives, dimensions, and variables into account. The debate of greed versus grievance in political economy covers many components that are considered responsible for the armed conflicts that happen between the boundary of any state. Proper assessment of rent seeking behaviour reveals the political process of division and survival of rebel groups.

Greed versus Grievance

The concept of Greed versus grievance comes up with two distinctive baseline arguments constructed by scholars when they try to understand the genesis of any civil war. Collier and Hoeffler introduced the term “Greed” which advocates that conflict generates elite competition over valuable natural resources and it is often hidden by collective grievance (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). Internal conflicts or strife within the borders of a state have chances of becoming intense if these conflicts are funded by rents based on natural resources such as oil and diamonds. There has also been an indication towards the relationship between poverty trap and civil wars. This reveals that in case of underdeveloped states, poverty motivates citizens to join as soldiers and often reduces the opportunity costs of such internal conflicts. At the same time, internal conflict due to its disastrous nature keeps on giving rise to poverty. This is known as the vicious cycle of poverty-conflict-poverty (Collier & Hoeffler, 2003).

Greed refers to the economic opportunity to fight. Greed accounts for the opportunities enjoyed by existing groups of rebels. There are three main mechanisms for these opportunities, which are known as recruiting, financing, and geography. Natural resources, third party donations, aid of foreign states that are against the government are the most common financial sources of the rebel groups. Natural resource is relatively a dominating factor. The recruitment process involves finding manpower and this becomes easy there is a large number of unemployed youths who suffer from poverty and deprivation. Geographical situation matters to a great extent as rebel groups seek for places that is suitable for insurgency (Murshed & Tadjoeeddin, 2009).

The concept of grievance in civil war or internal conflict revolves around identity and group formation. Hostility between different religious and ethnic groups is considered as the reason why most civil wars happen. It means that without the existence of collective action problems, large scale civil wars are impossible. The theory of grievance can fall into three categories: relative deprivation, polarization and horizontal inequality. The component of grievance can persist without greed but greed alone does not sustain without the existence of grievance (Collier & Hoeffler, 2002). This is why internal conflicts can occur only on the basis of mere economic opportunities if there is the presence of group formation with a history of grievance.

Political scientists attribute “group grievances” as the cause of most rebellions but the economic literature points to economic incentives and opportunities for appropriating wealth as the proximate cause which means the “greed.” If one compares the effects of greed and grievance on the occurrence of a civil war, the hypothesis of greed is more compatible according to some scholars (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). This hypothesis is useful to help one understand why people with low income in a society decide to participate in internal conflicts. In that sense, economic opportunities

and incentives originate from greed. So, when compared to grievance related to the political environment, socio-economic condition, and religious and ethnic dimensions of a state, the notion of “greed” relates more closely to the onset of conflict. All these led to an idea that civil war is largely driven by rebel greed (Ballentine & Nitzschke, 2003).

Rent Seeking Behaviour

The term rent seeking behaviour has been coined and made prominent by the economist Gordon Tullock in the discipline of modern political economy. Rent seeking behaviour is defined as “the expenditure of resources in order to bring about an uncompensated transfer of goods or services from another person or persons to one's self as the result of a favorable decision on some public policy” (Tullock, 1967). Group of individuals, who are largely known as the elite groups of a particular state attempt to formulate various ways to lobby the authority for expenditure, taxes, and even regulatory strategies that produce special advantages and financial benefits for these groups. This happens at the expense of consumers, taxpayers or other group of individuals who might be in economic competition with the elite beneficiary groups. Rent seeking redistributes resources from large unorganized populations to small organized groups.

Usually, civil wars or internal armed conflicts within a state are often viewed as violent competitions and contest for resources. Civil war or internal conflict in a state is often seen as a violent competition or contest for resources. In the case of civil wars, it revolves around rents, tax collection, land or even political power. The government lobbying procedure is highly political. Such lobbying or rent seeking behaviour as discussed earlier is driven by the objective of achieving economic rents that are greater than the usual income earned by impartial competition in the economic marketplace (Mbaku, 1998). Rent seeking has become the condition of survival for the rebel groups involved in civil wars. This is because the rebel groups try to ensure their own survival by securing rents that results from the control of primary commodity exports (Arcand & Chauvet, 2001).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The paper employed qualitative design to pursuit the study as it seems most appropriate. Research design is expected to include all four important considerations: the strategy, framework, the identification of whom and what to study on, and the procedures used in collecting and analyzing data (Schwab & Donald, 2008). As the paper is set to explore the political economy of an armed conflict in relation to a case study, qualitative research is best suitable. The historical case study approach is compatible with the objective of this paper since the paper solely focuses on the civil war in Sierra Leone. It explains the casual mechanisms of political phenomena and also offers useful circumstantial and inferential understandings of different dimensions (Buthe, 2002).

The paper incorporates secondary data which has been collected from libraries, historical archives, and electronically based sources. Some of the books for the purpose of this study including *An Essay on the Nature and Significance of Economic Science*, and *The Political Economy of Internal Conflict* were collected and analyzed from university libraries. Internet has been a major source of secondary data collection. Most of the journals, articles, and a few books were taken from various websites, e-libraries, and online journals. Some information was collected through the archives of online newspapers.

DATA ANALYSIS

Ethnicity and Culture

Ethnicity and cultural diversity of any state is highly correlated with any internal conflict it faces. Ethnicity provides a strong basis for social and political organization and takes many forms. Ethnopoliticization is a strategy for political and class domination. In case of Sub-Saharan Africa, political ethnicity is seen as mechanism for elite domination in the society by being closely related with their interests. Around 16 ethnic groups, all with their own languages, live in Sierra Leone. Membership of an ethnic group often overlaps with a common religious affiliation in Sierra Leone. In the political culture of Sierra Leone, the main struggle for power focuses on the competition between the ethnic *Temne* in the northwest and the *Mende* in the south-east. While most of the Mende people support the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), the bulk of Temne support the All People's Congress (APC) (The **New People**, 2012). Discriminations identified during the colonial period in Sierra Leone is a result of British indirect rule (Jang, 2012). While the natives were people protected by the British, Creoles were British subjects. This distinction was the initiation of political, administrative, and legal discrimination. The politicization of identities like Creole, Mende, Temne, and Limba provided them with a dominant role in Sierra Leone to shape the post-colonial political process. The post-colonial history of Sierra Leone offers insights about the connections among class, ethnicity, and state formation (Kandeh, 1992).

Resource and Governance

The colonial history of Sierra Leone pointed towards ethnic polarization that might have caused the conflict erupted in 1991. Ethnic division and rivalry cause rebellion that often results into state conflicts. However, the ethnic polarization did not matter much into the war until political division was created when the governance system of Milton Margai was held responsible reportedly for being controlled by the British. The inaugural political foundation of independent Sierra Leone was based on political disagreement. The political structure was highly flawed as Stevens along with his APC, developed a system based on conventional authority that was extremely hierarchical in nature (Harris, 2014). Gradually, Sierra Leone sensed the missing element of a well-functioning state structure that has a proper distribution of power and resources. This, in the long run created economic and social imbalance. Moreover, Stevens and APC had, what is largely considered as a corrupt personalized system for state governance. The entire scheme concerned expenditure revenue produced by the distribution of raw materials that caused social and economic imbalance. The state resources have been largely misused during that time. On top of that, the exclusion of certain social groups led to zero growth in the development sectors (Asangna, 2017). Sierra Leone is identified as a failed state which failed to deliver positive political goods while witnessing economic decline, corruption, resource abuse, and breakdown of laws (Rotberg, 2004).

Blood Diamonds of Sierra Leone

Natural resources have a significant role to play in conflict on the basis of two aspects. These are: scarcity and abundance. Internal conflict can start when there is an increased demand for the scarce resources by the population. On the other hand, according to several scholars, resource abundance rather than scarcity is a bigger motivation for conflict. Similar to Sierra Leone, countries tend to experience resource curse, especially when poor management of resources is visible from

the government. Easily available resources give rise to rebel movements and political instability make the state more exposed to internal conflicts. Mismanagement and corruption here work as catalysts. Diamonds, now largely known as the conflict materials have received the media attention right from the beginning of civil war in Sierra Leone. Those diamonds have become famous under the name of blood diamonds or conflict diamonds. These diamonds are illegally smuggled in areas damaged by wars, especially in central and western Africa, to finance internal conflicts. One of the many reasons behind this is that diamonds are considered easy to steal, mobilize to the market and comparatively difficult to trace. They also provide valuable incentive for the rebel groups in order to keep on fighting (Smillie, 2000). Secondary diamonds that are easy to loot can provide incentives for civil wars. If we examine the diamond production in Sierra Leone in the following years, some things are noticeable.

Year	Produced Diamonds (Carats)
1991	243
1992	347
1993	158
1994	255
1995	213
1996	270
1997	104
1998	8.5

Figure 2: Diamond production in Sierra Leone from 1991 to 1998 (Global IDP Database, 2003)

Considering the civil war in Sierra Leone, diamonds not only worked as the main source of revenue for government, it is also considered as one of the key factors behind the conflict. As a result of being an underdeveloped country, the natural resources increased the risk of an internal armed conflict. Achieving the power to control natural resources worked as a major motivation behind this civil war. The rebels, the existing government, and the industry of diamond, all benefited from the war (Fithen, 1999). The RUF was producing \$ 25 million to \$ 125 million annually towards the end of civil war. For this rebel group in Sierra Leone, diamonds were the prime source of collecting revenue throughout the armed conflict. Easy access to natural resources assisted the RUF to gather arms during their campaigns (Osikhena, 2009).

Involvement of the Child Soldiers

One of the most prominent characteristics of recent internal conflicts has been the involvement of child soldiers. Scholars use many expressions to suitably portray the way children take part in armed conflicts. People generally identify them as children who are closely affiliated to the fighting forces. Their image as child soldiers has been drawn from being the victim to playing the role of hero by numerous newspapers. The process how children turn into child soldiers has several factors involved. From the most well-known factor poverty to the glorification of military forces or rebel groups, political use of symbols and even social manipulation, power structures including extended families and ethnic connections contribute to the creation of child soldiers (Denov, 2010). In Sierra Leone, every party involved in the conflict engaged children as soldiers for providing them with military support.

District	Registered Soldiers	Soldiers Supported	Percentage
Bo	83	42	50.6
Bombali	683	4	0.6
Bonthe	102	20	19.6
Kailahun	405	0	0.0
Kambia	16	5	31.3

Figure 3: Participation of child soldiers in the civil war in Sierra Leone (NRS Monitoring System, 2003)

Those children were used like pawns during this civil war as they were manipulated, abused, taken away from their families. All parties took advantage of these children by exploiting them in varying ways. As a matter of fact, this certainly violated some moral boundaries. Both internal and external forces of Sierra Leone actively participated in this process. At that time, the international community also did not show much effort to stop this malpractice. The child soldiers financed with guns and blood stained created an intimidating phase of conflict back in Sierra Leone (Bangura, 2012). Since the beginning of the war, parties started including children in the RUF ranks. However, due to the circumstances in Libya and Liberia much before the war, different armed groups decided to use the children in battle ground. Most of the youths were being trained in Libya. They stayed there as a part of the central group of Liberian and Sierra Leonean armed forces (Sesay, 2003).

Role of the External Actors:

From an economic viewpoint, the scenario in Sierra Leone continued to decline. This resulted in frustrations among the citizens of the country who were getting deprived of basic human rights. The elites looted the resources for their own benefit and caused massive imbalance in the societal structure leaving little hope for improvement. The involvement of external actors made the war lengthier and caused more fatalities. This civil war saw the active role of two states: Lebanon and Libya. The Lebanese traders were already in contact with Sierra Leone with their illicit exchange of diamonds and mining activities in the countries of West Africa. These unlawful deals started happening before nationalized industries came into focus. But they began to operate closely with the new Sierra Leone government (Nilsson, 2008). The relationship between these two countries continued even during the civil war. In the early 1970's to the late 1990's, a few rebel groups used the diamonds from Sierra Leone as the primary source of financing. This kind of revenue helped them obtain some informal taxes and global fund raising for armed forces residing in Lebanon. (Hazleton, 2000).

On the other hand, experts believe that this civil war spilled over from an internal armed conflict that happened in Liberia in 1989. This is because apparently in 1991, a small rebel group entered into Sierra Leone. The country also supported the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) that highly dissatisfied Charles Taylor, who was a rebel leader in Liberia. Because ECOMOG used Sierra Leone as a platform to attack Taylor's position. However, the influence of Liberia on Sierra Leone started in 1950s when Monrovia was used as the

route through which diamonds used to travel out of Sierra Leone. Dealers formed their offices in Monrovia to buy diamonds stolen at the borders of Liberia. The security at the borders was itself questionable as these loopholes in the system helped the dealers to get diamonds within an untaxed price. Liberia had close to little diamond in its reserve but this did not stop it from globally exporting excessive number of diamonds in the market. In between 1950 to 1959, amongst all the diamonds sold worldwide, around 20 percent were smuggled from Sierra Leone through Liberia. As a result, numerous diamond dealers started to move in Monrovia to continue their businesses (David, 2005).

FINDINGS

Greed or Grievance

The civil war in Sierra Leone can be discussed under both the explanation of greed and grievance becoming one of the most complex conflicts of that time. Many people attribute the conflict to the sustained political repression but the conflict can be explained in light of the country's valuable resource of diamond. This study shows that both greed and grievance have been the driving factors behind this conflict. Internal conflict within the boundaries of a certain country has a self-financing nature that gives much importance to the economics. The governing system of Sierra Leone has seen political patronage-controlled societal relations. The elites created an alterantive system of profit, power, and protection, involved in rent seeking behavior. The war was fueled by greed where the governance focused completely on illicit deals of diamonds and enriching the elites. There were enough economic incentives to initiate and sustain such conflict. This conflict is interconnected with the country's resources. Although, the rebel group, RUF launched their attacks against the APC, they had a greed-based motive which was to seek control of this diamond-producing country. The RUF started trading diamonds for guns in order to make their organization military and financially viable. The impact of natural resources on conflict is closely related to the governance.

Bad governance in the context of Sierra Leone excluded and marginalized certain social groups. The corruption as a primary mean to gather wealth for the elites created huge gaps between the rich and poor. The unhealthy political powers and their rent seeking behaviour did not let the ordinary people to have a reasonable portion of income. The presence of relative deprivation easily created the potential for collective violence long before the war broke out. During this time, the RUF took advantage of the failing state and started recruiting troops in a higher number. It only became possible because of the already existing grievance in people's mind. The faulty governance system affected the development perspective along with long running socio-cultural factors. We can see both factors of greed and grievance fitting well into the case of Sierra Leone (Collier, Hoeffler, 2000). The operationalization of diamonds as a resource curse can be seen from the greed perspective. On the other hand, poor governance and corruption can be attributed with grievances. However, the greed-based explanation seems more convincing. The ruling party and elites were driven by greed based on accumulating power and other resources. The rebel organization RUF has the primary motivation of invading a country abundant with diamonds, that also explains the greed perspective. Diamond worked both as a finance and a symbol of greed. The factors of grievance were present but the conflict was fueled and sustained long because of the natural resource.

Factor that Dominated the Most: Political or Economic

The paper tries to explain political economy that is taken into consideration seriously in case of new wars. It is almost near to fundamental to focus on the factors that influenced the most in this armed conflict. So many factors are intertwined in this conflict along with many intervening variables that it becomes difficult to come to a conclusion on whether the economic factors or the political factors dominated the war era the most. There are, however some determinants that could be pointed out. According to many scholars, it was not greed but grievance of ordinary people that turned this war into a protracted one. This can be understood if socio-economic and political condition of Sierra Leone is properly analyzed. The living standards of citizens declined because of mismanagement in the economic system. The country had an established political system that was proved to be beneficiary only for the elites. On top of that, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank forced structural adjustment programmes on Sierra Leone. The conditions attached to such programmes further complicated the issues by reducing the government expenditure and devaluation (Mustafa, 2010). Sharp increase in unemployment and with that poverty, made conflict in Sierra Leone seem inevitable. Such elements can be marked as highly political ones as bad governance paved the way.

On the other hand, the alluvial diamond mining for the economic purposes and benefits has been focused as a primary motive of the war. The war is considered to be fought over the diamonds and reached a point where the minerals were given the title of resource curse (Reno, 1997). These economic expectations of the rebels and the societal elites also gave dimensions to this civil war. The rebel organization, RUF easily got engaged in a vicious cycle of greed financed by the fruits of greed. Sierra Leone has been listed on the Human Development Index as 180 out of 187 (Bah, 2011). As a result of the underdevelopment and poverty, there was major unemployment throughout the country. There were even children seen reaching out to strangers for money or food. So, it was quite an easy task for them to be exploited (Schmidt, 2009). It is better to say that both the political and economic factors in this civil war rather compliments each other. The whole political system capitalized on selfishness in the society and this resulted in economic failures largely affecting the common people.

CONCLUSION

This paper provides an in-depth analysis of the political economy of Sierra Leone's civil war. This particular war fought in Sierra Leone exposed many characteristics of new wars from the post-Cold War era. The concept of political economy explained the underlying motivations that help these conflicts sustain for longer period of time. The case of Sierra Leone has always been in the limelight while discussing political economy of any armed conflict. The reason behind this is that, this civil war reflected unique traits that create a foundation for larger understanding in this discipline. Both the political and economic factors have worked collectively behind this war. If brought under comparison the answer would be tough to provide. In that case, this war can also be defined as a social pathology where it is difficult to extract motivations from the behavior. It is difficult to reach any conclusion as all the elements present in the context are interconnected. The paper focuses on the underlying causes that might have caused the violent conflict to sustain for a long time. The

paper finds that while natural resource was the primary motivation for almost all parties to the conflict, the crippled state system with questionable governing body and corrupted structure that is only beneficiary for the elites of the society had a significant role in fueling the conflict. Poverty, underdevelopment, and exclusion of many social groups created rage among the mass which later made it easier for the rebels to mobilize. The paper also provides a comparative analysis between greed and grievance and concludes that although the presence of grievance against the governance and state system favoured the conflict, greed based on the natural resources is responsible for the larger part of the conflict. It is better to say that the combination of both elements paved the way of a lengthy, brutal armed conflict in Sierra Leone.

The paper attempts to offer an extensive anatomy of the political economy of an armed conflict where it analyzed the case of Sierra Leone. It identifies the underlying causes of this conflict. By doing so, it also focuses on the primary motivations behind the conflict and presents a comparative analysis on that matter. Research have shown that while analyzing any internal armed conflict, the focus is limited to the economic incentives and rarely goes beyond that. This study, however starts from the very beginning that includes focusing on the colonial period of state making. This goes a long way in revealing the deep-seated elements of grievance. Furthermore, the paper creates an argument based on the understanding on the role of greed and grievance and also between the elements of political economy in the context of Sierra Leone. As a result, it has profound significance in the discipline of political economy.

Future research on political economy of armed conflicts should focus more on the earlier trajectory of events. This is fundamental in understanding the whole scenario of conflict. Number of authors related to this topic are limited which means that research done is insufficient. It is important to study the structure of the governing system to analyze both the political and economic incentives. The political economy of new wars has different elements working closely and, in most cases, interconnected. Researchers must be extra careful in analyzing the underlying causes in order not to exclude any aspect. Lastly, it is important to examine the conflict from the perspectives of all the actors involved.

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