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**POSTCONFLICT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SIERRA LEONE:
WESTERN, CULTURAL, AND NATIONAL INFLUENCES**

by

WHITNEY MCINTYRE MILLER

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
University of San Diego

May 2010

Dissertation Committee

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Abstract

Sierra Leone was torn apart by a terrible eleven-year civil war. Rebel forces raped and murdered civilians, burned down crops and villages, and looted homes and community structures in a quest to overturn the long-corrupt government. Since 2002 communities have begun the process of developing toward a sustainable peace. Using grounded theory and inductive analysis, this qualitative research study conducted during the summer of 2009 examines the development efforts of two communities in the Northern provinces of Sierra Leone, Lungi and Makeni. Findings reveal that there are three influences playing a role in their development: western, cultural, and national. This research describes the impact that these influences are having on postconflict community development and the ways in which they are working to affect change.

This study shows that while western organizations are able to provide means for assistance, they often struggle to connect with the local people. Culturally, leadership and community-based initiatives encourage community cohesion and build on resilience, but are limited by the resources they can provide and the traditions that in some instances undermine issues of equality. Finally, national influences, which appear uniquely situated to link the resources of western influences with local cultural practices, are limited in their ability to make these connections in a way that successfully contributes to Sierra Leone's development. This research suggests that postconflict community development in Sierra Leone would benefit from a more integrated and collective approach on the part of these three main influential systems. Although the findings in this research are not generalizable, they offer some insight for other countries struggling to achieve community development after conflict.

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Acronyms

AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
APC	African People's Congress
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGOs	International Nongovernmental Organizations
MP	Member of Parliament
NACSA	National Commission for Social Action
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
US	United States (of America)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Chapter One

Introduction

This is a study of Sierra Leone and the forces that have influenced its postconflict community development. Sierra Leone experienced an eleven-year civil war from 1991-2002 that left communities largely in disarray. These communities are struggling to develop and move forward from this horrific conflict. Although western, cultural, and national influences are each playing a role in that development, it is unclear precisely if, and how, they are helping Sierra Leone develop conditions that would support sustainable peace. This study examines the role of each of these influences, their interrelatedness, and their impact on postconflict community development.

I begin with an examination of Sierra Leone's history including its civil war, and current situation. I then discuss the research that is helpful in understanding postconflict community development in general, and in Sierra Leone in particular. After a description of my methodology, I present my findings on two Sierra Leone communities, which extend our understanding of the role of western, cultural, and national influences and their interrelatedness in postconflict community development. Finally, I discuss my conclusions and recommendations.

Overview of Sierra Leone

In order to fully understand community development in Sierra Leone after the conflict, it is important to be aware of both what happened during the conflict as well as the events and factors that led up to that conflict. Through understanding this history, we get a better sense of the experiences of the communities over time. This understanding enables us to grasp what historical factors may have influenced communities to look the

way they did before the war, which may, therefore, inform the way communities are developing since the end of the war.

Sierra Leone is a small country located on the coast in western Africa, bordered by Guinea to the north and Liberia to the south; a country slightly smaller than the state of South Carolina (Pham, 2006). Prior to its establishment as a settlement for freed slaves in 1787, the people of Sierra Leone lived in communities separated by ethnicity and language (Alie, 1990). The largest of the ethnic groups were, and continue to be, the Temne and Mende (Alie, 1990), with the Mende living largely in the South and the Temne in the North. Once freed, slaves from Britain, the United States, and Nova Scotia began returning to Sierra Leone after being taken from their country for the slave trade (Alie, 1990; United States Department of State, 2008). Many of these slaves, who lived in the area of the capital city of Freetown, were considered to be Krio and spoke the Krio language, a language combining traditional languages and English (Alie, 1990). Krio eventually spread throughout the country and it became common for people to speak Krio, in addition to their native tongue (Alie, 1990).

Ethnic communities, prior to colonization by the British in 1808 (Alie, 1990), established a political system led by non-autocratic traditional rulers, or chiefs (Alie, 1990). These chiefs ruled for a lifetime based on inheritance and paternal lineage (Fanthorpe, 2003; Keen, 2003, 2005). When the British colonized Sierra Leone they attempted to establish some indirect democratic rule within the communities. They used the traditional local political system (Keen, 2005) and gave the chiefs the power to bestow land rights on the native occupants and their descendants. Chiefs were given the authority to represent their people to the government, levy taxes and other fines as

needed, and to run local court systems (Fanthorpe, 2001, 2003; Jackson, 2005; Keen, 2005; National Recovery Committee, 2002; Richards, Bah, Vincent, 2004; Sawyer, 2008). This rule was indirect, however, because the British government still maintained complete control of the national government (Alie, 1990). Despite having one member on the colony's governor's advisory cabinet, the local people continued to be left out of governmental rule throughout the 1800s, causing a rift between the Krio people and British colonizers (Alie, 1990).

Beginning in 1919, and throughout the first part of the twentieth century, the local people held strikes and made other attempts to encourage the British to allow them to join and be involved in governmental affairs (Alie, 1990). By the 1940s and 1950s the voices of the local people were starting to be heard, as dissent against the colonialists in Sierra Leone was increasing, and the British were largely weakened by World War II. Moreover, the United Nations (UN) had openly condemned colonialism (Alie, 1990; Keen, 2005). Protests and strikes heightened in 1955, while the British were attempting to design an exchange of power from colonized rule to a local rule (Alie, 1990), and finally, the country, like many African countries during this time, gained its independence on April 27, 1961 (Alie, 1990; Keen, 2005).

The years that followed saw a good deal of political turmoil. The initial system of government had a Prime Minister in charge. The first Prime Minister was Milton Margai, from the largely Mende-dominated Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), who attempted to unite the various ethnic groups through granting each group ministerial positions (Keen, 2005). Milton Margai was followed into the position briefly by his brother,

Albert; but in 1967 Siaka Stevens from the All People's Congress (APC), or Temne-dominated party, was elected Prime Minister (Keen, 2005).

With Stevens' election, there was increasing tension within the country between the ethnic political parties and a heightened divide between the ruling elites and those without power (Alie, 1990). These tensions were somewhat assuaged by the local people using the Krio language, which made communication possible, and by the commonality of inter-ethnic marriages (Keen, 2005). Rampant corruption, both at the national and local governmental levels, however, fed popular unrest (Alie, 1990). The military, which consisted largely of ethnic Mendes, felt threatened by APC rule, and staged a coup. Although the government was later reinstated, the coup ousted the president and ignited a series of attempted military coups and juntas. In 1978 Sierra Leone became a one party state under the control of the APC's Siaka Stevens (Alie, 1990; Pham, 2006).

Siaka Stevens' government was made up of a strong patronage system with a small group of insiders able to amass wealth for themselves, while the majority in the country suffered from mismanagement of the country's resources and worsening living conditions. Stevens used a carrot-and-stick type of system to maintain a hold on those close to him and to threaten those in potential opposition, while working to centralize the government and the decision-making power in the country. Those traditional chiefs that did not acquiesce to Stevens' politics were replaced, thus leaving communities without their rightfully elected chiefs and the ruling families embittered. This often led youth, who were frustrated by these enforced chiefs and their somewhat oppressive rule, to support the opposing political party as a way to show their displeasure of that chief's rule, and ultimately of the national government (Keen, 2005).

During the centralization of power, the industries in Sierra Leone were being nationalized. Money, particularly from the nationalized diamond mines, was going into the hands of corrupt government officials and businessmen friendly with Stevens, instead of going to assist the country. Stevens was attempting to control all aspects of the government and the economy of the country for his benefit and for those close to him. In an attempt to combat this centralization and mass corruption, the international community recommended the privatization of industry in Sierra Leone. In privatizing, however, Stevens managed to put those close to him in charge of the newly privatized entities and created a system of government control over import and export licenses, which in turn, served to put even more wealth into his hands and those of his cronies (Keen, 2005).

While Stevens and his colleagues were amassing wealth and local youth were feeling isolated from the chieftaincy system, food production sank, and the currency was devalued. By 1984, only 3% of the budget was being spent on development while 60% went to Stevens' discretionary fund. In 1985 Siaka Stevens was succeeded by Joseph Momoh. While in office, Momoh attempted to change some of Stevens' policies, including reinstating multi-party elections, but he faced massive inflation, which resulted in cuts in government spending. With minimal social services provided in the communities, the local people grew to view the national government as an imposition (Keen, 2005). Without the ability to gain control of the wealth from the diamond trade, Momoh's government could not pay for the country's needs, including salaries for soldiers, officials, teachers, and others (Keen, 2005; Pham, 2006).

The rampant corruption, the mistrust of the government at both the local and national level, the lack of social services, and the privatization of diamond mines and

other potentially rich sources of revenue had exacerbated the gap between the haves and the have-nots. Ruling elites monopolized access to economic opportunities. Access to power and resources was typically only achieved by political appointment (Pham, 2006). Youth were largely excluded from employment, education, and influential positions. Authorities courted youth only to serve their political agendas. More typically they were thought of, and dealt with, as delinquents with drug addictions and little education. By 1991 the government was collapsing at all levels and the climate was ripe for rebel groups to attempt to gain political and economic control of the country (Keen, 2005).

The Civil Conflict

It was during this time that Foday Sankoh, a poorly-educated man who was dishonorably discharged from the Sierra Leonean Army and jailed for an attempted coup on President Stevens, formed the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in order to liberate the masses from the corruption and oppression of the government (Abraham, 2001; Keen, 2005). Sankoh's RUF was a rebel group that trained in Liberia and had the assistance of the famed rebel leader of Liberia, Charles Taylor, who met Sankoh during the time they both spent training in Libya. Taylor turned over Sierra Leoneans that were captured in Liberia to Sankoh for use as RUF soldiers and provided some of his best troops to Sankoh for the initial invasion of Sierra Leone (Keen, 2005). Taylor was supportive of the rebel movement in Sierra Leone because the Sierra Leonean government assisted in fighting the rebel movement in Liberia, for potential access to diamonds, and because war in Sierra Leone might take attention off his own rebel movement (Keen, 2005).

Moving from Liberia into Sierra Leone, the RUF started to attack villages in the eastern regions of Sierra Leone (United States Department of State, 2008). Using arms

purchased through smuggled diamonds from government soldiers and from Liberia and Guinea, the RUF fought originally to end the one-party system, but ended up fighting to gain complete economic and political control of the country (Keen, 2005; Writenet, 1997). In writing about the RUF, Keen (2005) summarized that many saw the RUF as lacking a unifying ideology, as they attacked the very people they claimed they wished to empower and represent. Others said they fought not just for political gain, but for greed, to solve their grievances of underdevelopment, and for status. An RUF soldier interviewed by Keen (2005) stated that the RUF gave people some hope, even though he acknowledged that hope was not realized.

In their quest for these unspecific ideals, the rebels captured cities and diamond mines. The diamond trade was a source of frustration to the rebels and most Sierra Leoneans because the money brought in from the government-controlled mines and the taxes levied on private mines went straight to lining the pockets of government officials instead of improving the country (Pham, 2006). To help capture control of the cities and mines, the rebels conscripted youth as they made their way to Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone. Their end goal: to take over the government (United States Department of State, 2008; Writenet, 1997).

The youth, often under 18 years of age, and as young as eight, were used in the ranks of the RUF forces throughout the war. In some cases, children joined either because they agreed with RUF ideals, goals, and dislike for the patriarchal chieftaincy system. More commonly, however, children were conscripted by force against their will. Once members of the RUF forces, children were often drugged in order to reduce their fear of the acts that were required of them within the communities, which included raping

and murdering their own community members. The children conducted large-scale massacres of civilians and burned crops and houses (Binns & Maconachie, 2005; Writenet, 1997). Keen (2005) described the violent acts conducted by the rebels as using humiliation as a tool against those who had humiliated them, turning the tables to show that those who were powerless now wielded the power. In fact, it was often said that the child soldiers were the most violent of the RUF forces (Pham, 2006).

Community members described to me the severity of the rebel attacks on the cities and communities. As the rebels entered the communities, they would burn and loot homes and community spaces. Forced to flee from the violence, families were often splintered and could not stay together; often, family members would never find each other again. Subsections of families would travel around the country, or to neighboring countries, in an attempt to find some safety and reprieve from rebel attacks. Some would hide in the bush, or the wooded areas of the country, to wait for the rebels to pass.

Community members often witnessed the raping and murdering of parents and siblings by the rebels. One woman had to watch as her husband was killed by hot melting plastic; after which, she was raped repeatedly and stabbed by the rebels. Some of the women who were raped were taken into captivity by the rebels and forced to live as sex slaves and be responsible for domestic duties in the rebel camps, while others managed to escape. Rapes tended to be committed by more than one rebel soldier and often resulted in long-term medical problems for the women. In other less common instances, rapes were carried out by the women who had been forced to join the rebel troops, on male civilians when entering towns and communities.

Those who were unable to flee from their communities were sometimes subjected to rebel rule in their towns. Like the women taken to the bush and forced into domestic labor, community members in the rebel-controlled towns were forced to cook and clean for the rebels who often took the food of the local people, leaving them with little to nothing to feed themselves. Others in the communities had limbs amputated so they could not run away. Sometimes, rebels would force their victims to choose their amputation. For example, if a rebel was going to amputate an arm, the victim was forced to choose if they wanted a “short sleeve,” meaning they would be amputated at the elbow, or a “long sleeve,” meaning they would be amputated at the wrist. Other stories of indiscriminate violence included the rebels playing a game to guess the sex of an unborn baby. To determine who won the game, the rebels cut that baby out of its mother’s womb. They would brutally kill both the mother and baby, sometimes by putting a baby in a mortar, or device for hand grinding spices.

During the mobilization and violent atrocities committed by the RUF, the government continued to face political turmoil. The Sierra Leone Army had little support from the government, was in disarray, and unprepared to deal with the RUF attacks due to their antiquated weapons that were in short supply. This disarray provided space for soldiers to go rogue and act in ways similar to the rebels, attempting to gain economically and politically from the war, making the civilians view the army as an additional instrument of terror. Therefore, the local people had to worry about not only the RUF, but also the Sierra Leone Army. Local groups, or civil defense groups, formed as a way to combat both of these groups, thus creating three warring factions within the country at one point in time (Pham, 2006).

After the overturn of one-party rule, and after the failure of military rule and other attempts at establishing an effective government, a new president, Ahmad Kabbah, of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), was elected through a questionably democratic vote in 1996. Within six months of his election, he was able to broker a peace agreement between the government and the rebels called the Abidjan Peace Agreement. Unfortunately, the culture of mistrust that existed between the government and the rebels led to a breakdown of the peace agreement within only a year (Pham, 2006).

Kabbah ran the country for just over a year before being overthrown through a coup by the Sierra Leone Armed Forces. They came to the capital and freed prisoners from the Freetown jail who were considered allies and then proceeded to engage in looting, stealing, and violence throughout the city (Pham, 2006). Calling themselves the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), and headed by Johnny Paul Koroma, the group invited the RUF to join them in running the government (Pham, 2006; United States Department of State, 2008).

After less than a year, the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG)¹ intervened and overthrew the junta, reinstated Kabbah as president in March of 1998, and worked to combat the rebels (United States Department of State, 2008). Although back in control, Kabbah still had little power, with an

¹ ECOMOG is the non-standing military entity of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) designed to safeguard peace and intervene in West African conflicts (Lima, 2002). The ECOWAS member-states that provided troops for operations in Sierra Leone were Ghana, Guinea, Mali, and Nigeria (African Development Information, 2007).

ineffective army, and ministries that were largely destroyed (Pham, 2006). Still fighting for control of the country, and taking over communities in the rural areas, the RUF, now linked with their partner the AFRC, once again staged a coup in Freetown in January of 1999, resulting in one of the deadliest battles in the conflict (McIntyre, 2004; Pham, 2006; United States Department of State, 2008).

Six weeks after the initial Freetown attack, and after at least 3,000 civilian deaths, the RUF was driven out of the ruined city by the ECOMOG forces (Pham, 2006). Although a peace agreement was signed in 1999 in Lomé, Togo, the RUF continued to fight in the communities against ECOMOG and the UN troops that had been sent in to assist (Pham, 2006). Their activities were finally quelled by these troop's efforts. The ECOMOG troops and the UN troops withdrew in 2000 and 2002 respectively. It was at this point that Kabbah declared the war finally over (Pham, 2006; United States Department of State, 2008).

At the end of the war, both peace accords, those signed in 1996 and in 1999, called for a blanket amnesty for the general perpetrators of violence during the civil war, excluding those who led and participated in the grossest of violations. Despite outcries from the international human rights community, a majority of the broader international community, or those involved in internationally focused organizations and politics, supported the agreement for amnesty as a way for Sierra Leone to move forward (Pham, 2006).

Sierra Leone also adopted two mechanisms in addition to the amnesty to encourage the country to move forward. The first was the establishment of an UN-appointed Special Court, which was designed to prosecute those not covered under the

amnesty agreement, as these individuals were most directly responsible for the crimes against the local people, which were considered to be crimes against humanity. The court eventually indicted former RUF leaders and soldiers, most notably Liberian rebel leader Charles Taylor, who as of March 2010 had been moved to The Hague and was still on trial (Pham, 2006; Special Court for Sierra Leone, 2010). Foday Sankoh was also indicted, but he died in UN custody in 2003 (Keen, 2005). Although many worried about violence breaking out as a result of indictments, the Court's proceedings remained peaceful, and by the summer of 2009 the court was ending its work in Sierra Leone.

The second mechanism that was put in place for dealing with the violence was the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Begun in 2002, the TRC lasted twelve months and collected stories of the war from around the country and held public hearings. In some instances, the TRC managed to host reconciliations between the victims and perpetrators. There was little linkage between the TRC and the Special Court, however, and it is not known how effective either initiative was in the process of justice and reconciliation for the country (Pham, 2006).

Postconflict Sierra Leone

By the time Kabbah had declared an end to the war, it had lasted eleven-years and taken the lives of between 50,000-70,000 Sierra Leoneans (Masin-Peters, 2003; Pham, 2006). An estimated 2.6 million people, or more than half of the 4.7 million population, became refugees in neighboring or other countries during the war, and an estimated 1.2 million (Pham, 2006; Writenet, 1997) were at some point internally displaced persons (IDPs); these refugees and IDPs lost their families, their possessions, and their homes (King, 2005). In addition, hundreds of thousands of civilians were maimed and/or had

limbs amputated (Pham; 2006). During the period of the conflict, economic activities were disrupted and the infrastructure of the country was destroyed. Young women and men had been raped, forced into becoming soldiers, made to use drugs; and poverty, already widespread, worsened (Binns & Maconachie, 2005; Pham, 2006). It is, therefore, no surprise that Sierra Leone is considered one of the least developed countries in the world (United Nations Development Program, 2008).

The war left Sierra Leone facing many challenges as it attempted to engage in post conflict development, at the national, regional, and local community level. The government, although run by an elected president, was left in great disarray, and new elections had to be held to elect members of parliament and district councilor positions. Alongside this national structure, the traditional rule of the chiefs was restored to the communities, but as a review of literature in the next chapter will suggest, returning to a traditionally led authority structure was controversial due to fear that chiefs may not rule in a fair and efficient manner.

In addition to the political turmoil, the social problems were immense. Communities were largely damaged or destroyed with houses either burned or severely looted. Issues of how to encourage refugees and IDPs to return, to integrate ex-combatants back into their communities, to encourage the resettlement of villages where the infrastructure had been destroyed, were, to put it mildly, a challenge. People were being asked to live without proper water systems, road networks, electricity, schools, health care, and many other necessities. Communities needed to find ways to establish working economies and other ways to move forward together toward sustainable peace.

This study focuses specifically on two local communities in Sierra Leone and their efforts to facilitate development and move their community toward a sustainable peace since the end of the war. At the time of the study, the conflict had been over for approximately seven years. My research suggests that postconflict community development during this time has been primarily shaped by three major influences: western, cultural, and national. I examine each of these mechanisms individually, their interrelatedness, and their impact on the development of communities in Sierra Leone. It is important to note that the order in which these influences are discussed does not reflect their importance in this study or their efforts to contribute to postconflict community development. As western influences are often those most understood in the literature and the western world, those influences are discussed first.

Western organizations, such as International Nongovernmental Organizations (INGOs), and the role they play in providing aid for development in postconflict countries, have been heavily studied in the literature and in the academy. Large western organizations, such as the United Nations, contribute to peace keeping, monitoring, and providing resources for development through their subsidiary organizations like the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (Fanthorpe, 2003; Hanlon, 2005). INGOs, which include UN organizations and smaller unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral organizations, have also been examined for their abilities to provide resources and means for community building in developing countries in general, and to a lesser extent, in Sierra Leone in particular (Callway, 2005; Chenge, 2002; Fanthorpe, 2003; Hanlon, 2005; Mlambo, Kamara, & Nyende, 2009; Rogers, 2006; World Bank, n.d.). Based on this literature, the direct impact of these efforts on the local people and their ability to

attend to the specific development needs (Chenge, 2002; Fanthorpe, 2003) of Sierra Leoneans is not fully known. This research study aims to shed new knowledge on the precise effects of INGOs, these western influences, on the development of postconflict communities in Sierra Leone.

Research has pointed out that understanding postconflict community development demands that we also take into account the traditional, cultural, or local aspects of community development (United States Agency for International Development & United Nations Development Program, 2000). In this study, I focus on the role of cultural influences, or what has been done through culturally-relevant means at the local community level to build capacity and foster a direct connection between community members for development. Research suggests that it is important to consider these local means, because for development to be effective, it must be people-centered and people-driven (Chopra & Hohe, 2004; O'Brien, 2007). While much research pointed to the importance of taking cultural influences into account when attempting to understand postconflict development, little academic research existed detailing the cultural influences on postconflict community development in Sierra Leone.

It is important to look at these cultural influences for several reasons. First, as much of African tradition is orally-based and not written (Nussbaum, 2003), research in the field must be conducted to fully understand the implications of culture and tradition on postconflict community development. Secondly, cultural influences were often thought to be at odds with the more modern or western techniques for development (Gboku, 1993; Kirk & Bolden, 2006). It is, therefore, important to understand cultural influences in the context of western influences through the involvement of INGOs after

the war. Finally, cultural influences need to be examined as people tend to be attracted to communities for historical or traditional reasons, and because many in Sierra Leone remained supportive of the traditions and norms that existed in the communities prior to the conflict (Buckle, Marsh, and Smale, 2000; Sawyer, 2008). As it is clear that development requires engagement from members of the community (Ager, Strang, & Abebe, 2005; Chopra & Hohe, 2004; Erasmus, 2001; Fayemi, 2004; Francis, 2000; Gboku, 1993; Green & Haines, 2002; Putnam & Feldstein, 2003, Reychler, 2001a; Sesay, 2001), the cultural and traditional means the local people use for development must be better understood.

Finally, the national government of Sierra Leone, like postconflict governments around the world, plays a role in development, as it is likely to be situated as an intermediary between the western and cultural influences (Malan, Meek, Thusi, Ginifer, & Coker, 2003). In this study, I examined national influences in order to understand the role the Sierra Leonean government has taken in postconflict community development. Government is often in a difficult position after conflict, as its structures tend to be in disarray, and in need of work to establish its legitimacy, while attempting to find a balance between western and cultural influences (Malan et al., 2003).

To date, there is little academic literature that speaks directly to the role of western, cultural, and national influences on postconflict Sierra Leone. Moreover, we know little about how these influences work synchronistically or at cross-purposes, challenging and/or facilitating community development. This study of Sierra Leonean communities attempts to remedy this gap. Before I begin a more thorough explanation of

my study, I will define key terms as a way to ensure understanding of, and rationale for, the use of these terms.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, I use the term “influences” to illustrate the organizational arrangement, culture, activities, groups, systems, processes, and infrastructure that affect postconflict community development in three areas: western, cultural, and national. Examples of western influences include INGOs and other organizations that provide aid and assistance to countries at the end of conflict, and encourage development in the country and its communities. Cultural influences include the groups, collectives, and relationships that exist within the community. They are the social and physical structures that are readily observed in Sierra Leonean communities including the community leadership structures; the traditional ceremonies, rituals, and/or other forms of network building; as well as the values and experiences of the people in their community. National influences refer to the Sierra Leone government and their systems, such as the police and army, as well as their educational system. It also refers to the infrastructure, and its leadership, specifically those elected to political office. These examples of influences will serve to assist in the understanding of how communities develop after the war.

I use the term “postconflict” in this study as one word in an effort to define the term as a period of time after conflict. The use of a hyphen, as in post-conflict, links the term post to conflict, whereas without the hyphen the word can stand on its own, and is its own period of time, not one that is directly related to the conflict. Although it may be difficult to always accurately define when a conflict shifts to this period of postconflict, I

operationalized my research by identifying postconflict in Sierra Leone as beginning at the withdrawal of UN and ECOMOG troops and the reinstatement of the president.

I have been inspired in this postconflict distinction by Keen (2008), who found in his research on postconflict Sierra Leone a desire to move forward after conflict, not to reinvent the past. He, therefore, believed in removing the “re” from terms like redevelopment to emphasize a moving forward and not a reflection on the past, as past circumstances likely caused the conflict in the first place. Following his example, I have removed the majority of “re” words from this document, save for reconciliation, rehabilitation, and return, as these terms are prevalent in the development literature.

The analysis of development within communities can be difficult, as often development is defined in many ways. For the purpose of this study, development was viewed in terms of Reyhler’s (2001b) criteria for sustainable peace, which suggested that peace marks the absence of physical violence and unacceptable forms of discrimination at all levels, high levels of self-sustainability, and the ability to constructively transform future conflicts. While sustainable peace as a definition for development may be a lofty goal for any community to achieve, and may take a great deal of time, possibly far beyond the seven years that have passed since the end of the conflict in Sierra Leone, this standard was used as a reference point for the two communities studied in this project.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to more fully understand the ways communities in Sierra Leone were developing after intense conflict. By examining the ways in which communities develop in Sierra Leone, we can begin to understand some strategies that

may be useful for other postconflict communities around the world. Unfortunately, in the world today many communities are faced with conflict. These communities, much like those in Sierra Leone, must find a way to develop and move toward a future without violence after the conflict ends.

The civil war was extremely brutal in Sierra Leone, and pitted members of the same community against each other; because of this, the country's communities faced grave obstacles for development, and, therefore, presented the opportunity for a good case study. Should communities in Sierra Leone begin to develop toward a future of sustainable peace after such a horrendous conflict, it may be possible that other communities could do the same. While recognizing the limitations of the generalizability of these findings, the lessons learned from this study offer the potential to reveal the ways in which western, cultural, and national influences may be important for community development after conflict, and why. Also, while issues of sustainability are outside the scope of this study, it is hoped that by gaining an understanding of the actions and interactions of these influences, communities may be able to sustain peace and avoid a relapse into conflict.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

This study is concerned with three main influences on community development in postconflict Sierra Leone: western, cultural, and national. Research has been conducted about each of these influences individually, but few studies exist that take into consideration each influence, as well as their interrelationships. This review of literature examines the research about each of these influences on postconflict community development in general, and in Sierra Leone in particular, and begins to address the evidence that suggests the importance of understanding how their interrelatedness shapes postconflict community outcomes. In order to provide a comprehensive understanding of these influences, I examined literature in the areas of peace studies, leadership studies, international development, and community development, as well as several smaller bodies of literature focused on community building strategies.

Buckle, Marsh, and Smale (2001) argued that communities are like a pond, if a stone is thrown into that pond, the ripples affect all aspects of it; communities that have suffered through conflict face these same ripple effects. According to Oliver-Smith (2005), Maynard (1997), and Stiefel (2001), focusing on building community in postconflict settings is important because, like the stone in the pond, members of communities were uprooted during war and their physical and social security was endangered; they were left psychologically scarred, and with their social and political networks in disarray. Displacement fractures a community. Therefore, an understanding of the community and its efforts toward development, both for itself and the nation, is important (Addison, 2003b; Goodhand & Hulme, 1999).

Western Influences Postconflict Community Development

One of the primary influences that address community displacement and movement toward development are western influences. Western influences on postconflict community development in Sierra Leone were those that largely emanated from international organizations and focused on providing aid, resources, and policy advice at both the national and local levels to countries as they came out of conflict (Chenge, 2002; Mlambo et al., 2009; Rogers, 2006; United Nations Development Program, 2006; United States Agency for International Development, n.d.). In this section, I review what is known about the role these organizations have played in the development of postconflict communities, particularly in Sierra Leone.

Mlambo, Kamara, and Nyende (2009) argued that assistance in postconflict countries tended to come through western organizations that were bilateral, donors from one country giving to the country in need, or multilateral, those that gather funding from various countries or are nongovernmental organizations giving to the country in need. With the cessation of violence, Mlambo et al. (2009) stated that both bilateral and multilateral organizations were often the first responders because they tended to have the resources, the experience, and the preparation needed to quickly assist, but multilateral donors tended to take longer to respond than bilateral donors, as multilateral donors had to deal with debts and other challenges to fast action.

According to Fanthorpe (2003), Rogers (2006), and the World Bank (n.d.), many western organizations played a role in providing aid and assistance to Sierra Leone to support development. Prior to the end of the war in Sierra Leone, bilateral and multilateral organizations, such as the European Union (EU), the African Development

Bank, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the various United Nations (UN) organizations, pledged 640 million United States (US) Dollars of aid money. After the war, the World Bank pledged an additional 190.5 million US Dollars, and agreed to support debt relief for the first 600 million US Dollars of aid once the government created a poverty-reduction strategy paper; which it did, serving as one of the first long-term postconflict blueprints for Sierra Leone. Hanlon (2005) stated that between the money spent on UN peacekeeping to end the violence and other aid programs, more than 2.5 billion US Dollars had been spent in Sierra Leone by 2005. A similar amount, Hanlon (2005) went on to say, would need to be spent in the future for building peace and creating sustainable development. Freeman (2008) claimed even higher figures, stating that reconstruction had cost the UN 16.4 billion US Dollars per year and the British government 100 million Great British Pounds per year, and that these figures did not include other bilateral or multilateral organizations working for development in the country.

These figures, therefore, demonstrate that large amounts of aid were put quickly into the country and the communities at the end of the war. Many researchers have pointed out that these funds tend to serve a country by enabling them to secure resources that would jumpstart the economy, and to mend administrative and social infrastructure. The funds helped communities to meet their immediate needs in an appropriate and collective way, such as developing agricultural activities, creating health care and education, creating youth employment, and building community structures (Chenge, 2002; Mlambo et al., 2009; Rogers, 2006; UNDP, 2006; USAID, n.d.). Mlambo et al.

(2009) supported this work, stating that immediate aid for postconflict countries, as that discussed above, was essential, but recommended that instead of providing copious amounts of aid right away, donors should phase in that aid gradually and then, after the first four years, level off as a way to support continued and sustainable peace building efforts. This argument is important as often aid is not consistent across communities and begins to wane after a time (USAID, n.d.).

Although Sierra Leone has largely freed itself from many of its creditors, both Baker and May (2006) and Freeman (2008) brought to light that over half of the government's budget was coming still from foreign assistance, illustrating that the government, although now monitoring these aid agencies through government committees (Fanthorpe, 2003), was still very much reliant on western influences in order to keep the country running (Baker, 2006). This may put a burden on the western influences to engage and cooperate with both the government and local stakeholders to ensure that aid is operating in an effective manner for communities, since the country is still so reliant upon it.

While it is generally agreed upon that outside funding is extremely valuable, a great debate exists in the literature as to whether western organizations actually make a connection with local people and government in a way that empowers them. An USAID and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) joint report (2000) on community development in postconflict countries in general stated that when western organizations engaged in the participatory approach of encouraging the local people to articulate their problems, find solutions, and organize the necessary resources for success, the process resulted in the development of greater local capacity for future problem solving and

development. This same report acknowledged that a one size fits all approach to development may not suit all countries, and it is important to use local staff, encourage local ownership of programs and processes, and for international staff to fully understand the culture and political history of the country in an attempt to avoid a western bias. The question remains, are western organizations making these cultural connections?

Fanthorpe (2003) claimed that international aid organizations' connections with local needs in Sierra Leone required more respect and trust than was currently happening. In his examination of Sierra Leone, Chenge (2002) was a bit more blatant in stating that international aid organizations engaged in rhetoric about local ownership, but had not changed their behavior to reflect those goals. While there seems to be general agreement that assistance should be connected to, and control shared with, the community (Hamilton, 1992), there is an obvious discrepancy as to the degree with which international organizations do this. Even when connections are made, to date there is a lack of sufficient evidence as to the benefits that such connections create for the local people in their development efforts.

An example of the disconnection between international organizations and the needs of the local community was reflected in the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) program for ex-combatants that were sponsored in Sierra Leone by USAID and other multilateral groups, such as the UN. The focus of this program, which was considered by USAID (n.d.) to be largely successful, was the ex-combatants. This group was most likely to engage again in violence because of their access to weapons and residual anger and animosity (Leff, 2008). The DDR program was a re-entry program that connected the ex-combatants to their communities by entering them into training

programs, which typically taught skills, literacy, peace, and provided psychosocial and vocational counseling (Rogers, 2006; USAID, n.d.). For this training program to be an effective tool for postconflict community development, an USAID report (n.d.) stated that follow-up was needed to ensure that employment opportunities were available for those who had learned new skills so that they could contribute to their communities.

According to Freeman (2008), the DDR program was unable to connect the skills that were being trained to the locally-needed jobs. The program taught skills like plumbing, carpentry, and mechanics, but these were not skills that would serve communities, which were primarily agrarian. This left ex-combatants with unusable skills. Freeman (2008) went on to argue that farmers and the profession of farming was largely ignored by the DDR program, if not quietly disincentivized, and left communities without a requisite number of workers.

The DDR program also illustrated a significant disconnect with local Sierra Leoneans by focusing their program on training only ex-combatants instead of all community members, which might further polarize them from the community. As a result, DDR provided assistance to those who had perpetrated the war but ignored the victims of the war (USAID, n.d.). Therefore, better efforts were needed to integrate the whole community. Both Leff (2008) and an United Nations Development Program (UNDP) report (2006) agreed that DDR programs needed to serve both the individual and the greater community, as it is the greater community that must find a timely and effective way to build sustainable peace. Although some of these later reports acknowledged that the connection should be made with the local community, it is unclear

that the programs felt a need to connect to the needs of the community in a more holistic way.

The World Bank (n.d.) seemed to address some of the concerns about linking effectively with community needs when they reported about the program they started in communities in Sierra Leone called Community Driven Development. This program constructed and improved structures and worked to build confidence, trust, and relationships in the communities through project cycles, which transferred dependence on international organizations to local ownership over time, as a way to create accountability and transparency for long-term peaceful and sustainable development. This program was often conducted in three phases and carefully crafted to ensure success, recognizing that communities were fragile immediately after conflict. The three phases consisted of: the reintegration phase, which addressed the most critical needs of the community; the stabilization phase, which shifted from basic needs to creating relationships to enhance community development; and the consolidation phase, which strengthened local relationships and was built on a commitment to peace and longer-term development. The report seemed to provide a more positive connection between international donor activities and the community. It was, however, unclear as to the success of these linkages and programs in the Sierra Leone context, as the programs appeared to be still in preliminary stages at the time of its publication.

The issue of western influences and their connectivity to local communities in Sierra Leone was an issue that was taken up at great length by Fanthorpe (2003). He argued that often aid agencies do not send senior staff into the field to understand community needs, while at the same time they do not trust reports that come from local

affiliates without independent verification. In the same vein, these agencies required local employees and groups to meet the standards and values of the agency, even if these standards were not relevant or appropriate for Sierra Leonean communities. There was also a double standard, he argued, as agencies were seen as permitted to bend rules in order to further their work, but local affiliates were criticized for similar behavior. This provided a problem, as in some instances local workers were supposed to follow the actions of the agency workers, and in some instances they were not. The uncertainty as to what was allowed by agencies and what was not, contributed to a problem of trust and communication between the aid agency and the local people. This often resulted in limited effectiveness of aid delivery and generated local resentment. In some instances, this uncertainty and resentment led to aid agencies being accused of corruption, whether or not that was the case, which further illustrated the complex relationship between the international organizations and the communities.

It was because of this complexity that Fanthorpe (2003) argued that it was in the aid agencies' best interest to connect well with local groups because it enables them to find the proper beneficiaries, to design projects that take into account risk and potential impact, and deliver the appropriate services. When the aid agencies communicate with local people and organizations, trust can be established and the potential for fraud and other issues of corruption can be limited.

Callway (2005) noted another issue that may also limit the connectivity between the international aid institutions and the local people in postconflict countries. He stated that many international aid institutions were not very democratic in their framework. To promote democratic development activities and support sustainable solutions in countries

and communities, he suggested that the organizations should strengthen their democratic frameworks and transparency, and understand the social and environmental impacts of their policies. This is exceptionally important, according to Glentworth (2002) and Burde (2004), because postconflict countries often lack the self-confidence and experience to develop, so they rely heavily on external organizations for guidance and services. With too much reliance put on international organizations, governments might run the risk of putting too much power into the hands of these organizations, and not being able to fully form their own independent governing and legislative processes (Moore, 2004). This issue is discussed at greater length in the national influences section.

It is clear from the literature that western influences are engaged in postconflict community development in Sierra Leone by providing aid, resources, and other assistance to both the government and to the communities. The literature has also made clear that in providing this aid and resources, international organizations are connecting with the local people in varying degrees with varying results. Despite some accounts of positive interaction, more accounts of limited connectivity were acknowledged in the literature. Also, the reports on assistance generated by the international organizations were generally authored by the organizations themselves. Although some were more broad-based studies conducted by independent researchers, the evidence as to how international organizations actually connect with the local people at the community level, and how they influence development in those communities remains uncertain. To fully understand the role that western influences have on postconflict community development in Sierra Leone, further in-depth qualitative research is needed.

Cultural Influences on Postconflict Community Development

With the uncertainty of western influences' ability, or even willingness, to connect to local people and their development efforts, it is important that we understand how the culture of the local people creates its own set of influences on postconflict community development, and ultimately how the particular culture responds to the actions of western organizations. Geertz (1973) famously described culture as the public webs of significance that people weave together to understand and make sense of their environment. Culture, therefore, is the shared meaning of the world by a group of people, which could be both beneficial and detrimental to development. Cultural influences on postconflict community development are those based within a culture that serve to influence development by uniting the community to work toward sustainable development. It is important to acknowledge as well, that some cultural influences may divide the community, thus limiting postconflict community development potential. These positive and negative cultural influences are discussed below.

The concept of culture in general, and in Africa specifically, is important to note because the cultural context of a community can be very influential in promoting change (James, 2003). In fact, within the literature there is a debate about whether returning to cultural traditions and norms, in place prior to the war, helps or hinders community development. Some argue that in order for communities to progress after war, culture must be changed (Ager et al., 2005). Communities that decide to engage in cultural change must recognize that this cultural change is a collective process, where those involved in the change must be sensitive to the particularities of the context, as no routine or standardized approach is sufficient in all cases (Ahn, Adamson, & Dornbusch, 2004).

In order for change to be effective and development to occur in local communities, Buckle et al. (2001) argued implementation should be through a slow and deliberate process. If new strategies are designed in a way that meet the needs of ordinary people, Keen (2008) posited, then postconflict development will weaken the role of wartime extremists, undermine the potential for continuing episodes of violence, and ideally, will lead to new communities that will be isolated from war. Optimal recovery means not returning to an old point of development, but learning from community experiences and moving toward higher levels of functioning (Maguire & Hagan, 2007).

Community development should, therefore, according to O'Brien (2007) and Chopra and Hohe (2004), be people-centered and people-driven, in order for individuals to get directly involved and work together toward their common goals of integrated institution-building, and to create a sense of identification with the whole of the community. In the end, the community should be self-reliant. This can be accomplished through improving the distribution of resources by community members who own the process and are building off of each other's assets on their own terms (Alchin & Decharin, 1979; Coyne, 2005; du Toit, 1998; Ferguson & Fritz, 2003; Kingsley, McNeely & Gibson, 1997).

Alchin and Decharin (1979) agreed that in order to achieve development, information must be gathered about the community resources available, the ways these resources can be used, and the community's collective future plans for them. Examples of community resources include the people's skills and knowledge, local citizen groups, natural and physical resources, and economic influence and capabilities (Ager et al., 2005; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Oliver-Smith, 2005). These resources, and how

they work together, might also be termed social capital. Social capital provides interconnectedness, norms of reciprocity, trust, informal safety nets, and a shared ethic (Addison, 2003b; Coyne 2005; Ferguson & Fritz, 2003; Putnam & Feldstein, 2003). It is the networks and relationships between and amongst community members that form from individuals investing their resources for the common good (Green & Haines, 2002). The literature argued that social capital is important because the collective problems of the community cannot be solved through individual means (Green & Haines, 2002). Research conducted by Goodhand and Hulme (1999) emphasized the importance of examining a community's social capital as it may give insights into how they are able to develop after conflict.

Several researchers expanded on social capital to also include the importance of physical capital in the cultural resources necessary for community development in postconflict societies. The destruction of physical assets, which often occurs in communities during war, can have a profound impact on people and how they view and relate to their communities (Buckle, Marsh, & Smale, 2001; Coyne, 2005; Green & Haines, 2002). Therefore, people must develop the physical structures that make up their communities, like housing, roads, community buildings, and infrastructure after the end of conflict (Green & Haines, 2002; Oliver-Smith, 2005). Researchers have also pointed out that physical capital also includes institutions, such as the education system, health care systems, political organizations and representation, and the security sector (Addison, 2003a; Chopra & Hohe, 2004; Coyne, 2005; Englebert & Tull, 2008; Fanthorpe, 2001, 2005; Stiefel, 2001).

Therefore, assessing and utilizing these resources, like social and physical capital, for community development effectively requires an open dialogue between the various stakeholders in order to provide the sense of ownership needed to move a community toward future development (Erasmus, 2001). Dialogue between key constituents is only likely to occur when relationships have been built on trust and cooperation. This is especially true since the war likely eroded trust and replaced it with an environment of distrust (Last, 2000; Maynard, 1997), and especially as trust was already limited by corruption and other means before the war.

Stiefel (2001) also recognized the importance of building trust. He argued that in order to build trust and the relationships that were lost during the conflict, and thus work toward development, communities must use a holistic approach that involves building trusting relationships at all levels of the community. Trust and relationship building may include taking risks, enhancing individual skills to contribute, using dialogue, and engaging in reconciliation practices, discussed later in this literature review (Mendelek Theimann & April, 2007; Purdue, 2001; Stiefel, 2001). Mendelek Theimann and April (2007) argued that deep trust must be earned over time. Checkoway (1994) determined that it is only when a community gets organized, joins together in solidarity, has gained trust, and believes in the possibilities of the future that community development can occur. This trust needs to occur not just among community members, but also with the organizations that are helping development in the communities, such as international organizations and governmental organizations. Community culture and the need for trust can construct behaviors, perceptions, and actions of a local community toward outside influences.

Research conducted specifically in Sierra Leone confirmed many of the points argued above; that all relevant groups must be engaged in the development process, indigenous people must have ownership in the process and trust the process, and that development must be based on the local norms and culture (Fayemi, 2004; Francis, 2000). The rooting of community development in a culture was seen as important, although there was limited discussion in the literature about whether that culture needed to be changed or shifted for development to occur. King (2005) discussed that in Sierra Leone, the building of physical capital was equally important as social capital, because much of the physical capital was destroyed during the conflict. Having structures in place allowed for the transformation of communities to occur. Moreover, local people, according to Fayemi (2004) and Lappia (2006), needed to take ownership in providing for the needs of the citizens and encouraging a group identity for postconflict community development to occur.

Cultural influences on postconflict community development, like western influences, also create challenges to development, challenges that are rooted in the norms and traditions of a given society. A first challenge involves the issue of power. According to Goodhand and Hulme (1999), sometimes the surveying and generating of social capital may involve only those with the power in the community. This means that a community's social capital may not involve all levels of the community, and particularly may exclude the powerless.

Power, who has it and who does not, what kind of power, and the extent to which a community has the ability to make decisions that affect its well-being, is another important issue likely to impact postconflict development. Erasmus (2001) and Mitchell

(2002) focused on the importance of power and argued that efforts must be made to enable community members to empower themselves so that community development solutions can be equal for all members of the community and each member can have ownership of those solutions. Empowerment, stated Checkoway (1994), is a multi-level process where individual involvement, organizational development, and community change are essential for development. It is important for members of communities to feel empowered so that each person feels a part of future development, that their thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences are somehow heard and taken under advisement in the development process. While this vision of full community empowerment may be difficult, if not impossible, to obtain, research seems to suggest that full empowerment would be ideal for community building (Checkoway, 1994; Mani, 2005).

Leaving community members out of the decision making process, or keeping them oppressed, may make community building increasingly difficult. Sonn and Fisher (1998) discussed the importance of understanding oppressive systems in communities by stating that structures should be in place to mediate their impact and move communities forward. Communities need to move beyond the general connections people may feel as being part of a community to a strong belief that the community can move forward together after the conflict (Buckle et al., 2001; Maguire & Hagan, 2007). Developing a collective resilience seems essential. In order for communities to establish this resilience, Maguire and Hagan (2007) believed that “trust; leadership; collective efficacy; social capital; social cohesion and sense of community; community involvement; existing norms, attitudes, and values; communication and information; and resource dependency” (p. 19) must be cultivated.

Sierra Leone in particular, has experienced some limitations due to cultural influences in part because of the pre-existing conditions in the country before the war and the violence during the war. Development was made more difficult by the corruption, the lack of educated people interested in development, and the lack of resources that were present in the country before the war (Gboku, 1993). This history of challenges to development may serve as a continued hardship for postconflict community building, which means that communities, such as those in Sierra Leone, will have to make a conscious effort to work together to build a future that is desirable for all and free from previous corruption.

A continuing debate in the research regarding cultural influences on community development found in Sierra Leone, as well as postconflict communities in general, was the clash about whether there is a need for a significant change in the culture in order to facilitate further development (Gboku, 1993; Maton, 2000). According to some, any change that does occur must come from the initiative of the people in a gradual, peaceful, and orderly manner in order to contribute to moving a community forward (Gboku, 1993), as change “can be a difficult, time-consuming, and costly job” (Green & Haines 2002, pg. 34).

Some research suggested that the interaction between cultural influences and western influences might be important for limiting the possible legacy of conflict that may exist in communities (Stiefel, 2001), and do more to foster development. With varying involvement in the war, cultural influences alone may be limited in their abilities to bring people back together, as often violence in communities leads to a loss of leadership, resources, trust for others, and a diminished sense of future prospects

(Maynard, 2007). The extent to which Sierra Leonean communities have embraced cultural change, used social and physical capital, limited inequities, and/or connected with other organizations for development is not entirely clear due to the limited number of specific studies in this area. Such questions demand further examination to fully understand the role of cultural influences and their interactions with western influences in postconflict community development.

Leadership for postconflict community building. A review of research on cultural influences and postconflict development must include two particular aspects of cultural influences that have played a significant part in postconflict community development in general: leadership and traditional rites. Many researchers have claimed that leadership is important for transitions through change (Conner, 1998; O'Toole, 1995; Schein, 2004). Leadership is a network of relationships, and these relationships, and the various types of leadership that accompany them, can affect change (Ahn et al., 2004). According to Higgs and Rowland (2005), effective change may take different forms, but the approach that works best with large numbers of people and high-stakes is emergent change. Emergent change is the kind of change, which recognizes the complexities and challenges of change and creates capacity for people to move forward by strengthening a group's relationships, empowering individuals, while challenging the status quo (Higgs & Rowland, 2005; Maton, 2000). Research has pointed out, however, that leadership has to prepare for resistance, as resistance to change is inevitable (Ahn et al., 2004, O'Toole, 1995).

Sierra Leonean communities have a unique leadership structure rooted in traditional practices. The extent to which these cultural influences shape development

efforts is, to date, not well understood. Some clarification can come from a review of leadership traditions within Africa in general, about which there is more extensive literature, because Sierra Leone has similar qualities and experiences to Africa as a whole.

Leadership traditions in Africa. Africans, and therefore African leadership, tends to be humanistic, derived from centuries of rituals, stories, shared symbols, and myths, leading humans to understand their dignity, worth, and their interconnectedness or collective responsibility (Jackson, 2004; Mendelek Theimann & April, 2007; Mendelek Theimann, April, & Blass, 2006). The leadership that arises from this humanism is generative, and has the possibility of being transformative with new awareness and a focus toward the possibilities of the future (Mendelek Theimann & April, 2007).

Africans largely see leadership as social leadership involving harmony for an individual and the world around them, using symbolism to make sense of the world, connecting to spirituality and the family and community, and using oral tradition to pass on the collective wisdom of that leadership and community. In their earlier work, Mendelek Theimann, April, and Blass (2006) pointed out that this humanistic form of leadership, although time-consuming because of the need to form interrelationships, can create a sustainable society. This sustainability seems especially important for communities in postconflict settings.

Ubuntu, a very commonly discussed tradition of African leadership, can be defined as the notion of individuals and communities as an interconnected entity, each providing value, purpose, and identity to the other. One entity does not exist without the other; a human being is, in fact, a community being (April & Ephraim, 2006; Kirk &

Bolden, 2006). Ubuntu can be translated as “I am because we are; I can only be a person through others” (April & Ephraim, 2006; Mbigi, 2007). Mbigi (2007), Nussbaum (2003), and Van der Colff (2007) argued that the purpose of this type of leadership is to provide a sense of a shared future that engages all individuals in their communities and allows each to be a part of that future. Kirk and Bolden (2006) determined that African leaders need to understand the cultural history of and need for ubuntu, and use its strengths in their leadership practice in order to transform their communities. April and Ephraim (2006) argued that the practice of ubuntu can be loosely linked to general western leadership concepts such as servant, spiritual, and transformational leadership.

Kirk and Bolden (2006) offered a contrasting view, stating that ubuntu could be a romanticized concept glossing over unequal relationships between people and resources, and could be understood as a polarizing force for people who are caught with a traditional past and a modern future. The orientation toward development for a modern future exists largely from western influence and the urbanization of Africa, which tends to clash with the traditional communal nature of the society (Kirk & Bolden, 2006). Jackson (2004) also problematized ubuntu stating that often those who put stock in humanism tend to be people who are more disadvantaged in societies, as they are in higher need for mutual self-help. Those that are more advantaged may have the luxury of being less humanistic.

This philosophical division regarding appropriate leadership may provide difficulty for cultural influences on community development. Kirk and Bolden (2006) argued that leadership development may need to keep both the traditional and western influences available to enable leaders to find their own ways to lead people through the transition of African societies. It has been suggested that this may be especially true as

Africans are experiencing a separation between their home and community life, and their work life (Jackson, 2004). In traditional culture, these two aspects of life are typically integrated, not separated by traditional humanistic beliefs at home and more western beliefs in the workplace (Jackson, 2004).

A further criticism of ubuntu, considered here as an expression of humanistic thinking, is that at this point it may be difficult to determine in actuality what genuine African philosophy is, as there have been such complex interactions with Africans and colonialists or foreign powers through much of modern time (Jackson, 2004). As modern or “western” techniques have been embedded in management theory in Africa, many have trouble distinguishing between African and western techniques, and leaders can often oscillate between the two different techniques unconsciously, or use an uncomfortable hybrid of the various techniques (James, Oladino, Isooba, Mboizi, & Kusiima, 2005). This hybrid model may not necessarily be a bad solution to a changing and developing society. It appears from the literature on African leadership, however, that a more cohesive or comprehensive combination of leadership styles may be needed to navigate the differences between traditional and modern leadership.

The research conducted by Blunt and Jones (1997) and Mendelek Theimann and April (2007) also suggested an opposing type of traditional African leadership, at odds with ubuntu, that is largely based on centralized power and authoritarian leadership, which includes: emphasis on control; resistance to change; and a focus on security, resources, and kinship networks. This more authoritarian leadership exists not just because of the stereotypical great man theory of leadership, but also because of the followers that enabled the leaders to hold that type of power (James et al., 2005).

Mendelek Theimann and April (2007) and Mendelek Theimann et al. (2006) argued that this authoritarian orientation to leadership can pose some challenges for development in Africa because it is at odds with the African tradition to be open and humanistic, and can often cause power struggles between communities instead of viewing communities as equal, a characteristic, albeit utopian, of humanistic thinking. Also, an authoritarian focus can favor African needs over western offerings or vice versa, instead of blending the best of both. Finally, an authoritarian focus challenges an understanding of all communities, and the diverse perspectives each brings to reach a common whole. In order to meet these challenges for change, James (2003), and James et al. (2005) suggested that African leadership should use an empowering style, or one that includes others and enables them to participate, as this style touches on the humanistic principles and the common culture of Africa.

Traditional African leaders, according to James et al. (2005), Moyo (1998), and Nussbaum (2003), tended to be good listeners who were adept at guiding discussion, synthesizing inputs at the end of the discussion, and then giving those thoughts back to the community in a non-threatening and relationship-building way. This process is important, argued Nussbaum (2003), as it provided transparency and tolerance. It is important to note that these traditional leaders tended to be the elders of communities, as age was respected because the elders were those that knew the rituals, symbols, and customs of the community (Kakabadse & Kakabadse, 1999). These elders, most often male, should, to be effective, personify the community and live the values of that community in an exemplary way if the change they wish to lead will be accepted and effective (Jackson, 2004).

Although the previous discussion largely puts traditional leaders in a positive light, Agyeman-Duah (2003) discussed the traditional leader's propensity to want to be treated in a chiefly manner, desiring of accolades and needing to be paid homage. Often, Agyeman-Duah (2003) argued, the traditional leader would expect to be treated as a father, which would require life-long leadership resulting in the thinking that these leaders have permanent incumbency, and may be seen as the antithesis of inclusion and democracy. The African Leadership Council (2004) signed a document entitled the *Mombasa Doctrine* that proposed positive African leadership, stating that positive leaders should adhere to principles of participatory democracy that engages followers, produces results, and encourages types of development. This is the opposite of Agyeman-Duah's (2003) characterization of African leaders, which privileges hierarchy and unflinching respect. It appears from the literature that there is a dispute in the portrayal of African leadership, as evidenced by descriptions of leadership as authoritative versus open and inclusive. This dispute is further highlighted by a discussion of how these portrayals of African leadership intersect with modern or western styles. Therefore, the question remains, what type of traditional African leadership is being used to rebuild communities in Sierra Leone, and has this leadership style been effective, or not, for the development process?

Leadership for community change. In order to think through a bit of these questions, it is helpful to understand the research on a leader's role in community change, and how the role of the chief might fit within that change. Often in change contexts, communities developing after conflict, like Sierra Leone, tend to choose the leaders that led the communities before conflict (Checkoway, 1994). Lederach (2001) argued that a

return to pre-conflict leaders is seen as beneficial because they have often experienced the same atrocities as community members, and also have more traditional knowledge and more access to information than the ordinary citizens. Checkoway (1994), however, disagreed with the value of choosing previous leaders, because new leaders offer the potential to lead and encourage community change. New leaders might also be beneficial, as Johnston and Clark (1982) argued, because older leaders tend to lie disproportionately with the elite in a community, and a new leader might bring in a new perspective or way to initiate change. Whether old or new, formal or informal, Checkoway (1994) believed that leaders for community change should be indigenous and representative of the community.

In order for communities to move through transition or change, Johnston and Clark (1982) and Purdue (2001) argued that leaders must understand national and local government structures, culture, and the long-term commitment that a community has to moving forward. Community leaders must also know how to find a balance between inquiry and advocacy, encourage and organize involvement by learning together, and understand and represent the unique gifts and resources the community offers. They must also have established trust; find the dignity in those concerned; and plan, lead, and implement with or without authority. It is these techniques, and some imagination, that research claimed has helped communities define shared futures (Deutsch, 1991; Ferguson & Fritz, 2003; Minett, 1978; Purdue, 2001).

Purdue (2001) and Putnam and Feldstein (2003) argued that leaders best equipped to deal with change in communities are those who understand that change can sometimes be a slow and complicated process of building social capital that must involve the

creation of spaces designed to facilitate understanding, connection, dialogue, partnerships, and debate. Lederach (2001) continued this argument, stating that local leaders should use local commissions, grassroots training programs, prejudice reduction techniques, and psychosocial work in order to effectively deal with communities in postconflict settings. Leaders that can engage in these strategies may be more likely to get buy-in from the community in their endeavors.

Kirk and Bolden (2006) discussed specifically the importance of the local African community leader, revealing that the formal leader interprets the ideas and desires of community, holds the boundaries of the community, symbolizes unity, and enables the community to function. In essence, Kirk and Bolden (2006) pointed out that the leaders of communities in Africa should embody a community orientation to the work. One participant in Kirk and Bolden's (2006) leadership study summed up effective community leadership in relationship to ubuntu stating that "... leadership is seen as a relational process with one's community, rather than having all the answers for the community" (pg. 10).

Adebajo (2002), whose research focused on three interventions from ECOMOG, found that despite old tensions, local community leaders provided access to resolving conflicts at a national level, and were, therefore, important in several capacities. Peake, Gormley-Heenan, and Fitzduff (2004), however, disagreed with Adebajo. In their research with local leaders in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Sierra Leone, Peake et al. (2004) found that local leaders, despite having a role in creating the conflict, were usually forced or coaxed into conflict resolution processes, as they had little experience with creating change in the past, and seemed to show little indication of being likely to move toward

change. The debate in the literature about the most desirable type of leader, and their experiences and success with affecting change demands further examination. It calls for an examination of local leadership in postconflict Sierra Leone to understand the role these leaders play in creating community change.

According to the limited research in the area of local leadership in Sierra Leone, the majority of postconflict Sierra Leonean communities have returned to the traditional leadership structures of the past to assist in building community (Fanthorpe, 2005; Thomson, 2007). There is wide debate in the literature about whether or not returning to this leadership structure will be beneficial for postconflict community development.

The chieftaincy in Sierra Leone was established by the British colonialists; although a loose structure existed prior to colonization (Peake, Gormley-Heenan, and Fitzduff, 2004; Sawyer, 2008). The institution of the chieftaincy was meant to serve as a way to limit the governance by the colonialists (Jackson, 2005; Peake et al., 2004). Chiefs who ruled for a lifetime because of inheritance and paternal lineage (Fanthorpe, 2003; Keen, 2003, 2005), were given the power to bestow rights on the indigenous occupants of their land and their descendants. They represented the local people to the government, levied taxes and other fines as needed, and ran the local court systems (Fanthorpe, 2001, 2003; Jackson, 2005; Keen, 2005; National Recovery Committee, 2002; Richards et al., 2004; Sawyer, 2008). According to some research, this system often led to the corruption of some of the chiefs, as their power lent to easily taking advantage of citizens and monetary funds (Keen, 2003, 2005; Peake et al., 2004; Sawyer, 2008; Thomson, 2007). Research showed that it was this corruption and misuse of power

that largely alienated the youth of the communities (Jackson, 2005; Thomson, 2007) and led them into rebel armies in hopes of fighting against corruption (Jackson, 2005).

It is no wonder, with a past history such as this, that researchers, and possibly some Sierra Leoneans, are worried about the effectiveness of maintaining a chieftaincy system in Sierra Leone after the conflict, and it raises questions as to whether the traditional culture that may have contributed to the conflict is the best system to support the country's development after conflict. That said, some community members who fled during the war in Sierra Leone largely returned to their communities after the war because they knew the chiefs were there to provide them with a sense of safety and security (King, 2005; Thomson, 2007). Creating a sense of safety and security has been found to be important to peace building efforts (Annan, 1998). In a study of three hundred individuals in three districts of Sierra Leone, Sawyer (2008) found that individuals felt it important to have a chief that provided safety and security, and that the chiefs were essential in helping build community, especially through their role in reconciliation and conflict resolution, and in developing physical capital (King, 2005; Sawyer, 2008).

Although Sierra Leoneans appear to get a sense of security from a chief, it is not clear if this arrangement will result in similar sentiments toward chieftaincy leadership, given the pre-war abuses (Fanthorpe, 2005; King, 2005; Thomson, 2007). Some research suggested that those community members who fled during the war and were exposed to varying cultures in other countries and parts of the world will be less likely to accept corruption from chiefs (Keen, 2003; Richards et al., 2004). It is clear that the system must be transformed to prevent the similar conditions in the chieftaincy structure that led

to the war (Jackson, 2005). Even with the possibility of transformation or reform, a continuing debate exists within the literature as to whether or not the chieftaincy structure provides the best form of leadership for community building in postconflict societies (Fanthorpe, 2005; Richards, 2005; Sawyer, 2008). The ambiguity and uncertainty surrounding the chief as an agent for change in postconflict Sierra Leone communities raises important questions that needs to be further investigated in order to truly get a sense of what role the chief plays and should play in postconflict community development.

Rituals for postconflict community building. As with leadership, rituals are a type of cultural influence on postconflict community development. Rituals, as discussed in the literature, are the rites and ceremonies that are seen as the actual cultural events that link the community to each other, the land, and the gods, and provide the community with a changed view of their relationships with each other, allowing people to move forward after conflict (Ray, 2000; Schirch, 2005). Authors such as Honwana (2005), McKay (2004), Parringer (1976), and Ray (2000) argued that these rituals, which use practices such as cleansing, purification, and healing ceremonies; confessions; animal sacrifices; pouring of libations to ancestors; and celebrations through dance, art, and festivals, enable the community to focus on psycho-social integration and their future, instead of dwelling on their past. Oftentimes these rituals are led by community leaders, elders, officials, or other respected members in the community (Naraghi Anderlini, Pampell Conaway, & Kays, 2005).

One of the most common ceremonies that use rituals in African postconflict societies is reconciliation. Reconciliation is important throughout Africa because of its

ability to interpret the past, support the future, and restore balance and normative behavior (Abu-Nimer, 2000; Nina, 1998; Osaghae, 2000; Ray, 2000). Reconciliation is important for development in that it involves forgiveness, truth-telling, the establishment of mutual trust, and the development of a common narrative, which provides communities a shared story in order to create a community bond (Naraghi Anderlini et al., 2005; Skaar, Gloppen, & Suhrke, 2005).

The literature discussed two major benefits of reconciliation in order to build postconflict communities: using locally-owned methods and traditional arts. First, Honwana (2005), Kiplagat (1998), and Osaghae (2000) stated that reconciliation is significant when it allows everyone to participate, uses locally-owned methods and techniques, and is largely inclusive of the members of the community. Honwana (2005) pointed out that when community leaders allow for open space for this reconciliation, and allow the whole of the community to be heard, the community feels that they have a role in solving their own problems, rather than relying on outsiders to do so.

Second, traditional art forms are used in reconciliation as way to connect the community to each other, to their traditional roots, and to a new beginning. By enabling reconciliation, participants engage in dance, music, storytelling, and poetry (Kiplagat, 1998), feel involved in the process, and thus, feel connected to the community and each other. These art forms, Honwana (2005) declared, provide an emotional way for the communities to heal and move toward development for their future.

Research has also been helpful in pointing out some areas where reconciliation techniques may not meet the needs of communities intending to develop in a postconflict context. This is particularly true if reconciliation efforts are not open to all, or if the

process maintains the status quo of adult male leadership and marginalizes or disempowers groups, based on gender, class, ethnicity, and age. Such actions could contribute to troubled future community relationships (Clarke, 2005; Menkhaus, 2000; Mundy, 2005; Osaghae, 2000). Osaghae (2000) pointed out that reconciliation techniques may not be sufficient. If the breakdown of community relations has been so dire, new bonds and new networks may not be able to be built by reconciliation practices alone. Although it seems that a case can be made for reconciliation, and possibly rituals in general, as helpful for postconflict community development, overall, we cannot say this with absolute certainty. Further research on traditional, locally-based reconciliation practices and rituals is called for to better understand their influence and the extent to which they support or undermine community development in Sierra Leone.

Based on the scant literature of solely locally-based processes, rituals in general, and those used in reconciliation, within Sierra Leone, follow the majority of the patterns of rituals and reconciliation in the whole of Africa. Mundy (2005) in her master's thesis work in Sierra Leone discussed the importance of traditional art forms; the role of elders or chiefs; and the use of holy texts, confessions, and community agreement for communities to move forward. She also found that chewing kola nuts during the rituals practiced in Sierra Leone was important for community development. Ferme (2001) and Parringer (1976) discussed in their reviews of rituals in Sierra Leone that the kola nut represents peacemaking. When split in two, the halves of the kola nut uniquely belong solely to each other, therefore, when the two sides reunite, the eating of these nuts are a sign of agreement between the two parties and symbolizes their coming together (Ferme, 2001; Parringer, 1976).

According to the literature, women who belonged to secret societies that were designed to prepare them for adulthood were those who often organized the rituals in Sierra Leone. Some of these rituals served to heal the ex-combatants, and cleanse them of the crimes they had committed in the past (McIntyre, 2004; Naraghi Anderlini et al., 2005), allowing reconciliation to occur between the community and these ex-combatants. As with rituals throughout Africa, Mundy (2005) pointed out that in Sierra Leone, marginalization along gender, age, and ethnicity lines were the biggest drawbacks to reconciliation practices.

The material in this review points out some gaps and unknowns, demonstrating that there is much that still must be learned about cultural influences of locally-based rituals for postconflict community building in the Sierra Leonean context. With scant literature about these traditions in Sierra Leone, the question remains, what role do these rituals play in postconflict community development, and are they inclusive of all members of the community?

It is clear from this review that cultural influences have the potential of bringing the community together for development. The strengths of these influences are that they tend to be focused on community needs and processes, and include the local people in the development process. Some debate exists, however, as to how effective these cultural influences are in including and engaging everyone in the community. Although the importance of community leadership that works toward change has been acknowledged, there is still discrepancy as to whether traditional chiefs are able to play this role in Sierra Leonean communities. Finally, cultural rituals, said to bring people together through traditional norms and rites, have also been found to marginalize some members of the

community. To date, we do not have a clear picture as to the role of cultural influences in postconflict community development in Sierra Leone. Moreover, research has also largely failed to address the interactions of these cultural influences with the western influences that are at present impacting postconflict development in Sierra Leone.

National Influences on Postconflict Community Building

In this review, I have thus far discussed the literature about both the western and cultural influences on postconflict community development. These influences, while each exerting their own impact on development, may not be sufficient on their own to facilitate postconflict development. Arguably, western influences need to be connected to the local people to be effective, and cultural influences need to find ways to bridge their practices with the activities provided from western organizations. One other set of influences, yet to be discussed, includes those applied by the national government of the country attempting to develop and achieve peace. National influences may be the key to help promote linkages between western and cultural influences, and facilitate development.

The role of governments in community development is often complicated after conflict, as governments must find a way to establish legitimacy again in the country (Malan, Meek, Thusi, Ginifer, & Coker, 2003). Malan, Meek, Thusi, Ginifer, and Coker (2003) argued that in order for the Sierra Leone government to find that legitimacy, it needed to balance its efforts between the international community's desire to see good governance, and the local people's hope for the future with a more balanced sense of power. Research to date has not fully determined the Sierra Leonean government's effectiveness at achieving this balance, especially in working with the local people in the

communities. An investigation is called for: 1) to truly assess the government's role in development, 2) to assess their engagement with traditional leaders and western organizations, and 3) to assess their ability to create a balance between western and cultural expectations, if we are to understand postconflict development.

National government's connection with western influences. Discussions of national governments and postconflict development have primarily focused on issues of good governance. Governments in postconflict countries are often encouraged by the international community, or western influences, to engage in what is termed good governance in order to achieve sustainable development (Work, 2001). Good governance is described in the literature as that which respects human rights and the rule of law; engages in political openness, participation, and tolerance at all levels; encourages accountability and transparency; and supports administrative efficiency and oversight, all while connecting to poverty reduction and looking toward the long term (Grindle, 2002; Hope, 2008; Work, 2001). Grindle (2002) acknowledged that achieving good governance, or at least good enough governance, is a long-term goal, which will likely see many setbacks and reversals prior to success. Despite this long road, Hope (2008) emphasized that for development to occur and be sustainable, good governance must be established, which is important, as there has been some evidence that relying too much on foreign aid might lead to lower quality political institutions in developing countries (Moore, 2004).

According to the literature, one of the essential ways to achieve good governance is to focus on decentralization, as this is a step toward democracy, accountability, and improving social development. Decentralization reduces delays and overload in the

administration, and can improve government's responsiveness and quality of service to the public (Grindle, 2002; Oyugi, 2001; Work, 2001). Work (2001) argued, however, that decentralization should not supplant centralization, but instead should be a compliment, allowing both systems to effectively work together. In general, governments, however, tend to only be comfortable with decentralization if they are confident in those to whom they would extend power, the role those individuals will play, and if there is demand by the population for greater participation (Oyugi, 2001; Work, 2001). This is why Oyugi (2001) believed that decentralization in Africa is generally a horizontal endeavor, not a vertical one, meaning governments are more at ease breaking into various ministries, as opposed to providing power to regional or local groups. No matter the form of decentralized governance, horizontal or vertical, Callway (2005) argued that increased emphasis needs to be placed on feedback from the bottom up, more inclusion of local experiences, and better understanding of the impact national policies have at the local level.

Some research has spoken to the importance of national governments fighting corruption as key to decentralization and good governance; given that corruption can have a negative effect on all levels and functions of government, and the population. It takes away money from essential development tasks, requires people to pay for basic services that should be free, and lessens the confidence of people in the development process (Freeman, 2008; Grindle, 2002; Malan et al., 2003). While the British and the local population have supported an Anti-Corruption Commission in Sierra Leone, it has been limited in two ways. First, its minimal effectiveness stems from little buy-in and cooperation from the government, which has led to limited success in investigating and

prosecuting cases. Second, wages for civil servants are very low and are controlled by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), an international organization specializing in loans in order to assist countries in contributing to the world economy. With low wages, workers have often had to find other sources of income, which has translated into stealing time or money, demanding bribes, or demanding money or in-kind donations (Driscoll, 1996; Fanthorpe, 2004; Freeman, 2008; Glentworth, 2002; Hanlon, 2005; International Crisis Group, 2003). With the IMF controlling the salaries of all government workers as part of their foreign aid package, there is little movement available to increase these salaries and encourage more workers to join the government, exacerbating the problem of corruption (Hanlon, 2005). Those civil servants who are employed in the government often leave their governmental posts for higher paying ones with international organizations, as these groups are competing with the government for the most talented staff, especially in an area that has already limited quality employees because so many strong candidates fled during the war (Hanlon, 2005).

Good governance must also include attending to the needs of youth. The low wages and difficulty keeping people in jobs are of concern particularly for young people, as underemployment of youth was one of the causes of the war. Youth, considered to be the 34% of people in Sierra Leone under the age of 35, tend to be illiterate and lack work experience because of the conflict. They also have few employable skills (Peeters, Cunningham, & Acharya, 2009). Those that had gone through training programs were often unemployable for one of two reasons: they learned skills that were not valuable for government employment or the market was already saturated with those skills (Hanlon, 2005; Peeters et al., 2009). Research discussed several ways that the government could

employ youth, as their employment is said to be a government priority. One suggestion was to use them on infrastructure development projects, activities with which the government has been involved (Hanlon, 2005; ICG, 2003; Peeters et al., 2009). The government could also employ these youth through apprenticeships; on-the-job training; or through work in agriculture, tourism, and mining, provided the government regulates the mining industries better than before and during the war (ICG, 2003; Peeters et al., 2009).

Employment is a problem for more than just the youth. In fact, a 2003 International Crisis Group report stated that only 20% of the economically active population was employed in wage-earning jobs, leaving a large percentage trying to survive in the informal sector. With present conditions, there seems little opportunity to increase the wage sector other than increasing private investment in jobs, or the government lessening the regulatory framework on the informal economy, thus allowing small business to flourish (Hope, 2008; Malan et al., 2003). Private investment, according to Addison (2001), benefits communities through the creation of market networks, which in turn, increases the availability of jobs in agriculture and micro-enterprises.

In addition to the national government finding a way to organize for the future, it must interact with western and cultural influences if postconflict development is to be supported. The Sierra Leonean government is still heavily reliant upon international organizations, societies, and commercial interests, as they finance over half of its budget (Baker, 2006; Baker & May, 2006; Freeman, 2008). There has been some conversation in the literature about the international community serving as a trustee for the government

as a way to help the country develop. This would serve at the risk of sovereignty, but arguably, would heighten accountability and avoid those coming into to power solely to take from a damaged system (Baker & May, 2006).

This discussion of trusteeship illustrates that the international community is still unsure about the ability of the government to fulfill the role of a legitimate power in the country. As there is little literature that discusses the Sierra Leone government's ability to achieve and maintain good governance on its own, the effectiveness of the government in working with these international donors is unclear as to whether the government can decrease its reliance on them. Western influences, therefore, may have trouble visualizing the government as a partner for development, as opposed to a subsidiary. It is important to further explore the role of national influences on postconflict community development and their relationship with western influences in order to better understand what is happening in the communities of postconflict Sierra Leone.

Connection with cultural influences. Along with its connections to western influences, national influences are also connected with cultural influences in their attempts to facilitate community development. These connections are primarily through their work in the communities. According to Rogers (2006), the government attempted to assist in postconflict community development by restoring the local governance system, settling refugees and Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs), engaging in DDR, improving health care, providing free primary education with an emphasis on the girl child, engaging in peace building and human rights work, and renewing the economic system through the National Recovery Strategy, which was created in 2002. Despite these planned endeavors, Rogers (2006) stated that the nation still faced great challenges

including: maintaining the sustainability of peace, stabilizing the security environment, steadying macroeconomics, upholding participatory democracy and the rule of law, creating solid education and health care, reforming the banking sector, and shifting of attitudes from negative to positive about the future of the country and its people.

Hope (2008) argued that in order for governments to address these challenges, they need to own the process of building their country's capacity, as international aid and assistance is not sufficient for development. Capacity, he continued, is the ability of individuals, the public and private sector, civil society, and local communities to work together to achieve sustainability in issues like reduction of poverty, efficient delivery of services, good governance, economic expansion, improving environmental degradation, addressing globalization, and an increased use of technology. In order for capacity to be built, focus needed to be put in the public services, legislation and justice systems, local governments, civil society, private business, and infrastructure.

This, of course, is a very tall order for any government, and it would be difficult to achieve all of these things. According to the literature, the government of Sierra Leone has attempted to facilitate such a large and comprehensive mandate for development through the creation of a development organization, and the collection of taxes. First, the national government created the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA), which oversaw and coordinated all of the international organizations' activities in terms of development and humanitarian relief, through both a central and regional offices. It was the government's hope that these regional offices would connect with the chiefs and the local people in the chiefdoms (Fanthorpe, 2003; Glentworth, 2002). Fanthorpe (2003) discussed in his work that NaCSA served as a way to connect the government both to the

international organizations and to the communities, and to take an active role in development. It turned out that some organizations, both international and domestic, were initially resistant to this commission, as they viewed it as government interference (Glentworth, 2002). This hesitancy demonstrated that there was difficulty in the relationships between the government and both the western and cultural influences.

The second way the government was trying to contribute to community development was through the collection of taxes. With the collection of taxes, the government would have the ability to influence development by moving away from international assistance, which would please western influences, and connect more with the local people and their development desires, pleasing cultural influences. In fact, tax collection became more connected with the local people when much of the authority to collect these taxes was given to chiefs and district councilors after the Local Government Act of 2004 (Fanthorpe, 2003; 2004). According to Moore (2004), effective and transparent collection of taxes was seen to be important for development both for financing projects connected to the community, and in motivating community members to engage in politics, as they would feel a connection to how their money was being spent. A challenge to the collection of taxes in Sierra Leone should be noted, however, as according to Fanthorpe (2003; 2004), there were little resources available for staff and equipment.

Collecting taxes was not the only difficulty that the national government had in terms of postconflict community development; in fact, the literature discusses several other challenges to their efforts in Sierra Leone. One challenge was the government provision of justice within the communities by providing a non-traditional court system

that enhanced the decision-making by the chiefs, which tends to be focused on families, debts, inheritance, and land (Baker & May, 2006; Glentworth, 2002). This system was especially important, given past accusations of corruption within the chieftaincy around the issues of justice (Fanthorpe, 2004). Providing this system, argued Glentworth (2002) and the International Crisis Group (2003), was a challenge because national laws were in need of updating; the courts were highly expensive for the local people; and there was a lack of qualified personnel to handle legal matters and be the judges and magistrates, due once again, to the brain drain of the war.

Another challenge for the government for community development was in providing adequate education. Education is important, argued Freeman (2008), because education is the foundation of economic growth, health, development, and other means to create peace. The Sierra Leone Education Act of 2004 required all children to attend primary school and junior secondary school, and abolished state fees, but the majority of schools were still not free because of various fees levied by the schools themselves like for textbooks and uniforms (Freeman, 2008; Wang, 2007), making it still difficult for people to access education. After the passage of this act, there was an increase in enrollment, but according Wang (2007), still 25-30% of primary school students are not in school. This figure is exceptionally poor, considering only 47% of males and 24% of females are literate (Freeman, 2008).

Research demonstrated that there is also a great need to improve the number and the quality of teachers. The student to teacher ratio in Sierra Leone is on average 118:1. This is due to the limited number of teachers being trained and hired in the country (Hanlon, 2005; Wang, 2007). Hanlon (2005) argued that it is difficult to recruit quality

people to the education field, especially when in 2004 the average salary for teachers was only 72 US Dollars per month. This salary challenge is made worse by the IMF salary cap previously discussed, which makes it difficult to raise their rate of pay. Another challenge is the fact that an estimated 11% of teachers are on the payroll and do not exist, and 25% of teachers that are in the classroom, are not on the payroll. These statistics highlight the prevalence of corruption both in the education sector and in the country. According to Freeman (2008), unless some of these glaring issues are fixed by the national government, the majority of the people will continue to be marginalized and alienated as the system fails to meet their needs.

A final and important influence that the government must take on, and presumably has the power to do so, is in maintaining community safety. Safety issues are particularly troubling, as Chenge (2002) argued, because of long-term concerns about future stability. Hanlon (2005) and Malan et al. (2003) discussed how the government was trying to meet this challenge by being involved in training the military and police, with British assistance. Troops and officers were being trained both to engage in development practices, and to protect the local people. This training consisted of creating discipline, cohesion, professionalism, and loyalty by moving officers and soldiers away from the violence and corruption that was rampant before and during the war. When training is finished, the uniformed police officers are placed throughout the country to focus on community-based responsiveness, and the army is sent to focus on external threats (Chenge, 2002; Glentworth, 2002; Malan et al., 2003). Unfortunately, according to Hanlon (2005), like civil servants, both the military and the police are underpaid, often

resulting in soldiers selling equipment, uniforms, ammunition, and fuel, and both soldiers and police setting up roadblocks as a means to make money off of travelers.

It is clear from the literature that the government, while attempting to connect with cultural influences to assist in postconflict community development, is still quite limited in its ability to do so primarily because of issues of corruption and lack of resources to support staff to make these connections. This indicates that further research should be conducted in order to better understand the relationship between national and cultural influences on postconflict development in Sierra Leone.

In addition, with such great developmental challenges in postconflict communities, the government must decide on a course of action that interacts successfully with influences from western funding organizations, and finally, that addresses the needs of both the funding organizations and the local people, while simultaneously continuing to find room for itself in the process. There is debate in the literature about where the government should put their focus. Rogers (2006) stated that the most emphasis should be on sound macroeconomic policies, as he saw these were to be the most likely to sustain development and avoid movement back into conflict. Hanlon (2005), however, disagreed, stating that macroeconomic policy is not as important as social policy because social policy shows the intent to maintain peace and encourage sustainable development. Despite the debate as to where to focus development efforts first, several authors argued that, overall, the government must find a way to reengage after conflict at all levels, and support a country to once again be on its own without dependence on external funding and heavy monitoring and involvement. As this research has made clear, this may require an overhaul to create effective government

authority and systems at all levels, building infrastructure, and engaging the local people to take up a role in both the politics and governing of the country (Malan et al., 2003).

Previous research has yet to determine the ability of the Sierra Leone government to achieve postconflict goals. In addition, we know little about its role in working with western and cultural groups to achieve a balance of influence between the international community and the local people to help create sustainable peace. It is for this reason that further study must be undertaken in Sierra Leone.

Conclusions

This literature review has begun to expose some of the tensions that exist between the western, cultural, and national influences on postconflict community development. As western and cultural influences come into conversation with national influences, each are called upon to craft solutions that will support and sustain long-term peace in the communities. Previous research on postconflict communities, including Sierra Leone, has demonstrated that these conversations are often separate with little effective overlap. While relationships are being built, programs are being funded, and development is occurring, it is clear that these processes are not as effective and efficient as they could be. The literature, therefore, has failed to provide enough information to form a complete picture as to what is necessary for communities in Sierra Leone to develop after conflict, and the role that western, cultural, and national influences play individually and interdependently in that process.

Western influences were viewed in the research as being successful for supplying aid and assistance to Sierra Leone and its communities directly after conflict. Where these influences may be failing is in connecting their aid and programs effectively to the people

they serve, and in keeping funding going while the communities develop. Investigations have found that various aid programs are seen as disconnected and not fully addressing community needs (Fanthorpe, 2003; Freeman, 2008); leaving us unsure of how the foreign aid contributes to postconflict community development that leads to sustainable peace.

Cultural influences on postconflict community development in Sierra Leone appear to assist in building the physical and social capital and institutions that are necessary to allow communities to be resilient and find ways to develop a peaceful future. However, to do this successfully, research has shown that development efforts must attend to issues of power and trust, among others. Little is known about how communities in Sierra Leone are addressing these issues. Arguably, community members must be engaged and empowered, but achieving this presents a challenge in Sierra Leone given past inequities in the communities.

Research on cultural influences has also alerted us to the importance of leadership, but the question that remains is—what kind? Leadership, especially in terms of the community chief, may provide a sense of security to local people and help to lead the development of the community, but there is still debate as to whether the chieftaincy is the best form of leadership to help communities develop.

Finally in terms of cultural influences, rituals have been shown to enable communities to use rites and ceremonies to construct relationships between community members, and find ways to move forward. It appears, however, that these rituals and reconciliation practices can be exclusionary for some members of the community. Prevalent in these cultural influences is the need for community involvement in the

process of development; a key finding that may be relevant in further research on postconflict community development.

National influences are seen to be in turmoil at the end of most conflicts. Research has shown that national governments often struggle to find their place in development activities, and often need to strike a balance between the work of western and cultural influences (Malan et al., 2003). With a history of corruption and disenfranchisement, and the struggle to find and maintain good governance, the questions remain, what is the role of national influences on postconflict community development, and can government work with the western and cultural influences that shape development?

While the literature about these three overarching influences enables us to begin to understand the factors necessary for postconflict community development in Sierra Leone, we are still left with uncertainty regarding the relationships among them. More research is needed to fully understand the processes that support and challenge postconflict development in Sierra Leone. This study attends to this gap by more fully exposing the role of western, cultural, and national influences, and their interrelationships on community development in postconflict Sierra Leone.

Chapter Three

Methodology

This chapter discusses the research design and implementation of the study. I will also include the delimitations and limitations of the study, describing both the strengths and the weaknesses of the research design and methodology.

Research Questions

Based on an initial literature review and a preliminary study of postconflict community development in Sierra Leone,² original research categories were grouped as cultural ideologies and practices, structural factors, and non-traditional ideologies and practices. My research questions were the following:

1. How and why do cultural ideologies and practices influence or shape postconflict development?
 - a. How and why do traditional community collectives or groups influence or shape development after the conflict?
 - b. How and why does traditional leadership, such as the chieftaincy, influence or shape postconflict development?

² A single-case study was conducted in October, 2008 with a Sierra Leonean informant who had extensive experience traveling to communities in Sierra Leone after the conflict with the United Nations. From this study, the following themes emerged as significant for building communities in postconflict Sierra Leone: the election of a rightfully elected chief to provide a sense of safety and security, physical construction to create both literal and figurative space for community, and reconciliation practices.

- c. How and why do traditional ceremonies and rituals, including reconciliation processes, influence or shape postconflict community development?
2. How and why have structural factors (including institutional arrangements) influenced or shaped postconflict community development?
 - a. How and why has the building of housing shaped postconflict community development?
 - b. How and why has the building of community spaces shaped postconflict community development?
 - c. How and why has infrastructure shaped postconflict community development?
 - d. How and why has the educational system shaped postconflict community development?
 - e. How and why have the political institutions influenced postconflict development?
3. How and why have non-traditional ideologies and practices influenced or shaped postconflict community development?
 - a. How and why have INGOs or other international organizations shaped postconflict community development?
 - b. How and why have other western influences shaped postconflict community development?

Grounded Theory Design

This study was conducted using a grounded theory design. Grounded theory allows the researcher to generate theory from the data produced through fieldwork rather than grafting a pre-existing theoretical focus onto the data (Patton, 2002). The methodology, thus, allows for an understanding of the data to emerge throughout the process instead of using pre-established categories that may constrain comprehensive understanding. Using a grounded theory method, the fieldwork data were systematically compared and analyzed so that the story the data told and the theories that emerged from those stories generated understanding about postconflict community development in Sierra Leone (Patton, 2002).

The grounded theory approach enables the researcher to learn from the world and create meaning from those experiences (Patton, 2002), as opposed to prescribing a lens for the research. While grounded theory was my primary research design, I did use the findings from the aforementioned initial literature review and preliminary study as what Charmaz (2005) termed, “sensitizing concepts,” or themes that helped guide my investigation. It was important for me to acknowledge that even though I conducted this research using a grounded theory approach, these themes helped to direct data collection in the beginning stages of my research, and helped to structure my interview protocol. I remained attentive to emerging concepts that generated new themes or theoretical constructs. This process prompted me to generate a new theoretical frame that privileged western, cultural, and national influences in understanding postconflict development.

Data collection procedures. Data collection occurred over an intensive five-week visit to Sierra Leone in May through June 2009. Subjects for this research study

were the members of two different Sierra Leonean communities in the Northern provinces. Sierra Leone was chosen as a site to conduct this study for two primary reasons. First, the communities within Sierra Leone were hard-struck during the eleven-year civil war, and had begun the process of postconflict development over the seven years since the conflict ended. Second, Sierra Leone was chosen because of my experience with the country and its Chief Electoral Commissioner and Chairperson, Dr. Christiana Thorpe.

In 2004, I was fortunate enough to become a peace writer for the Women's PeaceMakers Program at the Joan B. Kroc Institute of Peace and Justice at the University of San Diego. I was paired with a woman peacemaker from Sierra Leone, Dr. Christiana Thorpe. Over the course of three months, I conducted interviews with Dr. Thorpe, and wrote a narrative of her life in Sierra Leone, including her experiences as the country's Minister of Education prior to the war, and as the founder of an organization for women and girls' education, the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE). Dr. Thorpe and I developed a close relationship as she shared stories with me about her country and her experiences before, during, and after the war. Since our time together, Dr. Thorpe had returned to Sierra Leone, had taken the post of Chief Electoral Commissioner and Chairperson, and had continued her role as Founding Chair of FAWE. It was my close relationship with Dr. Thorpe, her reputation as a peace builder through both women and girls education, and through her work in free and fair elections, as well as her efforts to connect me with individuals in the communities, that enabled me to conduct my research. Dr. Thorpe assisted with arrangements for my stay. She made the

initial contact with individuals in the two communities chosen for my study and with FAWE personnel.

There were hundreds of communities throughout Sierra Leone, but the two communities selected for this study were chosen through convenience sampling, and because they represented communities that were hardest hit by the conflict. Each community in the study was viewed as a case. The case study method is one that reviews a particular situation or place to explain the present circumstance, or how or why a social phenomenon works (Yin, 2008). The case study was useful for this research, because it allowed me to examine two communities in depth and get a full understanding of how and why these communities were developing after the war. The two cases, or communities, selected for this study were chosen based on Dr. Thorpe's understanding of the study's goals and intimate experience with Sierra Leone, and the postconflict development experiences of the communities in the Northern region; the region that was hardest hit during the war and the last stronghold of the rebels. Makeni was chosen because it was more developed and semi-urban. Lungi was chosen because it was experiencing more challenges to development and was more rural.

People in the Northern regions of Sierra Leone were largely from the Temne ethnic group and were roughly 60% Muslim and 10% Christian. Roughly 30% identified themselves as practicing traditional religions separate from or in tandem with their predominant religion (Bambrick, 2004). Also, communities that were distant from the capital tended to be farming-based for their livelihoods (Binns, & Maconachie, 2005). Sierra Leone is considered to be the least developed country in the world and as such has

the lowest life expectancy, lowest level of education, and lowest standard of living (UNDP, 2008).

Each of the communities had an active FAWE branch, and one woman affiliated with each branch served as my host. Each woman arranged my lodging and transportation, as well as my meals while in their community. Each woman also helped to select my participants and accompanied me on the bulk of the interviews. Interviews in each community began with three to four individuals identified through convenience sampling (Patton, 2002) by the local FAWE hosts. These were community members that my hosts knew were knowledgeable, and had been involved in the community development process or had stories that would be interesting for me to hear that were related to community development.

After interviewing these individuals, I used the criteria of both convenience and purposeful sampling to expand my interview pool (Patton, 2002). In order to have a comprehensive understanding of postconflict community building through my interviews, I researched the demographics of the communities I studied to ensure that my subjects were individuals who corresponded to those community demographics in terms of age, gender, education level, and community power. I interviewed a larger number of women than men in keeping with the community demographics, and more younger people than older people. I also made sure to have an equal number of people who did or did not receive formal education and/or skills training. I also included the chief and/or elders, as well as those who did not participate with the formal political administration of the community. With this sampling technique in place, I was able to use convenience sampling of those that fit the demographic necessities in order to obtain a purposeful

sample of the many ideas and experiences that existed within each community about development in the postconflict context.

Interviews were conducted over the ten days I spent in Lungi and the eight days I spent in Makeni. I conducted one half to one-hour semi-structured, qualitative interviews with 14 members of each community. All of the individuals I interviewed were made aware that participating in the study was voluntary. The majority of the interviews were closer to one half hour in length, with interviews of public officials and community leaders tending to be longer than those with other community members, as often these individuals had more direct experience with the community development process.

While I engaged in a more informal conversation style of interviewing, I used an interview protocol (See Appendix A) that was based on my early investigation of postconflict community building in Sierra Leone, and my thorough literature review. I edited the interview protocol for cultural sensitivity under the guidance of Dr. Thorpe. This protocol was structured enough to ensure that each participant was responding to the same questions derived from the preliminary study and review of the literature, while still allowing respondents to go in-depth into other areas through the provision of open spaces in the guide, and asking participants open-ended questions to elicit their thoughts and opinions regarding areas not directly covered by the interview protocol.

In each community, the process of interviewing participants was different. In Lungi, as the community was more rural and widespread, my host and I called on our interviewees at their homes, schools, or workplaces. In many instances, individuals were not at home, and appointments needed to be made with the residents who were home at the time. In some instances, we would call at a home multiple times to try and schedule

and conduct an interview before we were able to meet with the individual. In one case in Lungi, we were unable, after three attempts, to find a time to meet with an individual. Residents did not usually have home phones. In some instances, mobile phone numbers were exchanged and arrangements could be made by phone, but this was rare. In the culture of Sierra Leone setting appointments was uncommon. As a result, I spent much time attempting to arrange meetings with an individual or continuously calling on them until they were available for an interview.

As most of the interviews did take place in a home or a public place in Lungi, this often meant that interviews were not one-on-one, but surrounded by family members or other community members. In many ways this was an asset, as sometimes, these additional people offered constructive thoughts and ideas for the interviewee. It was often the case that after a suggestion was made, the interviewee would expand on this idea, and thus the various topics and ideas were coming through the interviewee themselves, but with some extra assistance from the others present. As the culture of Sierra Leone was extremely communal, I did not feel as though the information gathered was hindered by the presence of other individuals. In fact, in both the more communal setting of Lungi and the more private setting of Makeni, participants appeared equally comfortable in sharing both general information, and personal stories.

As mentioned, the Makeni community provided a more formal setting for interviews than the Lungi setting. The Makeni FAWE branch had an office near the center of the town, so the office was used as a staging area for most interviews. Makeni was in a more densely populated area and had a more urban feel, so it was easier for people to travel within the community. Many of my interviewees walked to the FAWE

office, where I had my own office space and was able to close the door and have more private one-on-one interviews, or with my hosts translating. Interviewees were often recruited by FAWE members who would call upon them at their homes or business places, and ask them to participate in the interviews. In some cases, I did travel to offices or homes to conduct interviews, but these interviews, unlike the ones conducted in Lungi, were done more in private with little or no interruption or participation by others in the home or office.

In Makeni, the women of FAWE met with me to learn about the varying types of people whom I wished to interview, and took on the responsibility of collecting people from the community who met my needs. It was easier for them to identify women that met my criteria. They had a more difficult time identifying men, as their influence and work was largely with women. As a result, my host recruited men who fit my demographic needs from her personal acquaintances, and through convenience. The majority of the men were selected from her acquaintances because she knew men of varying ages, education level, and community involvement. The most difficult category of male for her to find was a younger man. To overcome this difficulty, she resorted to convenience by finding a young tailor at the local market, asking his age, and asking him to participate in the study, which he did willingly.

The official language of Sierra Leone was English, so many of the interviews were conducted in English; 9 out of 14 in Lungi, and 6 out of the 14 in Makeni. The majority of the remaining interviewees had some knowledge of English, but felt more comfortable speaking in their native tongues of Krio or Temne, so my FAWE hosts served as translators for me when an interview needed to be conducted in a native tongue.

In most interviews, translation was offered simultaneously. In a few cases in Lungi, further translation was offered at the time of transcription, when interviewees did not give proper time for translation, which generally occurred while telling their stories of the their experiences during the war. For the most part, my FAWE hosts were able to offer verbatim translation, although both tended to try and explain the interviewee's answers from their own perspective, a common pitfall with untrained translators (Patton, 2002). I was able to explain to the women that I wanted to hear direct responses, and was able to bracket out most of their explanations during the transcription process.

Having my hosts involved in the process also provided a comfortable space for the interviewees, as many of them were familiar with, or had knowledge of, the women and their work. In many ways, my FAWE hosts served as co-researchers throughout my data collection. Glesne (2006) discussed co-researchers as those that were involved in most aspects of the research process, and may in some way, have control over some or all of the process. This, in many ways, was true for my hosts, as they provided the space for interviews, and they provided the leads as to whom to interview, being careful to select individuals that met my criteria.

I was fortunate in receiving access to my participants through the assistance of Dr. Thorpe, and my FAWE hosts. As a young white female, it would have been difficult for me to otherwise have access to the communities, and influential members within these communities. As Sierra Leone was a former colony and had suffered due to outside western forces, Sierra Leoneans likely were skeptical of my work in the country as an outsider, and someone who could have possibly represented the former colonialism (Smith, 2006). I had learned during my time there that westerners were often viewed as

those who either dropped off items of necessity and left, or those that come in and take for their own gain, without contributing to the country or community.

One participant asked how her participation in my research would help serve the community, and not just me. I would not be surprised if many more participants were at first skeptical of me, and my intentions in their communities. It was important for me to ensure these participants that my intentions were to learn and understand from them the techniques used to develop communities after the end of the war, not to force my ideas or beliefs upon them; the participants needed to be a part of the process, and it was important for me to bring what I had learned back to the community for the benefit of all. I tried to answer my participant's question by telling those I interviewed that I would share my findings with them, so that they could use the findings to provide insight into programs and activities that were receiving the most credit for development. This in turn, could help inform decisions made around programs and activities, and their abilities to contribute to postconflict community development. The questioning participant appeared satisfied with this answer, but I would not be surprised if years of negative experience with western researchers allowed for skepticism to persist.

This consideration was important for both the participants and for me, as I wanted it to be clear that I was in their country to learn from them, understand their ways of postconflict community development, and to share my learning with them. I emphasized that this was not merely an academic exercise, but was important and relative to the political and social conditions of the community (Smith, 2006). As an outsider, it was important for my participants to realize that I did not want to give authority to my voice over their voices, but rather to manage my subjectivity in order to enable my experiences

in country to connect with the data (Peshkin, 1988). This would enable me to give the results of the study back to the community in a way that was useful and meaningful for their continued development, and resonated with their experiences; not just as a piece of work from which I earned a degree.

It was also important to for me to check my understandings as an outsider, with insider privileges, with my co-researchers to ensure that I understood the phenomena I was experiencing and learning about in a culturally responsive way. It was, therefore, important for me to double check the ways that I was making sense of the data. It was essential for me to do this work around sense-making with my co-researchers, as reality is never consistent, but open to human interpretation, because we take cues from our environment and filter them through our existing knowledge, understandings, and experiences (Dervin, 1983; Timperley & Parr, 2009). It was, therefore, important for me to review how my co-researchers were viewing the interviews and events to ensure that we were constructing the meaning of these events in the same way, or making sense of what was happening in a similar fashion (Dervin, 1983), as we each likely had different lenses through which we were filtering this information.

With these intentions set, and having my established relationships with both Dr. Thorpe and with FAWE, I was able to be introduced and have access into the communities in a non-threatening way. The support of FAWE, and the groundwork that they laid for my research, assisted in my gaining credibility with community members. It was clear, however, that it was up to me to maintain their trust, to be respectful of the individuals and their culture, and to demonstrate that I was conducting interviews to learn about the ways in which the local people worked toward developing their communities

after the war. I assured all of the community members that these interviews would indeed be kept confidential. I relied on my past experiences working with communities of other cultures, which taught me to listen intently, be open and observant, and that it was usually welcomed to ask cultural questions in an effort to understand, to ensure that I maintained a level of trust with the communities and their members. One of my hosts complimented me during an informal conversation about my ability to connect with the local people of the community. Without the assistance and entry provided by FAWE, however, it would have been extremely difficult to conduct this research, and likely would have required a pre-trip, and a much longer time in each community to gain access to, and the trust of, the community members.

Aside from the more traditional interviews that I conducted, I had the opportunity to meet with, and speak to, several community officials and other community members informally. These informal conversations allowed me to ask questions that could check or compare the information I was getting in my interviews with their responses. It also enabled me to continue my investigation until I was assured that my data were saturated (Glesne, 2006). I was fortunate to be able to have informal conversations with a mayor, a chief, a member of parliament, women at traditional marriage ceremonies, women in the market, men who were the staff at my guest houses, and my drivers, among other community members. These informal conversations enhanced my understanding of my research and my observations.

These observations enabled me to further expand my understanding by providing me the opportunity to study events in each community, including meetings, ceremonies, and other opportunities that exposed the development process. I documented these

events, interviewed participants, and spoke about the events to my hosts to check my understanding, and to obtain their perspectives and understand how they were making sense of events, much like I did with the interview data I collected.

The findings from my research on the two communities served to answer my general research questions. The opportunity to include multiple sources of data ensured that I was able to provide as thick a description of postconflict community development as possible, as thick description enables us to more fully understand complexities that drive each community (Geertz, 1973).

Data analysis. I chose case study methodology to investigate the two Sierra Leone communities. Yin (2008) defined case studies as a research tool that investigates phenomena and contexts when multiple data and sources of evidence were available for analysis. Using the data I collected about each community and my observations, I wrote a case record (Patton, 2002), or a written account of the demographics, setting, and experiences of each community separately. This case record was intended to introduce the reader to each community, and offer a context to understand the data that I analyzed, and report about, in the following section. After writing each case study, I conducted a cross-case comparison letting my data generate analytical themes in order to account for postconflict community development.

In order to create accurate case records and emergent themes analysis, interviews were digitally recorded when possible, and transcribed verbatim during my stay in Sierra Leone. I took notes of my observations outside of interviews, and used the digital recorder whenever possible to record my observations. Data were transcribed from the digital voice recorder to a Microsoft Word document so that the interviews could be

easily manipulated and coded to create the case records, and the emergent themes analysis. As themes emerged from the stories of the communities, the note-taking software Zotero³ was used for the categorization of those emerging themes. This software allowed the data to be categorized and manipulated based on different themes and codes as necessary for thorough analysis. During my interviews with participants, I made sure to confirm my understanding with them through the interview process by fact-checking or restating their comments in order to ensure my meaning making was correct. This fact-checking was extremely important, as I was unable to share with them my notes and transcriptions at a later time. Verifying my understanding was even more crucial because many of the interviews were done using translation, and due to the Sierra Leonean accent, even interviews in English were often difficult to understand.

In addition to fact-checking my interviews during my data collection phase, I planned to give my findings back to the community through a focus group (Glesne, 2006). Due to the sensitive nature of some of the responses, especially around elected and local officials, Dr. Thorpe had recommended that I should wait until the data were more polished, and allow FAWE to conduct the focus groups to ensure that my work would not be viewed as a threat to political power, especially coming from a westerner. She believed, and the FAWE hosts agreed, that having a community forum sponsored by FAWE, where the report could be presented by FAWE, would be a more constructive

³ Zotero is a software program that enables the researcher to enter sections of transcripts into the program as notes and sort those notes by theme. With interfacing capabilities, the researcher can link themes, and search by multiple themes at once, thus enabling a rich understanding of the data.

venue to give the material back to the community, and have conversations about its content and possibilities for the community. FAWE would likely be the best choice to conduct such a forum, as participants and community members understood that I was being hosted by FAWE, and connected my research to their work. It would, therefore, make sense to the community that FAWE was presenting the results back to them.

The above data collection and analysis procedures addressed the three research questions through the development of case records and an emergent theme analysis that illustrated the development of each of the Sierra Leonean communities. This close investigation allowed me to learn the process of community building after conflict, the influences that enabled that process to occur, why these were used, and what work remains to be done.

Delimitations and Limitations

A first limitation to note about this study was the convenience sampling that occurred both with the selection of the communities, and the initial community members I interviewed. Using convenience sampling as a selection method for this study was a limitation because it meant that all the communities in Sierra Leone and all the participants in each community were not studied at length to determine which communities would be the best for this study, and which individuals in the community might be the best to interview. With other methods of sampling, different communities or participants may have been chosen to better meet the needs of this study. As Dr. Thorpe assisted me in organizing my time in the country, the community selection was largely in her hands, and at her discretion. While she was told of the types of communities with which I wanted to work, I relied on her choices and expertise for those

decisions. As she was a Sierra Leonean native and a highly respected community member, her experience did have its benefits as well as its drawbacks. She had a strong relationship with both of these communities, their FAWE branches and leaders, and the members in one way or another.

Also her position as the country's Chief Electoral Commissioner and Chairperson, and the power that role has may have influenced the community, and facilitated their willingness to participate. While Dr. Thorpe does not have the power to directly influence the participants or to punish them for their decisions on whether to participate or how they might respond, participants may have agreed to take part as they wanted to appear helpful to me, and to put a good face forward for the country and for Dr. Thorpe. As she was such an influential figure and had given so much to the communities, participants might have wanted to demonstrate that they were trying to give back and develop the community as well. She was a very popular figure, and many people were fascinated by her and her role in the country. This potential aim to please may have encouraged participants to take part in the study when they were uncomfortable doing so, and may have influenced their responses.

I tried to mitigate the influence of Dr. Thorpe by steering away from mentioning my connection with her as much as possible. However, there were times, such as connecting with the chiefs and other political figures, when it was advantageous to mention my connection with Dr. Thorpe because it gave me and my research more credibility among leaders and community elders. I was advised when to, and not to, mention Dr. Thorpe by my FAWE hosts. In an effort to gain the participants' trust,

regardless of their knowledge of my affiliation with Dr. Thorpe, I always assured them of confidentiality of the individuals with whom I interviewed.

In addition to Dr. Thorpe's work as the Sierra Leonean Chief Electoral Commissioner and Chairperson, she had, as previously noted, established FAWE. She had worked with women all over the country. The communities I studied had active FAWE chapters, and thus, were intimately tied to FAWE, and therefore, Dr. Thorpe. Communities with active FAWE chapters may also be more progressive than those without these FAWE chapters, as this organization provides for a role for women to get directly involved with education and community development activities. Having active FAWE chapters, therefore, may have been a limitation in that the results from these communities might not have captured the experiences of communities with less active women, and those without FAWE chapters. Also, participants would have connected my work with FAWE and the empowerment of women, and might have answered questions in a way that demonstrated their acceptance of FAWE's goals, whether or not those opinions were authentic.

Time was another limitation, as I was only in the country five weeks. Although having the connection with Dr. Thorpe and FAWE allowed me to accomplish a great deal in such a short time because I was able to have an already established access to the communities through FAWE personnel, and did not have to create that rapport on my own with each community. With additional time in the country, I may have developed stronger relationships with the communities and with the participants, thus enhancing the findings and possibly allowing me to conduct more interviews and have increased observational experiences.

An additional limitation of this study was conducting research with a culture so vastly different than my own, as previously discussed under data collection. I acknowledged that I brought cultural biases to my work, and attempted to check those biases from influencing my understanding and interpretation of the data. My position as a white, young, female, doctoral student from the United States of America likely constructed biases about me as well from the participants, such as expectations for me to be bringing things to the communities, or taking from the community without giving back. These issues of bias may have limited the relationships constructed, and rapport between the participants and me. Increased understanding of each other's culture may have assisted in the collection of greater amounts and more accurate data.

Working with my co-researchers helped to limit some of these biases, both my own and the participant's. The co-researchers offered me explanations of the things I was seeing and experiencing, and provided me insight into interview responses when I was unclear because of cultural unfamiliarity. At the same time, the co-researchers explained to participants who I was, what my purpose was, and the way that interviews were going to be conducted, including the use of a recording device, to put participants at ease with the process as it may have seemed unfamiliar. Also, the presence of my hosts during the majority of the interviews served as a buffer in situations that might have been unfamiliar for either me or my participants. Being a woman, and my hosts also being women, may have limited my access to information about the traditionally male aspects of the society. As my gender could not be mitigated, it is important to note that my research may be limited because I was unable to gain access to a complete male perspective and experience, especially in terms of male-only traditional societies.

In order to demonstrate that I was not in the communities with a negative purpose, I held constant to my intentions, as laid out at length above, to learn about, and from, the research participants, and not force my own ideas or agendas upon them. I recognized that it was important for me to take the time to understand the culture, and the indigenous systems with which I was working to avoid cultural mishaps (Glesne, 2006). I even wore traditional clothing to ceremonies so that I could be seen as making an effort to blend with the culture. Another way I tried to minimize the physical and ideological differences between myself and my participants was to work really hard at trying to understand the culture and the stories that were being shared with me, check my understanding with the Sierra Leoneans, and engage in a process of deliberate critique of my data analysis to guard against any assumptions that might creep into my research (Glesne, 2006).

As the culture and also the language were different from my own, I had to rely on my hosts to translate during many of my interviews. This use of translation could be considered a limitation as I was not able to assure that the translations I was getting from my hosts were completely accurate, and maintained the authenticity of the interviewee's statements. My translators on occasion attempted to explain or summarize statements (Patton, 2002), which may have influenced or distorted the data, as I was not hearing the participant's words verbatim, and the facts that the participant found important might not have been accurately conveyed by the translator.

In addition to the data being translated and occasionally summarized or explained by the translators, I often found it difficult to get my respondents to explore the analytical side of the happenings around development in the community. On the one hand, many

interviewees were readily able to explain the events that had happened to bring the community back together. On the other hand, they provided little analysis as to why these techniques were used, and why they believed they were effective. Without the participants being analytical in their responses, I was limited in a full understanding of their interpretations. I had to rely on my own connections and the connections made by my co-researchers, instead of having analytical information from all my participants to include in my analysis. This also proved difficult in finding quotes that were descriptive and analytical enough to provide meaning in the findings of this study.

Another limitation was that I was unable to share transcripts and notes from the interviews with the interviewees. I would have preferred to have had a chance to analyze the data, and then return with questions to verify or edit the transcriptions, but due to limited time and availability of many of the participants, I was only able to get one session with each of them. This was, of course, all that was initially planned, but having a chance to follow-up with each participant may have enriched and validated the data I collected.

I also was unable to conduct participant observation around some of the events and activities in the community because they were either not occurring at the time I was in the country, or were not open to outside participants. Many of these activities were those of the secret societies, although some were other ceremonies that occurred during the harvest, and my time in country was just before the rainy season. The time planned to be in country was based on both my and Dr. Thorpe's availability, and in accordance to the academic year in the United States. A longer trip, and one conducted just after the rainy season, instead of just before, may have enriched my observational experiences by

allowing me to see and participate in some of the events and activities the participants discussed. Having a firsthand experience with these happenings could have enhanced my understanding and analysis of the data.

Finally, as this study analyzed the development of only two communities in postconflict Sierra Leone, the study is naturally limited in scope. Therefore, the findings of this research can really only explain the process of each of these communities, and were not necessarily indicative of the processes of development from other communities in Sierra Leone or communities around the world.

Significance of the Study

The findings do, however, offer some insight, or transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), into the ways other postconflict communities may develop within Sierra Leone, or around the world, when those communities are of similar scope and dynamics to those communities involved in the study. The findings, delineated through the thick descriptions of the case record, will help to increase our knowledge about the influences that may be necessary for communities to develop in postconflict settings and maintain a sustainable peace, and why these influences were used. The lessons learned from this study may also inform understanding of similar communities in postconflict situations, and can give voice and insight into the strength and will of communities to move forward after conflict.

Community Descriptions

In order to complete a picture of each community, the next section describes the communities and my experiences within them. Each community is described separately

and taken as its own entity. The communities, although in many ways similar, had some striking differences.

Lungi. Lungi was a community located in the Northern region of Sierra Leone just across the Sierra Leone River from the capital city of Freetown, and was in the Port Loko district, one of the 14 traditional districts. Lungi was best known in the country for housing the International Airport, and their famous Lungi onions. Lungi was part of the Kaffu Bullom chiefdom, which had only 69,000 subjects, or citizens. A chieftaincy was an area, like a district, that was ruled by a traditional ruler from chieftaincy lineage, the Paramount Chief, and several sub-rulers, including Section Chiefs and Headmen. In the Kaffu Bullom chiefdom, of which Lungi was a part, there were eight sections. Unlike most chiefdoms, Kaffu Bullom was lead by a Regent Chief, or an interim chief, as opposed to a Paramount Chief because the Paramount Chief died in 2006, and a Paramount Chieftaincy election had yet to occur. When a Paramount Chief dies, as the chief rules for life, a Regent Chief was appointed in his place until a new Paramount Chief could be elected. The rules for the election of a Paramount Chief were being discussed in Parliament during my stay in Lungi, and because these new rules had yet to be established and approved, a new Paramount Chief had yet to be elected. The Regent Chief, as an interim, only serves until there was a new Paramount Chief elected, and cannot be considered for the Paramount Chieftaincy due to traditional law (Malikie,⁴ personal communication, May 26, 2009). Therefore, he, as the majority of chiefs were male, especially in the Northern regions (Florence, personal communication, June 10,

⁴ All names are pseudonyms to protect the identity of study participants.

2009), could only serve as Regent Chief until a rightfully elected chief was put into place in the community.

Lungi was a rural area with many regions adjacent to palm-lined beaches. While there were a number of shops set up outside of the airport and along the road to the airport hotel, there was no downtown area. The airport hotel was the only major hotel in the area; however, there were a few smaller guest houses. In each of the eight sections within the chiefdom there was an outdoor market where people went to shop for food, goods, and clothing. These markets were the most bustling places in Lungi, and were often tightly packed with shoppers and sellers alike. One of the area markets had clothing and goods sold in wooden huts on the side of the street, with more wooden huts behind that provided places for people to sell fish, chicken, vegetables, fruits, and other cooking necessities. In addition to clothing, goods, and food items, men also sold their handmade furniture. The men were trained after the war to make beds, dressers, and other items (Unisa, personal communication, June 2, 2009). Many people also sold mangos, particularly in the spring and early summer, as this was when they were in season, to make extra money. There were mango trees all over the area, which allowed many residents to pick the fruit and sell them on the streets and in front of homes.

The majority of the sellers and buyers were women. This may be because of the larger female population after the war, or men taking more formal jobs at the airport and other locations. The markets were a sea of women wearing brightly colored fabrics either sewn into elaborate traditional dresses, or wrapped around their waist as a skirt with a western-style t-shirt or tank top. These types of western clothing items were donated to Sierra Leone from international organizations and people could generally purchase these

items at the market. It was rare to see a woman in totally western clothes in Lungi. The men, however, were largely more western in their attire, save for the ones who wore traditional dress to ceremonies, or to the church or mosque. Away from the meeting places, many women went topless and only decided to cover their breasts when leaving the house or compound, or a when a western visitor came to call. The women who came to sell at the market carried their goods in large baskets on their heads with brightly colored wraps tightly wound into a coil and placed on top of their heads to steady the goods. Many women, in addition to carrying their goods on their heads, also carried babies on their backs by taking a wrap and tying it in front to keep the baby secure behind them.

There were few paved roads in Lungi. The rebels “would cut off some roads so that the ECOMOG or the UN soldiers could not get access to where they are so that they [could] continue to destroy the people and their property” (Rosaline, personal communication, June 2, 2009). The main paved road ran from the ferry terminal past the airport. From one end to the other was about a 20-minute drive and the villages within Lungi were situated on either side of this road. There were a few other paved roads in various locations, but largely the roads throughout Lungi were dirt and stones. In some instances, it was obvious that the road was paved at one point in time, but the paving existed just in the center of the road, and it was filled with potholes. The drivers preferred to drive on the dirt portions to avoid these potholes, which made getting to market and to work extremely difficult.

There were some cars that served as personal vehicles and some as public transportation, but largely people got around Lungi by hiring a motorbike to drive them

from one place to another or they walked. Taking a motorbike was relatively a cheap option, as the motorbikes were rarely more than the equivalent of one US Dollar a trip; however, many could not afford to ride, and instead, walked from place to place. As the community was rural and things were spread out, this could amount to a very long and difficult walk, especially during the rainy season when potholes filled with water and roads were muddy. On one of our drives to a neighboring fishing village from Lungi, we met a girl who walked six miles each way to get to school every day. We gave the girl a ride to her village as we were going her way; it was often common for people to give rides, especially to children, if they were going in the same direction and there was room in the vehicle.

The weather in Lungi, like much of the country, was hot and humid, which made long walks even more difficult for the residents. The country had a dry season from November through June, and then it rained heavily throughout the remaining months. Lungi, being right on the beach, however, benefited from nice breezes that blew through and cooled down the area a bit, especially in the evenings and mornings. Most of the homes and offices, even with windows and doors open, got very stuffy motivating the majority of the population to spend time sitting outside under trees or on a porch or verandah to try and take advantage of the cool breezes, both during the day and in the evenings. In Lungi, there were few jobs for people other than working at the airport, schools, hospitals, and development agencies; fishing; or being a petty trader of goods or foods. This meant that many people had time to be idle, and often sat out of doors for the most of the day.

There was no electricity in Lungi, and only a select few individuals, usually those with jobs at the airport, had generators to run for light in the evening. Those that were fortunate enough to have generators and televisions generally had many neighborhood guests who watched television through the windows. Football matches, or what Americans call soccer, were quite popular, as well as Africa Magic, a channel that played African dramas, or soap operas. Residents of Lungi, who were not as fortunate, used candles, flashlights they called torches, or kerosene lamps to provide light during the evenings. Before the war, Lungi had electricity (Emmanuel, personal communication, May 28, 2009), but there were no power lines going into Lungi now. Without electricity, people could only work as long as daylight enabled them to, students could not study into the night, people could not advance from the technology that exists, and did not have easy access to things like computers or the internet. Women cooked every meal from scratch, as there was no refrigeration, using wood- or coal-burning stoves. Families suffered in the Sierra Leone heat, as there were no fans or air conditioners to cool them.

Many of the houses in Lungi were built with cement or mud bricks. They had corrugated sheet metal roofs. The floors were generally cement covered with floor coverings that might look like wall paper to an American. On the outskirts of the chiefdom, located in the bush, or the forested areas of the country, the homes were made entirely from mud and had thatched roofs made from palm fronds, with dirt floors. These homes tended to be in the more rural areas with less economic access. There were several communities within communities. One noticeable group of houses that constituted a community unit was the amputee community. These homes were built for the victims of the conflict by the Norwegian government and were painted concrete and

had a neater appearance than many of the other houses that were constructed and kept up by other community members. Many families lived in compounds or houses that included family members, both immediate and distant relatives. In Sierra Leone, it was not uncommon to see men living with several wives and their multiple children from each wife. Also relatives came to stay, adding cousins and more distant family to family compounds.

The majority of homes had porches so that people could easily sit outside and enjoy the breezes. Houses tended to have parlors for meeting guests, and then rooms set off with doors or curtains for private quarters. Most houses were equipped with both indoor and outdoor kitchens. Cooking was largely done in the outside kitchen using either coal- or wood-burning cooking stands. The inside kitchens were used for preparing and serving the food, for storage and washing of dishes, and for other cooking needs. The kitchens were not equipped with appliances such as stoves, refrigerators, or other items that were found in western kitchens, as there was no electricity to run these items. There were also few utensils used other than spoons and knives. In fact, the majority of people ate meals with their hands, or with the aid of a large spoon. It was rare to see the locals eating with a knife and fork. Food products were often bought from the market, and in many instances, families owned goats, sheep, or chickens, and occasionally a cow, which were tied up in front of the homes until eaten.

Many houses had thatched areas used for cooking or spending time. As Lungi was such an out-of-doors community, many people would gather to spend time under these thatches often on wooden benches or plastic lawn chairs, which were very popular around the area. The women tended to get up early to clean the house; they could often

be seen in the mornings sweeping with a hand broom to neaten up the dirt around the compound. Once this and the tending to the children were finished, many sat and enjoyed each other's company. A lot of time was spent in silence, and it was not uncommon for people to sit for long periods of time without speaking to each other.

Children began school at around age six, and provided they stayed in school, could stay through their late teens. The children who were not yet in school, played outside and assisted in some of the household duties and loved to smile and wave as people drove by, especially white people, who they called *potho* (literally, white person). The men, who were not employed, often spent their days outside of each others' homes. One day, I observed a group of men gathered under a tree to play bingo; gambling had become a pastime for many of the men that were not employed (Rosaline, personal communication, June 2, 2009).

Lungi, like most of Sierra Leone, was a very religious community, and it was easy to see many mosques and churches when driving through the streets. In fact in Lungi, there were both Christian and Muslims schools which operated on different days to meet the religious norms; the Muslim schools ran from Sundays through Thursdays so that children could observe the Friday holy day, and the Christian schools ran Monday through Friday, so that children could observe the Sunday holy day (Lahia, personal communication, May 29, 2009). God was of great importance to many community members, and was often called upon in regular conversation fairly consistently. Statements about God were also commonly written on transportation vehicles like taxis and *poda-podas*, or vans that were used to transport large numbers of people. Many

houses tended to have religious symbols in them as well. The nation as a whole put great stake into God as a savior, as an all-being power, and as a protector of Sierra Leone.

Aside from the poor roads and lack of electricity, Lungi also had difficulty in securing safe drinking water. Many nongovernmental organizations, or NGOs, had established wells for people to find water in the more central parts of the chiefdom, but those in the outskirts had to get water from the streams, which often contained many diseases (Ishmael, personal communication, May 29, 2009). Those that were fortunate to live near wells, usually within several miles of their homes, retrieved their water in big, yellow, square-shaped rubbers with red tops. Each rubber held five gallons of water. There were often many people at the well at a time, and those wells in highly populated areas could have long lines of people waiting to fill their many rubbers. I saw some lines over twenty deep. The wells were generally dug by the communities, often with the help of international organizations, and therefore, the water was free. Luckily, many parts of Lungi had a good underground water system, which made the water accessible and generally clean. Water could get scarce toward the end of the dry season, however.

There were two hospitals in Lungi, one that was government-run and the other that was private. Both of them offered limited care with no staff on the weekends. The private hospital was a bit larger and better appointed, with an indoor facility, while the public hospital was largely an outdoor facility, where one must walk outside to get from building to building. The private hospital had an internet café attached to it, one of the few places that internet was available to the people of Lungi. It was only open in the evenings, obviously limiting community member's access to the internet and to the information that could be gathered there, and the communication that could be made with

those away from Lungi. In fact, a very limited number of people had e-mail addresses, let alone used them often.

There were also very few restaurants for people to patronize. Generally families ate their meals together at their compound and not in restaurants. In fact, most meals could take up to three hours to prepare, as all the ingredients were bought fresh and prepared separately for every meal. Without refrigeration, rarely meals could be stored for the next day. Cooking easily took up the bulk of many women's days.

Communication in Lungi could be difficult. While many people had mobile phones, they were hard to charge because of lack of electricity. Additionally, in order to operate the phones one must buy a package of minutes, or units, that were prepaid. This meant that people could only talk for as long as the amount of units purchased would last them, often leading to people running out of units while on the phone with each other. In order to continue to use one's mobile phone, more units had to be purchased.

Often to communicate with someone, you would need to drive by their house to see if they were home; if they were not available a message was left at the compound about when you would return to see them. It was very normal for people to come and call on each other at any point in the day. It was also not unusual when someone did call that the other members of the family living in the home or the compound would be included in the visit. As Sierra Leone was communal in nature, not much was done behind closed doors.

The majority of the people in Lungi, like all of Sierra Leone, spoke Krio, and some spoke native languages like Temne, as this was the language of the ethnic group predominately in the Northern regions of Sierra Leone. While English was the official

language, and it was taught in schools, the majority of people were more comfortable in their native tongues, and often spoke several of the local languages. The street signs and other information were in English, but there was no doubt that the native languages were preferred among the community members. Many people in the Lungi area tended to speak loudly to each other because typically they were speaking over loud radios, run on batteries, that were playing songs or reporting religious stories. Lungi residents seemed to like to debate everything from politics to local community issues, which they did very effectively for long periods of time without the argument escalating to any sort of physical fight. Many people stated they were conscious of fighting in light of the recent conflict, so seemed content with arguing quite passionately.

It was common to see trash and other debris, like vehicle frames that had been stripped of all their valuable parts and left to rust, along the side the roads in Lungi. There was no formal trash collection, and many people burned their trash in order to dispose of it. The beaches were also filled with trash and other unwanted items. In fact, there were very few public systems to handle waste of any kind, which was also why there were no formal sanitation systems in the community. It was ordinary to see men and children urinating on the side of streets and in the areas surrounding their compounds.

Prior to the war, Lungi was seen as a place where people were happy and living together in harmony with their families. Electricity, although not always consistent, had existed in the community before the war. There had been a system of roads that connected various parts of the city. More opportunities for jobs and schooling were also present. People felt as though they could live together successfully.

During the war, however, people had to run away to the bush to save themselves from rebel attacks (Ishmael, personal communication, May 29, 2009); many left when the local radio station announced the rebels were closing in (Emmanuel, personal communication, May 28, 2009). When people had to flee, they often were separated from their families. Those that were unable to or could not flee lost limbs and often their lives (Rosaline, personal communication, June 2, 2009). Many were captured. A pastor, named Samuel (personal communication, May 30, 2009), was taken as a prisoner by the rebels and forced to walk with them to Liberia, a distance of roughly 200 miles. He faced several attempts on his life, and an attempt by the rebels to force him to rape an old woman. Another respondent, Sombo (personal communication, May 25, 2009), told of having run away when the rebels came to the village and began raping her friends. The bullets they fired at her lodged in her leg causing it to turn gangrenous. Her leg was amputated so that she would survive.

Much of the infrastructure that did exist in Lungi was destroyed when the rebels invaded the town and clashed against the ECOMOG soldiers, the troops from various West African nations, mainly Nigeria, who attempted to restore peace. There was an intense three-day battle from which the ECOMOG soldiers prevailed, pushing the rebels back further into the Northern region of the country. ECOMOG controlled Lungi for the rest of the war period, often screening residents who wanted to return to build anew their homes and their lives by asking them for their personal documents, and ensuring they were not rebels (Ishmael, personal communication, May 29, 2009; Emmanuel, personal communication, May 28, 2009). While in Lungi houses and structures were largely still standing, other parts of the country were less fortunate, as rebels burned down houses and

structures. The homes in Lungi, although they still stood, had been looted and destroyed in other ways (Sahr, personal communication, May 28, 2009), requiring residents to attempt to furnish their homes again, and fix damage caused by missing roofs, doors, windows, and other necessities.

Due to the large international presence in Lungi, because of both the United Nations and ECOMOG troops, many individuals who had fled from rebel attacks in their home communities made their way to Lungi to find safety, because they understood that it was more peaceful there (Karamoh, personal communication, May 30, 2009). At this time there were no structures in place to help people, and virtually no formal jobs or much food. Many of the women of the community worked as prostitutes for the international soldiers as a way to earn money for their families, which resulted in a high influx of HIV/AIDS in the community (Rosaline, personal communication, May 25, 2009). As a result of prostitution and other promiscuous behavior that was brought on by the war, and therefore, the increase in cases of sexually-transmitted diseases, it was common in Lungi to see billboards advertising the use of condoms and encouraging people to live with AIDS through proper medication.

Makeni. Makeni was the headquarter town, or capital city, of the Northern region, located in the Bombali district. It was situated in the Bombali Seborra chiefdom which had 130,000 people, 80,000 of which lived in Makeni and the surrounding villages. This made both the chiefdom and Makeni larger than Lungi and its chiefdom. Makeni was actually the fifth largest city in Sierra Leone. Makeni was nestled in between two large mountains, Mena and Wusum, and was surrounded by bush, which was much less dense than in Lungi. There were many palm trees but few other trees and

vegetation. The town remained green much of the year due to the high level of annual rainfall, six months of the year there were heavy rains.

There was a traditional story about the two mountains that bookend the town. One of the hills was flat on top and was considered the male hill, Wusum. The other hill, Mena, was the woman. The story goes that these two hills decided to marry and have children, but Wusum was evil and beat Mena. One day she could no longer take the beatings so she fled and took the children with her. These children were the rocks, which sit on her top. A while later, the maids in Wusum's house ran to Mena to tell her that Wusum wanted the children back, and had called the police. The maids were the rocks that sit atop the little hill next to Mena. One day, the police came to take the children and Mena yelled at them so much that they froze in place, and the police were now the rocks that sit half way up Mena's hill (Kadie, personal communication, June 5, 2009). I confirmed this story with several people; it was well-known in Makeni, and the story, like the hills, seemed to envelop the town. This story seems in some way to provide a new way forward, which the country sorely needs. When the old ways, like beating the wife and children, were causing pain and suffering, the new ways brought safety and security to the wife and children. It may be that this story demonstrates the same feelings for the town, new ways of bringing people together must be taken on in order to have the community move forward in a way that was safe and secure. It might also be relevant that women were now more included in community activities, as it was Mena's power that brought people to her, and prevented the police from wrongfully taking away her children.

Makeni had the feel of a small urban-rural town, with a defined downtown area with shops and markets and much hustle and bustle. In the center of the town was Independent Square, a small plaza in the middle of several converging main streets. The plaza had an archway over it that was just cement and rebar, but before it was destroyed during the war was likely a beautiful monument. In the middle of the square was a marker that read “The Peace Pole.” I heard no conversation about the pole during my stay, and I never saw any residents really acknowledge its presence in the middle of the town. I found out later that it was put in by a group to remind the community to practice peace. I wondered whether the group that installed “The Peace Pole” had much community buy-in about the project, or whether its initial impact on the square had worn off.

Many of the main roads in Makeni were paved, and there were several traffic circles throughout the town, although many of the roads that lead out of the main area were like Lungi, dirt and stone. Makeni had recently received power lines from the government, but did not have the water to fuel the turbines to generate the power (Banura, personal communication, June 8, 2009); so, the town still did not have electricity, and operated largely on personally-owned generators that were scarce.

The downtown area had many two-to-three story buildings that were in various stages of repair. Those that had been attended to were painted vibrant colors. Many of the sidewalks were filled with people selling their goods; fabric, clothes, shoes; household items; and supplies for vehicles, among others. Most of the foot traffic was in the street along with the personal and INGO sponsored vehicles, taxis, *poda-podas*, and many motorbikes. Vehicles honked as they passed other vehicles and people walking in

the street. Sometimes large vehicles or men pushing carts full of goods or wood would slow down the flow, and were subjected to many long honks. The streets did not have any road signs to direct traffic, so the locals had to figure out a code based on honks and hand gestures, which seemed to keep people moving without too many traffic accidents, although I learned that traffic accidents were a common means of death.

In Makeni, the government had begun to dig drainage ditches along the sides of many of the roads in the town for better drainage when the rainy season came, so that the puddles did not consume the roads. Boards had been placed to help the residents and vendors traverse the ditches, and to better reach their homes and shops.

The shops downtown included those with indoor counters, as well as those who displayed their goods on tarps on the sidewalks. Behind the main shopping street were several markets with wooden stalls displaying clothes, fabrics, and other food and household items. The fabrics were either tie-dyed, the preferred local way to dye fabric, or they were imported fabrics with large prints. The merchandise that was sold was largely western-style, used clothing typically brought in from various other countries, either larger African countries like Nigeria, or from European countries and the United States (Florence, personal communication, June 7, 2009).

There were two covered markets with rows of tables where people set up their food goods to sell in stalls in the main downtown area. The aromas were overpowering from all the meats, vegetables, herbs, spices, and fruits that mingled together, and seemed to be slightly cooking in the hot and humid air under a concrete roof with little to no circulation. The vendors all called out for people to buy their goods, as the competition for goods was high. Like Lungi, many people had found that the one of the few ways to

earn a living was through petty trading and tried to sell anything to which they could get access. Like Lungi, jobs were scarce in this area. Oftentimes people sold goods or foods in front of their houses, creating a make-shift stand or putting their goods and foods under a tree.

Unlike Lungi, sellers tended to be both women and men. The women were starting to get more involved in politics as well for the first time in Makeni. As one community member explained, they were moving out of the backyard and into public view (Banura, personal communication, June 8, 2009). Makeni women now worked in the district council's office (Zaria, personal communication, June 5, 2009), and in the most recent election a woman became the first female court chairperson in the Northern region of Sierra Leone (Olivette, personal communication, June 10, 2009). Many organizations in Makeni assured that their leadership was made up of both men and women.

As Makeni was a larger town, it had a mayor in addition to the traditional and district leaders (Florence, personal communication, June 10, 2009), and also had more meeting spaces where people could come together. It had an old and new town hall, and several other public buildings that were often used for meetings and events. Makeni, being the district headquarter town, with people more centrally located than in the rural area of Lungi, resulted in more opportunity for events to occur.

The houses in Makeni showed the remnants of a city that was at once a beautiful small metropolis, and more thriving than Lungi. The porches of many of the houses had carved stone pillars and designs that were artfully crafted at one point. Makeni tended to be hotter and more humid, as it did not get the ocean breezes of Lungi, so porches were

even more important. This was especially true when the rains came, and people hurried off the usually busy streets to take shelter. If anyone stayed in the rain it was likely to be the young boys who enjoyed a game of muddy football, a game that the children enjoyed in any weather.

Many of the houses, save for a few around the city, had not been restored to their previous grandeur, and had paint peeling off in chunks or were no longer painted at all. The structures in the city were mostly all concrete structures, although those in the villages were made of mud brick with thatched roofs. Some of the city houses had tile work that remained on the porches, but had been poorly cared for or not retiled after the war. Although the town had a more developed feel, the houses looked harder hit by the war, which was not a surprise as Makeni was the last rebel stronghold. In addition to the rebels fighting here, the ECOMOG troops fought and dropped bombs on the area. Many homes still had traces of bullet holes, and were still in ruin because owners had never come back to fix them. The majority of residents did not receive assistance in building homes, and were therefore, responsible for the expense themselves, which, because money was so scarce, was why many had yet to return to fix their homes. Others may still be living as refugees or in asylum around the world, which was why they had yet to return to construct their homes again.

According to the majority of the individuals with whom I spoke, Makeni saw a lot of looting during the war; rebels were known to take everything out of homes including doors, windows, roofs, and any valuable material, leaving shells of homes where families used to live. This meant that the expense was more than just the patching of bullet holes

and painting of exteriors, pieces of the home needed to be put together, and furniture and household items needed to be purchased.

Homes were similar in style to those in Lungi in that each home had a central parlor with rooms off or down a hall. They also had indoor and outdoor kitchens where people did their cooking, which, like Lungi, could take hours as all the ingredients were fresh and needed to be prepared daily. In Makeni, large wooden versions of mortars and pestles, with mortars often almost two feet tall, and pestles upwards of five feet, were very popular for grinding peppers and herbs. Generally spoons and knives were the only utensils used. Rice had to be sifted for stones, as the local rice was grown in a rocky soil. Gourds were used for the process of rinsing the rice and sorting the stones, a process that alone could take a half an hour. Also, like Lungi, most houses did not have refrigeration, so food could not be stored. Typically leftovers were shared with the compound or neighbors, so as to not waste food.

People spent a lot of time outdoors cooking and relaxing on porches and under trees to get away from the hot sun. People most often tended to sit on wooden benches, although those that could afford them used plastic lawn chairs, which were also quite popular for seating guests in at ceremonies. As children played outdoors, similar to Lungi, they enjoyed seeing a white person and called out *potho*, and smiled and waved. During my time in Makeni, the neighborhood children would often hold my hands and walk with me as I went around the neighborhood for interviews and home visits.

Also like Lungi, it was very common for people in Makeni to call on one another without prearranging meetings. If the individual was not home or at the office, a message was left with those that were present. Makeni residents also had mobile phones by which

to get in contact with each other, and tended to share phone numbers easily. Other than calling on someone at their home or office, a phone call was often the only other way to reach them. If you were fortunate to find someone at home or in the office, often they would stop what they were doing to greet the caller and welcome them in for a chat. This was the case for me when I went to visit the mayor of Makeni; he welcomed me in for a chat, even though he was in the middle of a meeting with his advisors.

Makeni was a town that housed barracks for both the national police and army, and it was not uncommon to see both sets of groups taking jogs through the town chanting songs as they went. In fact, the barracks for the army were important in the war, as they housed the international soldiers that were fighting against the rebels. These barracks were largely looted and destroyed by the rebels (Florence, personal communication, June 10, 2009), and despite some construction, remained mostly this way during my stay in Makeni.

As in Lungi, Makeni also had an area of land that was dedicated to the amputees, built by the Norwegian government. The area was a bit far removed from the main area, and was located behind Wusum Mountain, as this was the area of land that the amputees were able to procure free of charge. The houses were neatly built in lines, and were clean with outhouses behind each house. While they were small, they had two porches and ample space for sitting throughout the day, and enjoying the view of the mountain. There were wells in this area, but there were still no schools for the children or health facilities nearby.

There were more hotels and guest houses in Makeni than in Lungi, as it was a district headquarter town, or capital city, and many local and INGOs had offices in the

area. The ritziest hotel in the country was located here. It had its own internet café, which during my time there, was not working. There was one additional café as well, which while it worked, was only open in the mornings and had quite a slow connection, making it difficult for the people of Makeni, like those in Lungi, to connect to the internet and to those beyond the town and the country.

Makeni was also the Sierra Leone president's hometown, and his mother still lived there, so there was government influence throughout the town. Makeni also had the largest hospital in the country (Florence, personal communication, June 7, 2009), and like Lungi, it had many religious institutions including larger and more grandiose churches and mosques. The people in Makeni were equally devout, discussed God fairly often, and recognized their faith in their homes and on their vehicles.

Prior to the war, community members felt the town was peaceful, and provided opportunities for people to work and live in harmony with each other (Arif, personal communication, June 7, 2009). Many participants stated that the town had relatively good electricity, water, and many of the things that someone would need to live and be happy, including sufficient health care. There were friendly football matches, and other games and activities organized for the children. People felt free to trade and move about without fear (Florence, personal communication, June 9, 2009).

During the war Makeni was a community that was full of looting, raping, amputation, killing, and broken houses. Both the male rebels and females rebels would rape civilians in certain areas in the town. The rebels would force people to be their laborers, and make them pound rice, cook, do housework, and launder for them. They would also force civilians seen cooking to give them their food; they would wait until

someone was done cooking and then take their food for themselves (Florence, personal communication, June 5, 2007). Youth were rounded up, and those that the rebels thought would be good fighters were taken 22 miles away to be trained, and the others were lined up in Independence Square, and killed. One youth, Hadams (personal communication, June 8, 2009), was captured and set for the same fate, but was rescued in his cage because the rebels had wanted to play a football match against the local team, and Hadams was on that team.

Many people had to flee to the bush in attempts to find safety, but could not always find it. Many of the women with whom I spoke were raped repeatedly while they were on the run; one was forced to watch as the rebels murdered her husband by melting a water rubber can over his body, and then she was raped and stabbed (Miatta, personal communication, June 5, 2009). She showed me the scars, and told me of the ongoing medical problems she had as a result of her injuries.

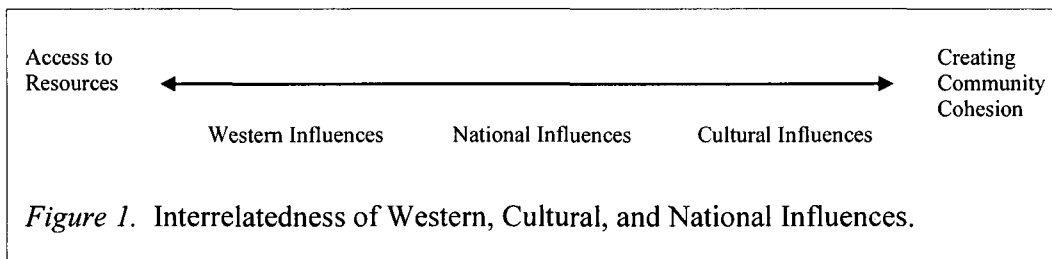
ECOMOG was also fighting the rebels in Makeni, and would often drop bombs on vehicles believing that all vehicles were driven by rebels, but often they would kill civilians trying to flee the town (Miatta, personal communication, June 5, 2009; Florence, personal communication, June 5, 2009). These battles contributed to the destruction of the infrastructure that had left Makeni to look the way it does today, without working electricity, running water, damaged roads, and people left without much economic viability. This was in stark contrast to Makeni before the war, which was a relatively bustling, although still poor, city with intermittently working electricity, a functional water system, and a population that lived together in harmony.

Lungi and Makeni, despite their differences in size and importance to the country—Lungi containing the international airport, and Makeni being a district headquarter town—were somewhat similar. Each were hard hit during the war, both by rebel forces and by ECOMOG combating those forces, both had limited infrastructure, and saw a great deal of looting in their homes and community structures. Houses were generally constructed out of cement, and people cooked outside in designated areas, as there were no western-style appliances for a kitchen due to the lack of electricity in the communities. While there was some buying and selling in markets in both communities, economic activity was still limited. It is these community struggles that provide a background to understanding the climate of the communities, which helps to inform the findings of my research study, discussed at length in the following chapter.

Chapter Four

Findings

In this chapter, I present findings from my research conducted in two Sierra Leone communities, Lungi and Makeni, during my five-week stay between May and June of 2009. I examine how three major forces, western, cultural, and national influences, have impacted the development of sustainable peace in both communities. As noted in Chapter One, these influences are not discussed in order of importance for community development, but rather in order of familiarity to the western audience. I found that western influences had ample access to financial resources for immediate aid and assistance, but were limited in their ability to create community cohesion over longer-term development. Cultural influences, in contrast, were largely able to create cohesion among community members, but were limited in their efforts at development by being disconnected from resources to expand and perpetuate their programs. National influences on postconflict community development, however, appeared to fall somewhere in between western and cultural influences in terms of connecting with the local people, and access to resources. In many ways, national influences were positioned to act as an intermediary between western and cultural influences, and potentially offered a link connecting these two influences; therefore, providing a coordinated effort at development between all three influences (as indicated in Figure 1 on the following page). I discuss this potential interconnectedness, and the limited ability of the national influences on postconflict community to meet the goal of these linkages.



Western Influences on Postconflict Community Development

International Nongovernmental Organizations were the primary western influences on postconflict community development in Sierra Leone. These organizations had great access to financial resources, which were used for aid and development activities, but were limited in their impact on community cohesion. I will further discuss their influence in the section below.

International Nongovernmental Organizations. International Nongovernmental Organizations (INGOs) assisted postconflict community development in Sierra Leone by supplying services, goods, and relief efforts to the country and communities at the end of the war. Largely headquartered in western countries, or within western institutions like the United Nations (UN), these organizations served to provide relief and aid after conflict in many parts of the world. They were active in Sierra Leone at the end of the war, and shifted from aid and relief to development activities in the years following.

Securing the peace in communities. INGOs first provided assistance to Sierra Leone by working to end the war, and bringing back peace to the communities. ECOMOG, an African-based group built around a western structure, and UNAMSIL (The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone) sent peacekeeping troops to the country. Community members credited them not only for ending the war, but for preaching peace

to the people, and encouraging those who had fled the communities to return. These practices enabled the communities to begin to build from a place of nonviolence. They also encouraged those who had left because of the violence, to return and once again become active in their communities, and help them to move forward in their development efforts.

In addition to assisting with the civilians in the communities, the UN also assisted community development through working to unite the civilians and the rebel fighters, as both of these groups had to share the same space and facilities after the war. The UN worked to find a way to get those who had caused the violence to live in harmony with those who had suffered it. Community members discussed some of the ways that the UN worked to bridge these groups were by disarming the rebel troops; giving them skills training, or what in the literature was referred to as Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR); and hosting meetings, events, dances, and football matches to unite the rebel troops with the local people.

Sinead⁵ (personal communication, June 4, 2009), a young woman from Makeni, explained that vocational schools instituted after the war were beneficial for community development because they taught ex-combatants “skills, like carpentry and driving, so they [would] not harm civilians anymore. This [was] helpful because once they [had] jobs it [was] easier for [everyone] to all live together.” The UN’s help in providing a means for the ex-combatants to give back to the community and contribute improved the likelihood that local people would accept the former rebels, and work with them to build the community for the future.

⁵ All names are pseudonyms to protect the identity of study participants.

The UN and other INGOs' direct involvement with the cessation of violence was important as a stepping stone for development. These organizations were said to have, overall, provided a safe space for communities to feel secure, and to begin the development process. On the other hand, some participants stated that there were instances where members of INGOs, especially ECOMOG, engaged in sexual practices that transmitted diseases and resulted in unwanted pregnancies. According to Rosaline (personal communication, May 25, 2009), a community leader, women who could not find other means of employment at the end of the war became commercial sex-workers because the men from the INGOs were able to pay for sex. These sex workers were prevalent in Lungi, I was told by several participants, as many ECOMOG forces were stationed there, and it housed the international airport. Unfortunately, sex tended to be unprotected, leaving women in the community with sexually transmitted diseases that would spread through communities, as often these women were married. These sexual relationships also, in some cases, left the women pregnant and with the burden of caring for additional children. Therefore, although the INGOs were praised for their work to end violence and secure the communities for development, there were instances where some INGO members engaged in behavior that was harmful to the local population.

Providing resources and aid for development. After the cessation of violence, other INGOs got involved with assisting community development through providing resources to the communities. Some of the INGOS, aside from the UN groups, that were mentioned by the community members were the World Food Program, the Sierra Leone Council of Churches, the Red Cross, the Norwegian government's development program, Britain's development program, the Catholic Mission, Doctors Without Borders, Plan

International, Action-Pharm, and Mercy Ships. One way that INGOs, especially religious-based, western organizations, provided resources after the war was through distribution of food products, such as rice. This rice was distributed to both “the Muslims and the Christians because everybody was involved and affected [by the war]” (Rosaline, personal communication, June 2, 2009). During the war, people were largely unable to grow crops, so often they were hungry, and the communities were without food. Supplying food enabled community members to move beyond the base needs of worrying about hunger, and focus more on issues of community development. The majority of community members stated that they received some sort of aid and assistance in terms of food and resources from INGOs.

Community members were often limited in their abilities to describe the assistance they received from INGOs, as there were often many different organizations providing assistance, and they were not always aware of the various names of the groups that had helped them. Those who were better versed at discussing the activities of the INGOs, were those community members with more power in the community, such as educators, political leaders, and leaders of community groups. As I spoke only with community members, and not with INGO workers, I had to rely on those participants with more advanced knowledge of INGO operations for much of my information around the role of INGOs in postconflict community development. Those community members with typically more power were those able to provide more in-depth analytical comments as to why community events and activities from western, as well as cultural and national influences, helped to bring people together. It is important to note then, that there seemed to be a divide between the capacities of participants to analyze community development

activities based on level of education and level of political or career achievement. Those that had succeeded in finding a good job and being involved in the community had a better understanding of why certain things were working than those who had not reached such high positions. This was likely due to the knowledge gained through political advancement and/or through formal education.

It is also important to note that these individuals were those that are more heavily quoted throughout this document, as they were more likely to have a good command of English, and were often the most articulate around the issues of postconflict community development. Those less involved in development activities tended to speak in a manner that was less linear and focused, and also tended to struggle with English or needed translation. This made their interviews often more difficult to use in a way that would enhance meaning to the influences described in this study.

In addition to providing basic necessities, INGOs also provided resources for the construction of houses and community buildings destroyed during the war. According to Rosaline (personal communication, June 2, 2009), a Lungi community leader, “[the INGOs] built a lot of houses for the amputees; those who were affected during the war.” Other community members stated that housing was also built for the blind. The INGOs also constructed community buildings like community centers, schools, health centers, and clinics. Furthermore, INGOs gave resources to construct wells so that communities could have safe drinking water. With these structures in place, communities could begin to get back to traditional functioning. Children could go to school, and community functions and events could occur, which were important, according to Florence (personal

communication, June 9, 2009), a Makeni community leader, “so [that they] could come together again.”

INGOs added to the resources they put into the construction of schools and health centers by also providing supplies and services for both. Donating school supplies, desks, and granting scholarships for children enabled the schools to have a greater impact on training children for their futures, and for becoming stronger citizens engaged in their community and able to help move that community forward. Giving medicine and providing medical services in the health centers enabled community members to heal from the damage done to them during the war, and allowed for them worry less about their health, and focus more attention on working toward building their communities.

A second way that INGOs benefited postconflict community development was through the organization of development projects. These included agricultural initiatives, local development initiatives, and granting micro-credit loans for small businesses. INGOs gave both financial resources and the frameworks for development projects to the community because local organizations did not have either the resources or the experience to accomplish postconflict development on their own. Banura (personal communication, June 8, 2009), an educator from Makeni shared that “the community is trying to find ways to develop itself, but they have no source for getting help.” Suzan (personal communication, June 4, 2009), a community leader from Makeni, stated that it was the INGOs who provided that help by “do[ing] things [the community] could not do by themselves,” which, therefore, enabled the communities to develop in ways they may not have been able to do without those resources. The INGOs also provided oversight

and monitoring of the local projects as a way to ensure that the resources were being used to enhance community development.

Therefore, INGOs, or western influences, were beneficial for postconflict community development because they provided financial and other resources, including aid, assistance, construction, as well as frameworks and models for community development initiatives. In fact, many community members stated that these resources and aid packages were necessary for their survival after the war, as people were left with very little. Despite the INGOs role in providing the aforementioned goods and services, many participants felt that the INGOs, even though working in the communities, did not fully connect with the local people and their needs and desires for development. Local people felt that the INGOs failed to engage them sufficiently in the development process.

Sierra Leoneans criticized INGOS for not allowing them an equal hand in the development process. According to Banura (personal communication, June 8, 2009), an educator from Makeni,

International organizations bring expatriates to do the jobs, [and] this is a burning issue. Most of these jobs could be done by Sierra Leoneans. They could employ the Sierra Leoneans as members of their staff to help; they could have more local people ... [but] the NGOs come with expats and take the bulk of the work ... the communities provide the unskilled labor.

The local people believed that western organizations saw them as unable to take responsibility for their own development. Thus, the local people felt that, in a way, they were forced to rely on the western organizations, resulting in a self-fulfilling consequence. Since locals were not able to gain the experience of running projects

themselves, their reliance on western organizations extended from the need for resources to the everyday running of these projects. Local people were not as actively involved in the western organization sponsored development projects as they had hoped, leaving them without feeling ownership of these projects.

Local expectations were unmet in a second way. Respondents said that members of INGOs made promises to them regarding resources and assistance that were not met. This left communities feeling vulnerable and with some mistrust of the organizations, and their intentions. In one instance, Ishmael (personal communication, May 29, 2009), a community elder from Lungi, mentioned the actions of The African Mineral Group, a mineral exploration company, which had promised to create jobs in the community, but failed to follow-through:

This group wanted to create jobs in their area. So [the community] gave [them] a list of workers, but no mining of iron or ore ever took place. [The organization] wanted to give the jobs so that people would not have to sit idle and do nothing, [but the community] does not know when the group is coming, it could be soon, or it could be far away.

Another instance of unfulfilled promises, which contributed to the belief that the INGOs had failed to meet expectations and thus limited community development, was told to me by Banura (personal communication, June 8, 2009), an educator from Makeni: He reported that the community was told by various INGOs that they were going to help the communities, but their resources were pulled away to other countries when the INGOs' international headquarters changed country focus. Florence (personal communication, June 4, 2009) agreed, stating that "programs come and go for awhile, but

then they just stop.” This left the local people feeling hopeless when the organizations were so quick to pull resources and go to other conflict zones, leaving the community with unfulfilled promises. In fact, Ishmael (personal communication, May 29, 2009), an elder from Lungi, stated that “[The communities] want to develop, but are afraid to commit to something just for it to be taken away.”

The communities were both reliant upon and desiring of the western organizations for their resources and their expertise, but were disappointed to not be directly connected with or involved in the process of the development activities, and making decisions about these activities. The local people stated that not being involved to the extent that they desired left them unsure of the decisions of the western organizations, when INGO resources would be coming, for how long they would be available, and what role the local people might play in the process. Therefore, there was a real disconnection between the desire for INGOs assistance, and the desire to feel connected in the process of that assistance. People wanted to have ownership in their development process, but knew that they could not do it alone.

Supporting findings from previous research on Sierra Leone and other postconflict countries, the comments made by local community members, especially in Lungi, made clear that to be successful, local initiatives required western financial and other support, and for western resources to be beneficial and contribute to sustainable development, they also needed to have local buy-in (Chenge, 2002; Fanthorpe, 2003; USAID & UNDP, 2000). There existed a complicated relationship between the INGOs and the local people. On one hand, INGOs were praised for their aid and assistance in securing the country and communities, and providing food and other necessary resources

directly after the conflict. They were also credited for building homes and community structures and initiating development projects. These organizations were limited, however, in their abilities to connect with the local people, and to build community cohesion. The community members felt that INGO involvement was important for development, as it provided much needed resources and expertise, but desired to find a way to be involved in the processes of these organizations, and to feel as though their interests and goals for their community were taken under consideration. INGOs may need to consider how they can work to include the local people in their development activities to ensure community buy-in for sustainability of INGO efforts and of peace and development in the communities, and the local people may need to consider how they can accommodate the mandates of INGOs. This is a topic I review in more depth in Chapter Five.

Cultural Influences on Postconflict Community Development

In order to understand the ways in which western influences might work better with the local people, it is important to understand the cultural influences on postconflict development in the communities. These cultural influences were those that were either in place within the communities prior to the war or formed after the war, but kept within the cultural traditions and norms of the communities. There were three major cultural influences that assisted postconflict community development in Sierra Leone; these were traditional leadership, community-based initiatives, and traditional societies and ceremonies. Each of these influences were given credit by the local people for benefiting community development, although there were also some clear limitations to these influences; they had limited resources, some influences were limited to only certain

groups of people, and there was concern that issues such as corruption might still be a problem within these cultural practices. I will discuss the role of each cultural influence on postconflict community development in the sections below.

Traditional leadership. The first cultural influence that affected postconflict community development was traditional leadership. Formalized by the British colonizers, but in existence prior to their arrival, the traditional leadership structure was headed by a locally-elected Paramount Chief who led a geographic area called a chiefdom, and also served in the Parliament. Under the Paramount Chief were Section Chiefs, who led sections of the chiefdom, and under those Section Chiefs were village headmen and elders, who led the individual villages, which comprised sections of the chiefdom. This leadership arrangement comprised the traditional leadership that will be referred to collectively throughout this section as chiefs (see Appendix B for a diagram of chieftaincy leadership hierarchy). According to community members, traditional community leaders positively influenced, and also limited, development through their efforts to create community cohesion, and by attempting to connect with western and national influences to acquire resources for development. The chief's role in these processes will be discussed in the sections below.

Creating community cohesion. Traditional leaders were able to assist in postconflict community development by working to create community cohesion. These traditional leaders were able to help build community cohesion in three ways; by encouraging community members to return after the war, holding community meetings, and settling community disputes.

The first way traditional leaders were able to establish community cohesion was by encouraging community members to return to their villages after the war. The return of the local people facilitated the growth of an active community. When community members were able to come together and rely on one another and their leaders, they began to feel more comfortable working together to develop a sustainable peace. According to Rosaline (personal communication, June 2, 2009), a Lungi community leader, “If the chief ran away from their community, the rest of the people also ran away. If [the chiefs] came back, that gave confidence to the people to come back and return to their homes.” With the traditional leadership back in place, the local people stated that they had a sense that the community had begun its process of coming together and moving forward.

The return of the traditional leader was not always possible, however, as in some instances those traditional leaders had been killed or decided not to return, and new leaders needed to be elected by the community. According to Malikie (personal communication, May 26, 2009), one of the traditional leaders, a chief “is voted on by chiefdom electors [which] are chosen by special criteria of one elector per every 20 taxpayers.” Communities that had to elect chiefs could experience a limitation in community cohesion compared to those communities whose chiefs returned.

Meetings. Another way that the chiefs were credited with working to create community cohesion was by holding community meetings to encourage discussions about creating peace, developing community, and healing from trauma. By bringing the local people into the same space and allowing them to connect with one another, the chiefs began the work of building the foundation for people to work together toward

postconflict community development in the future. Meetings were held at the large community level, or within sections or villages. With the system of leadership hierarchy in place, happenings in meetings at any level could be easily communicated from one level to the next. This allowed for community cohesion to form at the village, section, and chiefdom level.

The local people saw these meetings as successful, and were largely disappointed that the number of meetings called by chiefs had declined over time after the war. One community member stated that this was because meetings were too expensive to be held regularly. She stated that, “the native people ... expect[ed] the chief [would] cook for them and he⁶ cannot afford it, so he doesn’t call meetings anymore” (Jemi, personal communication, May 26, 2009). Therefore, the expense of the meetings and the expectation of the local people to have food prepared at these meetings were hindering the possibilities for future development. The chieftaincy system may have created over time a sense that the chiefs must take care of their subjects, and preparing food at a meeting might fit into these sets of expectations. If the local people truly felt that these meetings were beneficial to development, the expectations of these meetings would have to change in order for the meetings to continue. This would also allow people to feel more connected to the chiefs and to their role in development, as several community members felt unsure of the role the chiefs played in development, as further discussed below.

⁶ As both of the chiefs in Lungi and Makeni were male, and the majority of chiefs in the country are still male, the male pronoun is used when discussing the community chiefs.

Community disputes. Community members felt that the chiefs also created community cohesion by helping to settle community disputes after they had escalated to the point where the individuals or groups involved believed they could not resolve those disputes themselves. The local people considered “petty quarrels [to be] like ripples in a pond when you throw a stone in” (Florence, personal communication, June 9, 2009). The smallest of stones could send waves through the whole community shaking it to its core. While the chiefs may not be able to address the underlying issues or root causes of the disputes, they assisted in settling those disputes by engaging in what several community members termed mediation. According to Ishmael (personal communication, May 29, 2009), an elder familiar with the process, “when domestic clashes occur [community members] can take the report to the chief and he amends it.” Rosaline (personal communication, June 2, 2009), a Lungi community leader, added that the chiefs “intervene ... and make compromises ... and get people together.” The majority of community members felt that the chiefs settled these disputes with fairness and thoughtfulness, which enabled healing to occur between the disputants. One community member stated that “the chief [was] very truthful” (Miatta, personal communication, June 5, 2009), and another stated that “[the chief] tries hard to settle [disputes] well” (Arif, personal communication, June 7, 2009).

Community members tended to ask the chiefs for help settling disputes that were related to land use issues or centered on social conflicts. Land cases were those most often discussed by community members, and were particularly important for the chiefs to help settle fairly because these cases involved the land on which the community lived and shared space. It was difficult for cohesion to come to fruition in a community whose

members were fighting over their right to land, and worried about the possibility of their land being taken away. The chiefs, since before colonization, were known for granting rights to land, so their role in these disputes was essential.

Land disputes centered either on conflict between families about rights to land, or on issues of land use for INGO operations. Often families would get into disputes over land in their efforts to gain resources. Land could be some of the only property that individuals or families owned, so having the opportunity to sell that land could be profitable. The disputes tended to arise when not all family members agreed to the selling of the land. Some family members tried to sell the land without the others' knowing, and to share the profits with only those involved in the sale. With many members of the same family living on the land, some suffered the loss of their homes. Other conflicts arose, according to Florence (personal communication, June 9, 2009), a Makeni community leader, because when

... someone dies there can be a distribution problem. Women are not allowed to own land so this can cause a problem too. If a man dies his brother can try to take the land from the widow and the children. Now there are rules for them to share, but people get in disputes over houses, property, and land.

These disputes divided Sierra Leonean families, and they also divided the community, as community members took sides in the disputes or found they had to offer assistance to those who no longer had a place to live. According to Alie (personal communication, June 6, 2009), a Makeni mechanic, these land disputes "within and between families ... [could] sometimes result in killing." The chiefs mediated these disputes by making compromises between the two disputants, as stated by Rosaline

(personal communication, June 2, 2009), a community leader, thus helping to minimize the conflict, and its affect on the community.

Land disputes also arose over the selling of land to INGOs so that they could carry out their development projects within the community. Sometimes INGOs did not understand that the process of procurement of community land by outside groups traditionally occurred through the chief. According to Zaria (personal communication, June 5, 2009), a Makeni community leader, “When development [was] coming, the Paramount Chief [gave] land for [the INGOs] to improve the town.” INGOs unfamiliar with these cultural norms sometimes purchased land from a community member who did not have the right to sell the land. The community members involved in the sale might not have the permission from the family to sell the land, or might convince the INGOs to buy land that was not in the community member’s possession. This could result in INGOs buying land that was not actually for sale, and people getting money for land that was not theirs to sell. This, of course, could cause great upheaval in the community, and could further the lack of connection between the local people and the INGOS. The chiefs were then called in to settle the dispute so that both the land owners and the INGOs could find satisfaction with the settlement, and could begin again to work cohesively together. This was especially important given the issues previously discussed about connecting INGOs to the community.

The chiefs were also often asked to assist in settling disputes around social issues, which ranged from issues of stealing, promiscuity and polygamy, and general discontent, because according to the mechanic Alie (personal communication, June 6, 2009), these “[disputes were] tear[ing] the community apart.” Each of these issues, if the disputes

around them were not settled, would create the ripple in the pond of the community, so therefore, the local people wanted the chiefs' help in settling them, so that the community could be in harmony with each other. It is important to again note that these social issues were deeply embedded in the culture of the communities, and therefore, the chiefs could not solve the root causes of these issues alone, but were seen as being able to, according to Zaria (personal communication, June 5, 2009), a community activist, "build peace between [those involved in a dispute because] the chief is concerned with the welfare of the people...."

The local people felt that it was particularly important for chiefs, when called upon, to help settle disputes around stealing in a fair manner, as these disputes were visual. For example, people were able to see their property in another's possession. These grievances had the potential to divide the community. During the war, rebels stole the local people's goods, so after the war ended, it was the chiefs' responsibility to sort out to whom the goods belonged. Since the end of the war, stealing was often of personal items, chickens, and goats. Community members believed that stealing was often done by people without work, who in many instances were youth. In Lungi, the tailor who had made one of my traditional dresses had his entire tailoring shop broken into and all of his machines stolen; he lost his ability to conduct business. Without the ability to conduct business, and keep goods safe, many community members became distrustful, making community cohesion difficult. The chiefs' assistance in generating a compromise about stolen items attempted to create a balance again to help build a cohesive community environment.

The chiefs were also often asked to help settle disputes caused by promiscuous and polygamous behavior. Cases of promiscuity arose after the war, as a culture of lax sexual behavior had formed because this behavior had become the norm during the war period. Community members would violate marriage contracts and familial bonds and had sex out of wedlock, often causing disputes within and among families. Disputes also arose as a result of polygamy, even though this practice was a tradition in Sierra Leone. According to Mark (personal communication, June 8, 2009), a local tailor, “Polygamy tears people apart. [The husband] likes the last wife better than the first wife and this causes problems. The husband treats the three wives and children different than the last wife and children.” Disputes of a sexual nature, therefore, like other social and land disputes, divided both families and the community, so their fair settlement was imperative. Asking the chiefs to help settle these types of disputes, while once again not addressing the underlying societal and cultural issues that raised these disputes, did allow both families and the community to come to a compromise, and create equilibrium after their dispute.

A third type of dispute the chiefs were often asked to assist in settling was related to issues of dishonesty. Community members felt that it was very difficult for a community to build cohesion among its members when members were dishonest and misrepresented themselves or their situations. These types of disputes tended to arise from false gossip and issues of jealousy over jobs, access to jobs, and other successes. False stories and rumors about community members drew people apart, rather than influencing them to come together. The local people wanted these types of disputes settled by the chiefs when they got out of hand because, according to Karamoh (personal

communication, May 30, 2009), a petty trader, “people [should not] judge.... It is good when someone is doing a good job because he is working hard and is doing well, which in turn helps the community, so people should not have hatred towards him.”

Finally, the local people felt that it was important for the chiefs to help settle disputes around issues of corruption. People accepting or giving bribes to get ahead created a deceitful culture in the community, one that was reminiscent of before the war, when corruption in the communities and in the country was rampant. According to Suzan (personal communication, June 4, 2009), a woman involved with the community in Makeni, “Corruption [was] bad because if people [knew] you [were] grabbing for yourself, then the community [would] fall apart. This [was] making people unstable. Everyone [was] corrupt. Greed [was] a problem; people [were] trying to take everything for themselves.” Therefore, it was important for chiefs to assist in settling these disputes fairly so that a culture of honesty and transparency could flourish in the communities, and people could believe that everyone had the community’s best interest in mind, not just their own.

Despite the local people’s relative satisfaction with the chiefs’ ability to assist in settling community disputes, it is important to acknowledge that some community members believed that the chiefs were not always able to settle disputes in a fair manner. Some believed that the chiefs played favorites in their settlements, which disintegrated the relationship between the chiefs and the community members, and limited community development. Sahr (personal communication, May 28, 2009), a community member who had been unhappy with settlements, further explained that they “rip[ped] the community apart.” In order to try for a fair settlement, disputants unhappy with the chief’s ruling

could take their cases to the court, but taking cases to court was expensive, and as only some community members could afford the expense, it furthered a divide among community members. Taking cases to court, therefore, was often not feasible for the local people, which further enhanced their reliance on the chiefs to be fair. Several community members believed that those who took cases to court made the chiefs look as though they were not honest, so it was in the chiefs' best interests, as well as the best interest of their subjects, to settle community disputes fairly. Although in everyone's best interest, fair settlement appeared to not be a guarantee.

Overall, the community members stated they were pleased with the role the chiefs played in settling community disputes. Like community members desiring the chief's presence in order feel comfortable returning after the war, the chiefs' role in helping to settle disputes provided a different sense of comfort to the communities as they moved forward in development. It is essential to acknowledge, however, that while the chiefs were often successful at settling disputes among community members, the root causes of the disputes themselves were troubling. If Sierra Leonean communities truly want to build toward sustainable peace, focus should be placed not only on settling these conflicts, but the underlying social and cultural issues that are causing these disputes to arise. This, of course, goes beyond the role of what the chiefs can accomplish by themselves. The community as a whole would need to find ways to examine the cultural norms that contribute to these disputes, and think about what kind of changes might be needed in order to prevent these disputes from occurring in the first place. This kind of cultural change is important to consider, as the majority of community members believed that these disputes were limiting their ability to develop.

Acquisition of resources. In addition to the chief's role of building community cohesion, he also influenced postconflict community development by acquiring resources for development initiatives, like agricultural ventures and microcredit projects, from external sources, such as western organizations and the national government. As the community largely did not have resources to fund their development projects, they needed to solicit funds from the government and INGOs in order to run necessary projects. The chiefs tended to be the intermediary in securing these funds, thus bringing in the necessary resources or INGOs themselves to help with development needs. The information of the types of development projects desired from the community stemmed from both community meetings, and from local people talking with their village elders and headmen, who in turn passed the information to the Section Chief, and then to the Paramount Chief. This connection with the people on their wants and needs for development ensured that the community was a part of the decision making process for development projects chosen and implemented, and that they would work together to make these projects succeed once the resources were granted. The chiefs could use their connection with the local desires and with the INGOs to better help engage the INGOs with the local people.

Some of the projects that the chiefs had garnered resources for from western organizations and the national government, according to the local people, were agricultural production, micro-credit lending for businesses, and construction of community centers and markets. Resources for people to develop agriculture projects were important because the communities were largely agrarian in nature, and relied upon agriculture to feed their families and make a living. The local people's agrarian work

included planting crops, fishing, and making palm wine. Micro-credit resources were important for community development in a similar way, as they provided the means for community members to earn a living and to stimulate the economy, thus improving the standard of living for other community members. Small businesses were often the only way to earn a living outside of agrarian practices, and local people sold various necessities in markets and small shops. Finally, resources for community centers and markets were important as these were spaces for people to gather together to work on development issues, buy and sell goods, and to establish an overall sense of community space. Markets and other community spaces were always bustling during the daylight hours, with people selling goods, trading goods, stopping to talk about their lives and the community, and discussing current events.

As with INGO development activity, the well-educated and politically-involved community members were the ones best able to articulate the chief's role in development. Those who were less educated or involved often stated that they were unaware of this work, or did not understand it. Many felt the chief's development activities did not affect them. The disconnection to the chief's role could be due to the lack of meetings being held since the end of the war, or to an overall disconnection between the chiefs and the community that could stem from a turbulent past. Samuel (personal communication, May 30, 2009), a pastor from Lungi, stated that he "[could] not tell about the chief, because most of the development [was] from NGOs and the missionaries.... [He had] never seen the chief help before." This comment further illustrated that the interrelatedness between the chiefs securing resources and assistance from INGOs and INGO involvement in the communities was not well understood by the majority of

community members. Many of the local people did not seem to make these connections, or to understand the way that their development projects were ultimately linked to the projects from INGOs and also the government.

Several community members were aware, however, of a link between the chiefs and the government that they felt hindered community development—the chief's engagement in national politics. Sierra Leone, like many democracies, has competing, fractious political parties. If the chiefs were seen as siding with one party over the other, parts of the community were alienated, thus limiting the chiefs ability to create community cohesion, as the local people lost confidence that the chiefs were impartial and had the community's best interest in mind. A community leader from Makeni stated that “being the traditional leaders, they should not be political at all. There [were] particular chiefdoms where you could not go if they [were] supporting a particular party” (Banura, personal communication, June 8, 2009). Playing a role in one political party over another, therefore, divided community members, as they felt their chiefs did not support their interests, thus limiting the ability of the chiefs to create community cohesion and therefore, limiting the potential for postconflict community development. A chief told me that he believed that chiefs should be allowed to have a preference for a political party and still support all of his constituents, but understood why many preferred for a chief to be apolitical in order to more fully support his community.

The data suggests that, overall, the chiefs were seen by the community members to be beneficial for development through their abilities to bring people back to the community, call community meetings, and assist in settling community disputes, and also by some community members to help acquire resources for development opportunities.

At the same time, they illustrated that the chiefs were limited in their ability to engage in community development primarily because they had stopped holding meetings, were not always able to settle community disputes fairly, and were unable to openly inform the entire community of their role in the development process. The fact that the chiefs could be instrumental in connecting the community together and in helping create an environment where development could occur, but struggled to move the community away from some of the root causes of disputes shows the tensions that exist in the Sierra Leone postconflict climate. With the chiefs' access to resources and their knowledge of the community's desires and interests for development, they could possibly better facilitate a link between the local people and the INGOs, and even the governmental resources discussed later, so that each are involved and knowledgeable of the others' roles.

Community-based initiatives. Community-based initiatives that joined community members in a common interest around community development were either formal and organized by existing community and/or religious groups, or informal. Whether formal or informal, community-based initiatives provided the means for the community to come together, and work toward sustainable peace. Community-based initiatives worked toward community cohesion by using inclusive leadership, engaging youth, offering support and rehabilitation projects, building community structures, providing non-formal education, and increasing economic viability. I describe each of these community-based initiatives in the sections that follow.

Inclusive leadership. The first way that community-based initiatives created community cohesion was by adopting inclusive leadership practices, which involved both women and men in the leadership of both formal and informal initiatives. According to

Banura (personal communication, June 8, 2009), a Makeni educator, “If the chairman is a male, the vice will be a female; if the chairperson is female, than the vice is male. That is why the communities can be peaceful; always men and women are side by side in organization.” Prior to the war, women in Sierra Leone were largely left out of community organizations. Banura (personal communication, June 8, 2009), stated that:

The women were subjects of backyard activities, but now they are invited out of the house to help in development. Now they are being included in their rightful places in the community and the society. They are also very involved in politics and decision making. Before this time, the wife had no say in the house; the husband is the end all and be all. Now that approach is gone. Now the women are being relied on....

Although this inclusive leadership structure was not described in depth beyond Banura’s comment about having women and men together makes the community more peaceful, and others stating women should be as involved as the men, the benefits of involving women in development has been widely discussed in the development literature. In fact, Woroniuk (1999) demonstrated the positive effects of including women in the development process by stating that “women (as well as men) have a fundamental stake in building peaceful communities” (p. 3), and that women have different experiences in conflict, giving them a different perspective to bring to the table for development. She further stated that involving women helps to enhance human security, increase the capacity of local leadership to take responsibility for peace, empower civil society, build trust and reliance on the political and legal systems, and promote economic initiatives. Chinwe Nwoye (n.d.) added an African perspective by

stating that African women were responsible for teaching children about culture and engaging in conflict resolution rituals, and can provide the connection between these important community and family norms to the peace and development process.

Although this new, more egalitarian form of leadership was said to make communities more peaceful, one Makeni community group explained that they were struggling to move forward under the new leadership structure. This was likely because this new leadership was such a shift from the traditional chieftaincy model both in its involvement of women, and in its shared leadership structure. The local people did not overtly discuss the departure from traditions in terms of the hierarchical structure of leadership, but did minimally discuss the new involvement of women in decision-making roles. In fact, several men and women were pleased that women were starting to be elected to political offices, and a few women in the South had become Paramount Chiefs.

Engagement of youth. Another shift from methods of the past was to increase the engagement of youth both in the community, and in the development process. When youth were engaged with each other and with the community, the local people felt more confident in the future of the community. According to Ishmael (personal communication, May 29, 2009), a community elder, “when the youth [are] active and engaged, [they] won’t divert from work to loot and steal.” Youth involvement projects were organized around activities and sports by the youth themselves, and other informal groups. Activities often ranged from dances, peace festivals, field trips, concerts, music shows, and business partnerships as a way for youth to earn money and have a role in the economy of the community. Not only were they kept busy, but they were provided an opportunity to form their own networks, which united them to each other and to the

community. Several of the youth spoke about groups organized around music, with dances to keep them active. Community leaders and activists were invited to talk to them about staying involved in their communities.

Community cohesion strategies focused on youth included efforts to organize sports activities. Sports offered a chance for youth to be competitive, and work out issues of anger and frustration in a nonviolent way. With tensions ameliorated, youth could contribute to community cohesion. The most popular form of sports engaged in by the youth, and oftentimes even adults, was football, or the American equivalent of soccer. Although not nearly as popular for the youth in Sierra Leone, sports like tennis, volleyball, and basketball were also competitive outlets for youth. Fraser-Thomas, Cote, and Deakin (2005) argued that involvement in sports had a positive influence on youth and development, provided that those experiences with the sports were organized in a constructive and positive way, where children learned through sport to be more connected with and give back to their community.

After the war, the rebel groups hosted football matches with the help of the UN so that the rebels, the youth, and the community could come together and engage in friendly competition. Sinead (personal communication, June 4, 2009), a young woman from Makeni, stated that these organized football matches “[brought] peace and unity so people [could] live together well.” These matches were preceded by group prayers for peace within the community, thus providing an opportunity for the community to come together, ease some of the tensions from the war, and demonstrate that the groups could be united and work together toward community development.

Football matches among friendly groups in the community continued to bring the communities together even after the rebels had been sufficiently integrated. Local schools and youth organizations hosted the matches where members of varying schools and community groups would play each other; enhance their relationship with each other, and ultimately with the community; and enjoy a day of friendly competition.

Also, communities organized intercommunity matches, which were called *Galla*. These matches brought participants from several communities together, which gave both the participants and the spectators a chance to engage in friendly competition among the neighboring communities. Like with matches directly after the war, prayers and discussions of peace were conducted before the matches to help unite the communities.

The final way youth engagement assisted in creating community cohesion was through connecting youth with the traditional culture. Banura (personal communication, June 8, 2009), a Makeni educator, discussed that it was important for the youth to spend time with the community elders so that they could learn and understand the community's traditional practices, as the elders were largely the individuals that still engaged in those practices. By connecting the youth to the elders of the community, a bridge was built between the different generations in the community, thus establishing a new and direct connection on which to build community, and to carry on the traditional culture into the next generation. Connecting youth to the traditional culture seems somewhat risky, however, as often it was some facets of the traditional culture that discouraged youth away from the communities, and encouraged them to join the rebels. For this connection of youth to culture to contribute to sustainable peace, it may be important for deliberate and purposeful discussion and thought to occur as to which areas of culture encourage

engagement and inclusion, and which areas are best to deemphasize as they may lead to alienation as they did in the past.

The majority of participants felt that engaging the youth was an important way to create community cohesion, both among the youth and among the greater community. Connecting with the youth would make them feel a part of the community, instead of the alienation they felt before the war. Community members worried that there were not enough types of programs to engage youth, or resources to keep those programs running consistently. This meant that the only opportunity for youth to connect with each other was at school, or playing together after school. Many participants feared that in these less structured environments, without connections being made between the young people and their communities, youth would revert back to the violent behavior that was seen during the war. Schneider-Munoz and Politz (2008) had a similar concern, and stressed the importance of out-of-school time to build interest among youth in community development and transformation.

Support and rehabilitation. The majority of the communities faced violence during the war, and often needed to find ways to heal and move forward from the horrors they witnessed. Community-based initiatives met these needs by forming groups around providing support and rehabilitation. If community members were able to heal collectively from the trauma of the war, they would be able to better work together toward community development; therefore, by the community creating groups for people to gather to heal, community-based initiatives were bringing people together and enhancing community cohesion.

Support. One way that community-based initiatives were enhancing community cohesion was by creating groups largely organized around healing from the war's trauma. When the local people were able to gain support around the issues of war that traumatized them most, they were better able to cope with these issues, feel connected to the community, and have a more vested interest in the people that were supporting them.

Religious community-based initiatives, both Christian and Muslim, also provided support for the local people by organizing prayer sessions separately, and in a more ecumenical way. Combined prayer services provided an opportunity for individuals to spend time with others in their faith group, but also across faith groups, to pray for peace and development. According to Salieu (personal communication, May 28, 2009), a young man from Lungi, "religious groups help[ed] in that they [got] people together to pray, and group prayers help[ed] create peace." In addition to the prayer groups themselves being helpful for community development, Florence (personal communication, June 9, 2009), a Makeni community leader, stated that seeing the local people pray together encouraged community members who had fled during the war to return, because they saw this group prayer as building peace in the community. Therefore, praying for peace offered ways for the community to come together.

It is interesting to note that in a country where God was frequently mentioned and called upon by the local people, as discussed in Chapter Three, there were few instances of community members crediting specifically religious-based groups with promoting community development. In fact, in addition to their role in providing support and offering prayers for people to come together as a community after the war, religious-based groups were only credited with community building efforts two other times. The

first was the aid efforts from international religious organizations discussed above, and the second was their role in promoting agricultural projects, which is mentioned below.

In addition to religious-based groups, informal community groups also engaged in supportive activities by building relationships between people that focused on nonviolence for the future. Salieu (personal communication, May 28, 2009), a young man from Lungi, explained that informal groups met to

... connect with others and agree that from now on they would share their hurt [in order] to keep peace. If I hurt you, you would say to me, you have hurt me and we can talk about it as opposed to keeping it up or letting it out in terms of war.

This form of support created groups of people who were dedicated to encouraging each other to commit to nonviolent actions, nonviolent communication, and community cohesion.

Rehabilitation. Community-based initiatives also were building community cohesion through rehabilitation. If community members could be healed from the traumas of war, they were more likely to be engaged in community life. The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) was given credit in Lungi for their ability to support the healing process. Rosaline (personal communication, June 2, 2009), a Lungi community leader, explained the purpose of FAWE. She said it is to

... take care of the ex-combatant girls, the less fortunate, and mostly to help the commercial sex workers [women who became prostitutes as a means of employment during and after the war].... [FAWE created] the center also to rehabilitate their minds because they were traumatized, [and] women and girls could not be left like that.... You have to rehabilitate their minds and get them

engaged in skills training so that at least that will make them have their livelihood at the end of the day; that will sustain them....

Working to rehabilitate the women and girls of Lungi, FAWE was able to help them heal from their trauma, and connect more with the community. FAWE engaged in efforts that would help give them a livelihood, and once again feel a part of the community.

Community structures. Community-based initiatives were also creating cohesion by building community structures including infrastructure, meeting spaces, housing, and schools that provided space for community interaction. While both INGOs and the government attempted to play a role in building community structures, the local people felt that the community had to rely only on itself to build these structures. Often the INGO projects were simply insufficient in number to reach all of those in the community who needed assistance.

Infrastructure. One way the local people came together was through community-based initiatives that were designed to build the community's infrastructure. Community groups, like FAWE, worked together to dig wells to provide safe water, and install pumps, so that the local people could access the water from the wells. Often people gathered around the wells to collect the day's water and share community happenings. This not only helped address health issues like water born diseases, but also provided a space for the community to gather and connect to each other. Groups of youth and community members also worked together to build community roads, allowing them to be better connected, and have easier access to each other. Despite the efforts of these groups, there was still a lack of wells and usable roads in the communities. Community

development was limited because infrastructure that would support this development was still insufficient.

Meeting spaces. Through community-based initiatives, the local people worked to increase community development by building community meeting spaces. Lamenting the lack of these spaces, Rosaline (personal communication, June 2, 2009), a Lungi community leader, explained that often the spaces used before the war were either destroyed, or badly looted by the rebels. By providing places in the community for all of them to gather, the local people could “sit together and discuss what is happening in their environment, in the country, in their homes, and give advice to each other.”

Community meeting spaces that were built tended to be both formal and informal. More formal meeting spaces were the *cote barre*, or the chief’s compound; the town council; the town hall; councilors’ homes; pastoral centers; and colleges. More informal meeting places were transports, vehicles, ferries, the market, nightclubs, the football fields, and the palm wine tapper’s compound. The villages that had yet to have as many community spaces built, were eager to create these spaces so they too could have places where people could gather. A village elder from Lungi told me that in his village,

There is no market or community center. There is no place to gather other than the Imam’s house, but he lives in a small hut, and there is not enough room for the whole village to come together. We need a market place [and] community center. (Ishmael, personal communication, May 29, 2009)

Having a large enough space to hold the entire community was important to building community cohesion, as “larger places can hold more people, than the smaller places, and these can bring more people together.... These places ... bring unity” (Vera,

personal communication, June 5, 2009). Like infrastructure, however, there were still many parts of the communities that were either lacking these spaces completely, or could stand to have the structures in existence improved. Although the community-based initiatives, as well as INGOs and the government, were trying to assist in the development of these structures, on the whole, they were still lacking.

Housing. Another area where community members assisted with building structures was by working together to provide housing for each other. Most community members did not have outside assistance in repairing the homes that were looted and damaged during the war, as INGOs focused largely on groups like the amputees and the blind. Without outside assistance, community members had to rely on each other for the labor needed to make their homes habitable.

One of the first examples of the local people working together for building homes occurred at the end of the war. Those who had managed to stay in Lungi and those who had already returned to the community, worked together to repair the damage done to their homes, and then fortified these homes against the rebels who continued to attack as the war drew to a close. By working together to repair and then defend their homes, this group of community members served as an example for others who returned to the community to rely on each other in order to build their homes anew.

According to the majority of the community members, in the North, where Lungi and Makeni were located, houses tended to be subject to more looting and destruction during the war, rather than being completely burned or demolished as in other parts of the country. Makeni community leader Florence (personal communication, June 9, 2009) and mother Tenneh (personal communication, June 4, 2009) spoke firsthand about the

burning of houses in other parts of the country, but stated that many homes were spared from burning, and were just looted in the North. The damage to homes consisted primarily of bullet holes; damaged roofs; and broken or looted windows, doors, building materials, and furnishings. Those who returned to the communities banded together to repair their homes by “mold[ing] blocks [made largely from mud] and help[ing] to build each other’s houses” (Rosaline, personal communication, June 2, 2009). Alie (personal communication, June 6, 2009), a mechanic from Makeni, described the building of homes.

When they came back they reconstructed homes together, did it in groups and did the work for food. If you help me, I’ll help you; really it was just the family that helped. Family groupings shared the building together. If I go to his house to help, they will come to my house.

In this way, these groups of families and individuals worked together to create the homes where the community members could live and thrive. The process of building these homes developed a sense of community, and created cohesion among the local people, as there was little outside assistance, and the local people had to rely on each other.

Schools. Finally, the local people worked “together [to] contribute their meager resources to build more for the school” (personal communication, May 26, 2009), said Malikie, a community leader. Working in community-based initiatives, schools could be built and enhanced, as the majority of the local people felt strongly about the importance of education. Coming together to construct schools was a way that the community could show the value they placed on education. By working together, they were not only

building a school, they were building an institution that would help prepare students to work toward community development in the future. Despite community efforts and the efforts by the international organizations to build schools, there was still a shortage of schools in the communities. According to Malikie (personal communication, May 26, 2009), the situation was still dire: “School buildings are too small; there is not enough furniture so some children have to sit on the floor.... Sometimes they have over 100 children in just one school.” As community schools in Sierra Leone are generally small and include only one to two rooms, 100 children could be considered significantly overcrowded.

Although members of community-based initiatives were putting in a great deal of effort in building community structures, both on their own, and in some cases with the help of western organizations and the national government, these structures were still quite limited. Without the necessary infrastructure, meeting spaces, housing, and schools, the community was limited in its overall ability to come together and work to enhance postconflict community development. The individuals with whom I spoke were adamant that more needed to be done in this area for communities to be able to achieve sustainable peace.

Non-formal education. Another cultural influence on community development provided by many community-based initiatives was non-formal educational opportunities, or those that were not based on a traditional primary, secondary, or collegiate education. These non-formal educational opportunities helped to build community cohesion by bringing people together to learn, and gain new skills that would better prepare them to contribute to the community. These community-based, non-formal

education programs included awareness programs, adult literacy programs, intensive primary school programs, and skills training. Each of these programs provided a way for the community to unite together for a brighter future.

Awareness programs. One way for the community to learn together was to become aware of what was happening in their community. Awareness programs served to educate people about issues important to development. These projects varied, but some informal community groups educated their community members about women's involvement in development, and the negative impact of sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS, on development.

Other groups worked to raise awareness about the harm done by early marriages for children. Children marrying at a young age, in addition to causing possible health issues around pre-mature sexual relationships, could cause a rift in the community, as young marriage could rip families apart. This social problem caused a divide both within and among families that had the potential of carrying over into the community. When community-based initiatives made communities aware of the dangers of early marriages, arguably more families were able to stay intact.

In a more formal capacity, FAWE brought awareness programs about how to communicate in a peaceful manner to the community. Teaching a diversified group of community members how to communicate in peaceful terms, established cohesion among the group, but also among the community, as those involved shared what they had learned with others. Florence (personal communication, June 9, 2009), a community leader familiar with FAWE, told me that in order to teach these skills, they provided

... workshops on psycho-social trauma counseling for peace conciliation.... For every school the workshops trained two teachers, two pupils, one religious leader, one local authority, and one school management committee member. They remained in the schools to talk about [peace] and explain to the people [to] use what they have learned in their community. On follow-up, parents said that there was no more quarreling in the house because of what they learned, and would not allow children to quarrel. The community was also able to settle long standing quarrels with what they had learned.

Awareness programs, therefore, were able to enhance community knowledge around ways to develop toward sustainable peace, while also providing the space for the local people to come together to build community.

Adult literacy programs. Another informal community-based educational mechanism that contributed to development was adult literacy programs. Arif (personal communication, June 7, 2009), a village leader, saw enhancing adults' literacy skills as beneficial to community development. He reasoned that "if people are educated, they are developed. When educated, they get more understanding, good jobs, and can give more help to those who are not educated, and can help themselves also." By enhancing adult literacy, community-based initiatives directly affected community development by teaching people the skills they needed to be engaged in the community, and move the community forward. Hamilton (1992) confirmed this importance through his research, stating that adult education was important, as these individuals have the responsibility to transform a community.

Intensive primary schools. Another form of adult education was seen in the community-based educational initiatives providing three-year, intensive informal primary schools for those community members whose formal education ceased as a result of the war. Like adult literacy programs, when the local people were able to complete their primary school training, they were more likely to have the skills that would enable them to interact with the community. Suzan (personal communication, June, 4, 2009), an active community woman from Makeni, explained that these schools also encouraged community cohesion among their students because they taught them “to do things as a group.” Thus, intensive primary schools developed community cohesion by the educational and interaction skills taught to the students.

Skills training. A final way that students were trained non-formally using community-based initiatives was through skills training programs. While initially brought to the communities by the UN after the war, many communities embraced similar programs as their own, and trained both men and women. Skills learned in the training programs were driving and carpentry for the men, and catering and cosmetology for the women. Both men and women also tended to learn tailoring skills. These skills training programs operated both as independent centers, and those linked with schools, offering skills training after the completion of formal classes. Skills training programs gave community members the education they needed to participate in community development by directly contributing to the economy and social fabric of the community.

One specific case where skills training increased community cohesion was seen in the skills training program provided by FAWE in Lungi to the commercial sex-workers, or those women who took up the illegal profession of prostitution during and toward the

end of the war with the ECOMOG and UN soldiers. As these soldiers were willing to hire prostitutes, this became a profession in which women engaged as a way to make money for their families. While serving as prostitutes, these women were largely isolated from the community, but when taught skills like catering, cosmetology, and tailoring, they were able to take up roles that could connect them to the community in a productive manner.

One young businessman from Lungi stated that skills training “reduced the rate of sex programs and prostitution because now the girls [were] not in the street so much. It help[ed] because it offer[ed] training, and [found] jobs for them, so they [would] not be on the street again” (Karamoh, personal communication, May 30, 2009). A community elder agreed, stating these training programs made the girls “part of the community.... Girls need[ed] to be marketable so they should learn skills that they can use” (Malikie, personal communication, May 26, 2009). When these women had the needed skills to support themselves and contribute to the community, they were welcomed back in, and united with the community.

Despite the success of developing skills that fostered community cohesion, skills training programs as a means to community development were limited in two ways. First, there were insufficient funds to train those that were only temporarily in the community and not permanent residents. Skills training programs had to become more selective as there were instances in the past where people were trained within the community and instead of using their skills in the community that trained them, they would return to their pre-war communities. Therefore, the resources expended on these people would not be put back into the community that had funded their training. While

one might argue that providing skills training even to people who would not stay in the community would be beneficial to the country, with limited resources to conduct training programs, it was important for community members to ensure that those receiving skills training would stay and contribute back to the community.

Second, there was also an increased demand for skills training from individuals in the community, with often more individuals who wanted to participate in skills training than there were places available in the existing skills training programs. In addition, there were limited resources for the types of skills training programs that could be offered. For example, many local people believed that a computer skills training program would be an asset to the community, but without the funding and with limited electricity, this program was not possible.

Therefore, skills training programs could not support all those who wished to be trained, and often were limited in the programs which could be offered. While skills training, like the other non-formal, educational community-based initiatives, provided a positive space for growth both among the community and individuals, the local people were limited in their ability to offer these programs. Each effort made to provide education to the community, however, was seen as a step toward development and sustainable peace.

Increasing economic viability. Increasing economic viability was the final way that community-based initiatives worked toward development. By joining people together to work on projects that enhanced economic vitality, community-based initiatives were giving the local people the tools they needed not only to enhance their

livelihoods, but also to work toward development. Community-based initiatives encouraged economic vitality through agricultural projects and business partnerships.

Agricultural projects. Community-based agricultural initiatives were both formal and informal in nature, and in some cases, religiously-oriented. They tended to take two forms: the planting and harvesting of crops, and the raising of animals and fishing.

The first type of agricultural projects engaged in by community-based initiatives involved the planting and harvesting of crops. These projects enabled people to work together in the fields in order to provide food products to sell to the community. Working together allowed for a sense of community to form, as each farmer was relying on the others in order to have successful crops to sell. Seeds for planting were shared among the people involved in the agricultural project, which also instilled a sense of community cohesion among those involved in the project. Sahr (personal communication, May 28, 2009), a farmer from Lungi, stated that the “experience of farming together builds community.” Collaborative farming also allowed for larger crops and more money to be made, thus enhancing economic viability while creating community cohesion. These projects were challenged, however, because seeds after the war could be difficult to find, which put a strain on the relationship of the collective farmers. This, in some cases, caused people to blame each other, thus causing tension in the collectiveness of the agricultural projects.

The second type of agricultural projects focused on the raising of animals and fishing. These projects were run by groups that regulated the prices for the selling of animals and fish at the market. This price-setting enabled economic prosperity to be evenly shared among those who sold goods at the market. An example of one such group

was the women's fishing group in Lungi. Agricultural groups that set prices enhanced community cohesion because everyone knew they were together in their successes and failures, and jealousy of those making more than others was limited. Overall, community-based agricultural initiatives largely served to bring people together to enhance their productivity and economic viability, while encouraging fairness and sharing.

Business partnerships. The second way that community-based initiatives enhanced economic vitality was by creating business partnerships. These partnerships were often informal but served as a way for community members to come together and enhance their business opportunities and simultaneously meet the needs of the community. More often than not partnerships resulted in the petty trading of small products, such as phone cards.

According to the local people with whom I spoke, these economic community-based initiatives did a good job of building cohesion in the community while encouraging people to work together to enhance their own and each other's economic development. A former community leader from Lungi told me that investing in small businesses helped to "bring people together" (Jemi, personal communication, May 27, 2009). These businesses were limited in their development potential for the community, however, in that the people often lacked the necessary capital to start new businesses. With additional resources, like those that could be gathered by the chief from the INGOs, the business partnerships could arguably do even more to bring the community together to work toward economic gain, which would build community cohesion. Dhesi (2000) confirmed this relationship, stating that economic advancement improves social capital.

Community members agreed that community-based initiatives, although often influenced by outside forces, tended to be “locally built and their approach [was] traditional and from a Sierra Leonean point of view” (Banura, personal communication, June 8, 2009), which meant they often took into account cultural norms and interactions among community members. These initiatives influenced postconflict community development by bringing the local people together through using inclusive leadership, engaging the youth, offering support and rehabilitation, building community spaces, providing non-formal education, and increasing economic viability. Being rooted in cultural norms, community-based initiatives enabled people to feel comfortable working together to enhance their own lives and the lives of the community, and provided “opportunities for people to live in peace” (Salieu, personal communication, May 30, 2009).

Although the community-based initiatives were often considered to be effective in bringing people together for development, it is important to note that these initiatives were also limited in their development potential because they lacked resources to enable them to fully address many of the community issues. The local people did not have sufficient infrastructure and community buildings. They were worried about youth disengagement, could not provide the necessary education and skills training to all of those who desired it, and were often short on means to begin projects to increase community economic viability. Therefore, despite the positive influence these community-based initiatives had on community development, there were many areas where enhanced resources might have further promoted development in the communities.

The desire of local Sierra Leoneans to enhance each of these areas of community-based initiatives offers directions for possible connections with INGOs.

Traditional societies and ceremonies. Like community-based initiatives, traditional societies and ceremonies also influenced postconflict community development. The continuance of traditional societies and ceremonies brought smaller factions of the community together in a way that resonated with the cultural norms of the participants, and encouraged them to work together toward development. These societies and traditions connected with only parts of the community and faced criticism, and therefore, may not enable community development on a broader scale. These issues will be addressed in the sections below.

Traditional societies and culturally-based groups. Traditional societies and culturally-based groups tended to be members-only groups that engaged in the majority of their activities outside the public sphere. By bringing the local people together through traditional and culturally relevant means, these societies and groups were ensuring that those involved felt connected to one another, and worked to build hope in a shared future. Those who were not involved, however, often did not feel the same fondness for the groups, and tended to argue they did not work toward overall community cohesion and development. In fact, due to the secretive nature of these societies and groups, only a limited number of community members spoke about the nature of their activities. Those that chose to share descriptions of them, tended to either speak in favor of the groups without exception, or acknowledge that the groups provided some benefits, while also having drawbacks.

Traditional societies. The traditional societies were “old traditions [that] started all over again after the war [when] people started coming [back] together ...” stated Florence (personal communication, June 9, 2009), a community leader in Makeni. Traditional societies were said to bring members of the societies together for rites and rituals that have been part of the culture of Sierra Leone for generations. Members of these societies were separated by sex, with the men belonging to societies such as the *Hunting Society*, *Poro Society*, or the *Gban Gbani Society*, and women belonging largely to the *Bondu Society* in the North. Each society served to bring their members together to heal from the war, celebrate life, and teach future generations “to maintain their traditional beliefs” (Banura, personal communication, June 8, 2009), and prepare them for their future. This was done in both male and female societies, according to those community members who spoke about the societies, by initiating members, dancing, cooking, and ceremonies.

Community members who spoke about the traditional societies, both women and men, talked mostly about the roles of the *Bondu Society*, or the women’s society. Their comfort in speaking only about the women’s society could have been because my hosts and I were women. The *Bondu Society* was said to increase cohesion among its members through initiations, dances, meetings, sharing stories and information, and teaching the cultural norms to the next generation. They were known to bring women together to “sing, eat, dance, and participate” (Vera, personal communication, June 5, 2009). Rosaline (personal communication, June 2, 2009), a community leader from Lungi, explained that the societies taught the young women and girls how to

... care for themselves, their bodies, and their husbands, and then they [tell the girls that] it is dangerous for them to go back to the bush [the countryside where the rebels hid and the girls were often used for sex and domestic chores], and why it is dangerous and tell them [instead] to go to school and learn more. They talk to them about the way forward as women in this country.

In other words, the societies instructed the women on how to be contributing members to the community through education, and by taking care of themselves and their families so that they could be a part of the future for the community and country, as opposed to the lives many girls led in the bush during the war. Through their initiation, the girls were considered to become women, and their involvement in the society taught them how to be women in the Sierra Leonean culture, and gave them an opportunity to learn from other women about their role and place in the community.

Although the local people largely credited the traditional societies for creating cohesion between their members, these societies did not necessarily create community cohesion for the community as a whole. Traditional societies were limited in their potential for full community development because of the controversy they created in the community over their initiation practices, as some members of the community felt they initiated people at too young an age, forced them into initiations against their will, and used practices during initiations of which they did not approve. Some even argued that participation in the societies went against both Muslim and Christian doctrines, including Selina (personal communication, May 30, 2009), a young woman from Makeni, who stated that “it is bad because it is not in the Bible.” Due to the secretive nature of the

societies, these practices were not made explicit to me, even by the limited number of community members who were willing to discuss this issue with me.

Society initiations limited community development in many ways. The first way was by selecting initiates that some community members felt were too young. Some society members argued that initiating girls at such a young age, sometimes as young as three or four years old, made sense because the clothes purchased to signify that a girl had become a woman were much more inexpensive for young girls than for older teenagers. Other community members, however, felt that when society members were initiated at a young age, they missed out on opportunities for schooling and other education and in community participation because often after initiation, girls chose to become wives and mothers as opposed to staying in school. According to Rosaline (personal communication, June 2, 2009), a community leader, the initiations

... clash[ed] with the school curriculum and education for the girl child, because when they [were] being initiated when they [came] out they [didn't] want to go to school again they just want[ed] to go straight to men to get married, and be at home.

Therefore, initiating girls at a young age, and thus encouraging them to get married and become mothers, directly went against the traditional societies' stated public opinion that coached girls to stay in school. It also went against more progressive understandings of women's roles in a new society, including women as community and political leaders, and the new trend of inclusive leadership in organizations.

Many community members who appeared to be unaffiliated with the societies believed that children should not be initiated until after eighteen, so that these children

would be given the opportunity to finish their secondary schooling prior to the society initiations. This way the girls would have passed their school exams, learned new skills, and would be able to participate fully in the larger community, as well as in the societal community. Initiating girls at an older age, some women told me, would also prevent early marriages and pregnancies, which would give women more opportunities to succeed among the community at large. One community member believed that the societies were not necessarily “a bad thing, [they] just needed a better time table” (Rosaline, personal communication, June 2, 2009) for initiation.

The second way that society initiations caused controversy, which inhibited cohesion, was by forcibly initiating people against their will into the societies, both male and female. When people were initiated against their will, a divide was created between those who supported the initiate’s decision to remain outside of the society, and those who forced him to join, causing a rift among the various facets of the community, and often within families.

Forced initiations tended to occur for two reasons. The first was for speaking badly about the societies. Selina (personal communication, May 30, 2009), a skills training student from Lungu, gave an example, “If a boy insults the society they hurt him and make him join. They will flog and beat him and make him join.” While no community members were explicit about the purpose of forced initiations, it was clear that these societies had power within the communities by the way people spoke about them, or in more cases than not, chose not to speak about them. This power was also illustrated by the traditional society’s decisions to use violence in their initiations. In a culture emerging from a violent conflict, the use of violence in any way does not

demonstrate a move toward peace but rather maintains a culture of fear. When community members are afraid of forced initiations and/or voicing their opinions about the societies to each other or to outsiders, then cohesion was placed at risk in the community.

The second reason people were initiated against their will was when one parent forced the child to join against the child and the other parent's will. This situation caused rifts in the family, and in the community. In some instances the community was split, as individuals would flee the community in order to not face forced initiations. Losing community members because of forced initiations, therefore, divided the community as opposed to building community for development and sustainable peace.

The final way that initiations practices caused controversy in the community was through the practices that occurred during a society's initiation. The most controversial of the practices within the *Bondu Society* was female genital mutilation. The women with whom I spoke only briefly mentioned the controversial topic of female genital mutilation to me. As a westerner, I was advised by my hosts not to push women on this issue, as they were often afraid that speaking too candidly with me on the topic might get them in trouble with the societies. I was fortunate that I was able to attend a community meeting addressing the issue of female genital mutilation, but as it was conducted largely in Krio, one of the native languages with some similarity with English, my understanding was limited. It was clear, however, that female genital mutilation was a topic that raised much controversy in the community, with heated discussions of the issue emerging around cultural traditions, health and cleanliness of the process, and sexual pleasure for

women. Since the practice was obviously controversial among the community, it limited the potential for community cohesion.

Traditional societies' influence on community development, therefore, is mixed. While it was clear that there were very concerning issues regarding the initiation practices of these societies, especially in a postconflict context, many participants still felt that the societies benefited development by bringing the people who were members together in culturally responsive ways. It appeared that the sustaining of cultural norms was important to the participants, even though there was disagreement in the ways in which those norms were implemented, especially in terms of initiations. In order for traditional societies to move into a position of being beneficial for community development, the serious concerns around initiation processes must be addressed, including the use violence, the disempowerment of women, and issues of free speech. Also, traditional societies need to find ways to include those community members who were not a part of the societies. One of the few instances where these traditional societies were given credit by the local people for connecting with the entire community was when the chiefs asked for the societies to perform their dances for the whole community. This typically brought everyone together to celebrate life and community. Perhaps a focus on these rituals would do more to support postconflict development than emphasizing polarizing initiation ceremonies.

Culturally-based groups. In addition to the traditional societies, three community members briefly mentioned that there were also some culturally-based groups that were less secretive and tended to include both sexes. These groups, such as *Ateh A Yeshsu*, which literally translated to “what the war did to us” and the *Orjeh Society*, built cohesion

amongst their members and the community at large by performing traditions together, bringing children into the ceremonies, discussing the importance of maintaining peace, and uniting people together by “dancing, cooking, and forget[ting] about the past” (Alie, personal communication, June 6, 2009). As these groups involved both men and women, and the community as a whole, there was less controversy seen with these culturally-based groups, and more community members agreed that these groups enhanced community cohesion.

It is clear that controversy surrounding these traditional societies was one of the main cultural issues hindering development. I found, therefore, that due to the controversy, these traditional societies and culturally-based groups were not, as they are currently structured, beneficial for postconflict community development in Sierra Leone. Other less secretive and arguably less radical culturally-based groups definitely were of less concern among community members, and may be more helpful in building community cohesion.

Ceremonies. Traditional ceremonies served as another cultural influence on postconflict community development. Like the other cultural influences, traditional ceremonies brought the community together in two ways: by connecting them with the earth, and by helping them to celebrate life’s transitions. While some community members did not see traditional ceremonies as contributing to community development, others believed that these ceremonies went beyond being local cultural traditions to serve as means to bring community members together both physically and to build relationships and enable conversations to occur about moving the community forward.

Ceremonies that connected people to the earth took two forms: cleansing ceremonies and harvesting ceremonies. Both of these ceremonies celebrated the land and its connection to the community. The first type of earth-connecting ceremonies, or cleansing ceremonies, were traditional in nature, but occurred for postconflict community development primarily immediately after the war ended. Cleansing ceremonies brought people together to ceremonially cleanse the land from the blood spilled and atrocities committed during the war. Several community members in Makeni discussed how both the mountains that surround the town, Mena and Wusum, and a devil oversee the community. The cleansing ceremonies, which could include the sacrificing of animals and cleansing of rebel burial sites, served to appease the community's overseers, and wash the land of previous wrongdoings. When these ceremonies were completed, community members felt that the land was safe, and that the devil overseers were appeased, thus making the communities livable areas again. According to Florence (personal communication, June 9, 2009), a community leader from Makeni, "People [felt] happy when [the cleansing ceremonies] happen[ed], and forg[ot] about [their] problems, they [felt] peace and unity." Arif (personal communication, June 7, 2009) discussed that once the local people felt that the communities were safe, more people returned to their homes, and the community felt a sense of togetherness, or cohesion.

The second type of earth-connecting ceremonies was harvesting ceremonies. The local people felt strongly that since a successful harvest was connected to the land, people must come together to cleanse the land, and to celebrate the land so that crops could grow and be bountiful. The people were not only ensuring a positive crop, but were also creating community cohesion. Harvesting was also a chance for people to celebrate the

earth. Ishmael (personal communication, May 29, 2009), an elder from Lungi, explained the celebration: “When they come from farming ... they invite[d] people all over to play music, *belagy*, drums, pipes, *booboo*, to entertain people and to change life.” Ishmael stated that these celebrations were important because they brought people together within their cultural traditions, and enabled them to talk and get rid of any grievances.

Therefore, earth-focused ceremonies were those that provided a connection between the community and the land, allowed people to feel safe, and to build connections for the future. In addition to earth-connecting ceremonies, Sierra Leone communities also engaged in ceremonies that celebrated life transitions. As all local people go through life transitions, celebrating such events, such as naming a new born child, marriage, and funerals, helped to establish community bonds. These ceremonies were rooted in the cultural norms of the society, and although not a new phenomenon since the end of the conflict, they did allow for local people to come together, and as several community members argued, to build community for postconflict development.

Naming ceremonies. The first of these community building ceremonies were naming ceremonies. These were important to community cohesion as they brought people together to celebrate a new life, and a new member of the community. In revealing a baby’s name, and welcoming a new member to the community, community members felt a reason to celebrate, and to congratulate the parents through gifts and togetherness.

According to tradition, a baby in Sierra Leone was not named until eight days after birth for a girl, and nine days for a boy. Babies were not named until then because the people were superstitious about miscarriages and stillbirths. According to Sierra

Leonean tradition, it was even bad luck to touch a pregnant woman's stomach for fear of harming the pregnancy. Giving the child a name represented that child's ability to survive and thrive in the community.

The majority of families in the communities followed the naming ritual that the first born son was named after the father's father, and the first born daughter was named after the mother's mother. In some tribes, all first born children had the same names, all second born children had the same name, and so forth; so upon meeting someone you would know in what order he was born based on his name. In another tradition of names, people often called those named the same name as one of their family members by the role that family member had in their family. For example, my host introduced me to a man she called her son. This man was much too old to be her son, but because he had the same name as her son, she referred to him as her son, and not by his given name.

Naming ceremonies were held in a church if the family was Christian, or in the family's home, if Muslim. The Muslim naming ceremony I attended while in Lungi occurred in the front yard of the family's home, and had over one hundred community members present; the family shared in the birth and the naming of their child by engaging in a ceremony to announce the child's name, and then inviting guests to eat, dance, and share time together as a community. Like many things in Sierra Leone, the ceremony began forty-five minutes late.

Community members sat in plastic lawn chairs in their brightly colored traditional dress under tarps to block the heat from the piercing sun. At the beginning of the ceremony the mother came out wearing all white with a white head covering and sat in the open space in the middle of two sections of lawn chairs with her new baby. The

ceremony began with an Imam, a Muslim religious leader, calling the group to prayer and continued with a series of Imams speaking and praying in Arabic, Krio, Temne, and English. One Imam held the baby up to the crowd and whispered in her ear, a tradition of praying for the child and the family. At the feet of the mother sat a bowl with rice paste and kola nuts. The kola nut was an important piece of symbolism for any traditional ceremony, and after the ceremony, first the older and then younger men ate the paste and chewed the nuts, a sign of respect for the elders. Before the new baby's name was revealed, the ceremony allowed for friends and family of both the mother and father to give money for the girl's education in a collection plate, and to shower the new mother with baby gifts. Finally, once the crowd was rightfully roused and gleefully demanding the name of the baby, the head Imam read the name: Zienab, a traditional Muslim woman's name. The crowd cheered enthusiastically, and the goat that had been tied up outside the tarp was slaughtered in celebration. The goat meat would later be passed out to the attendees, as per Muslim tradition.

The end of the ceremony provided the time for the attendees to come together to celebrate in both the birth of a new generation, but also in the unity of the community and the possibilities of the future. Large plates of food and soft drinks, as Muslims generally do not drink alcohol, were passed around to all the guests, and everyone ate together and enjoyed music, which was often played at extremely loud decibels. The celebratory eating, drinking, and dancing could go on for many hours after the ceremony finished. Although I left quickly after the food was served, it was quite clear that this ceremony had provided a chance to for the people to come together and celebrate the birth of a new community member and to bond together.

Marriage ceremonies. During my time in Sierra Leone, I observed the way families in both Lungi and Makeni came together for marriage ceremonies. I was able to attend a marriage ceremony in each community, and observed the way these ceremonies utilized both Christian and Muslim traditions, thus encouraging all to share together in the momentous occasions.

Traditional marriage ceremonies were paid for by the groom, but tended to occur in the home of the bride or one of her family members. In the Lungi ceremony I observed on May 28, 2009, the marriage occurred at the bride's sister's home. In Makeni, the traditional marriage ceremony occurred on June 6, 2009 at the parent's of the bride's home. As many guests as possible crowded into the parlor or living room of the house, with many guests often peering through windows outside, as the homes often were not big enough to house all of those invited. On the ground in the middle of the room, in a space that was left clear of guests, laid a straw mat on which was placed a *kalabash*, or a gourd full of items that represented marriage. These items included tobacco, showing the marriage was not always sweet; rice, to indicate cooking; a fan used to sort out the rocks from the rice; and a needle and thread to represent the wife sewing and caring for her husband, all wrapped in a white cloth. The mat and gourd were traditional symbols, and were important later in the ceremony.

Like the naming ceremony, marriage ceremonies, which were more of a formal engagement ceremony than an actual marriage, as the official wedding took place usually a day or two later in either a mosque or a church, began with prayers; generally presided over by the court chairman, or the officer of the court who also issued the marriage license. These ceremonies demonstrated the uniting of the two families. First, the

chairman gave out envelopes from the groom with a small amount of money in it for people currently in the couple's lives, and symbolically for those who may come into the couple's life. Both ceremonies had nearly twenty envelopes that were passed out. Next there was the giving of the dowry to the bride's father by the court chairman, as the groom was not present during the ceremony and the court chairman acted on his behalf. It consisted of a brown sack full of kola nuts with money wrapped inside of it. This sack was offered on behalf of the groom along with a Koran or Bible, depending on the faith, and a ring box, which contained a western-style engagement ring. These offerings represented the religious, traditional, and modern coming together.

After receiving these offerings, the bride's family presented them to the bride, to this point waiting in a side room, for her acceptance. In both instances, and often as marriages were generally entered into by free will; she did. After the bride was said to accept the offerings, the crowd beckoned her to come out from hiding, and formally accept the groom's offer of marriage. Often as a way to tease the crowd, the bride's assistants sent out false brides covered in veils to get the crowd riled up. Eventually, the real bride would come out into the crowd to much cheering and jubilation. The bride knelt on the straw mat and picked up the *kalabash* as a symbol that she had accepted the marriage, and the duties and responsibilities that go along with the marriage. It was only after the bride's acceptance that the groom entered the room, which led to increased cheering and photos taken; the bride and groom wore traditional clothes made from the same cloth.

As with the naming ceremony, there was no lack of food, and everyone ate, drank, and danced long into the night celebrating the uniting of this couple. In Lungi, the family

had hired a drummer for the dancing after the ceremony was over; in Makeni, a singer was hired. Interestingly, both arrived early and interrupted the ceremonies frequently with their drumming or singing, as a way to earn money. People at the ceremony would pay them to stop interrupting the festivities, although the payments just encouraged them to come back and further disrupt the ceremony. It was a vicious cycle of interruption, but people did not seem to mind, it was part of the tradition. In fact, interruptions seemed acceptable, as people would often answer their mobile phones in the middle of the ceremony, including the court chairman. Although in both instances, I did not stay after food was served because my hosts thought it appropriate to leave the celebrations to family and friends, it was clear that the celebrations would continue for many hours, with the local people talking, dancing, sharing, and enjoying life together.

In providing opportunities for people to share in life events as a community, marriages encouraged community cohesion. These marriage ceremonies also represented a sense of a combined future for many people. Although Rosaline (personal communication, June 2, 2009), a community leader, felt that these ceremonies were anti-feminist, she and others pointed out that these ceremonies were still especially important for marginalized populations, like amputees and younger girls, because they “teach them that all is not lost. Even after the war they can still get men to marry them.” These ceremonies brought hope to the community that life could bring happiness and that the people could live in harmony and unity together.

Funeral ceremonies. The final type of life transition ceremony that brought people together was funeral ceremonies. These ceremonies served as a time for the community to gather to remember the life of the deceased, and share in the pain and

sorrow of that loss. Funerals generally occurred first in a mosque or a church for the formal proceedings, and then continued in the home of a relative, much like a western-style wake. The gathering after the formal services was a chance for the community to gather and share food and stories. I was able to attend a funeral gathering in Makeni, as the brother of a public official had died unexpectedly. In addition to the grieving, the locals who attended used this sad time as a chance to have conversations about community development and advancement, and to speak about figuring out a way forward. They joined together to create a vision for a safe and healthy community future.

Traditional ceremonies, therefore, built community by bringing people together through cultural traditions and shared understandings about how to celebrate the earth and life. In celebrating these events, people were able to join in a common experience, and build trust and rapport among each other. These ceremonies often gave people a chance to celebrate what they had, and envision a common future. These events were seen by many community members as being positive and encouraging community events that contributed to development.

It is important to note, however, that several community members discussed two limitations in using traditional ceremonies as a way to build community development. First, ceremonies only occurred during certain seasons or life events. This meant that there were not consistent times for the local people to join together through these celebrations. Also, these ceremonies were often very expensive for families to host, especially in a society that had such limited income. This expense could limit families' abilities to host the ceremonies, or to invite large numbers of community members to participate, thus limiting the ability for the community to come together through these

events. Overall, however, hosting these ceremonies was seen as a priority for many families, despite the cost.

Largely, cultural influences on postconflict community development encouraged a philosophy of progress for the community by building community cohesion. As evidenced by the comments of the local people, these influences, however, also had their limitations. Traditional leaders, while providing a sense of security to the community, settling disputes, and acquiring resources for development, were limited in their abilities to always settle disputes fairly, and articulate their relationship in terms of development. Community-based initiatives, while viewed as providing culturally relevant means to development, often lacked resources necessary to fully assist the community toward the future. Traditional societies and culturally-based groups provided a way for their members to come together, but often alienated those in the community who were not members by their forceful and violent initiation practices.

Some of these limitations might be addressed if the importance of change in cultural traditions or norms is acknowledged, or if Sierra Leoneans focus on those culturally relevant mechanisms that contributed to development, and find a way to transform those that hinder it. Despite the limitations of the cultural influences, many local people felt that cultural influences served to unite the community with hope for the future. According to Ishmael, a Lungi elder, “where there is life; there is hope” (personal communication, May 29, 2009). There are some clear areas where INGOs could connect with this hope and the local people, and encourage people-driven development projects, but it may require help from the national government.

National Influences on Postconflict Community Development

Another way that western and cultural influences could be connected is through national influences on postconflict community development acting as an intermediary. National influences were those coming from the national government, and included the president and his administration, and the Members of Parliament and the district councils. On the surface, national influences may seem best suited for postconflict community development, as they would have both access to internal resources and arguably resources from western sources, and the ability to connect those resources with the local community. The findings from this study, however, suggest that national influences have moderately assisted in postconflict community development, as access to resources have been largely limited or used in a corrupt manner, and the connection to the local people has often been lacking. In this section, I discuss the community member's perceptions of two national influences, the president and his administration, and the Members of Parliament and their district councilors, and the role each have played, and seem to be continuing to play, in postconflict community development.

It is important to note that as with the discussion of INGOs and the chiefs' role in resource acquisition, few of the community members who participated in this study were involved in or affiliated with government efforts for postconflict community development. Therefore, it was only these community members that were best able to address the role of the government in these activities, as others commonly stated they were unaware of government involvement. It was these knowledgeable community members who recognized that the national government had limited resources to contribute to these activities. This lack of resources in many ways stemmed from the

government presiding over one of the least developed countries in the world, but the local people also noted the squandering of resources by the government in the past, and the current issues with taxation and corruption among governmental officials, both discussed below, as contributing to that resource limitation.

Another consideration in Sierra Leone's lack of resources is that it is a country rich in natural resources. There is a belief, both in the literature and amongst local Sierra Leoneans, that proper management and use of these resources could provide the country with the monetary resources necessary to contribute on a large scale to postconflict community development efforts (Hoeffler, 2009; Maconachie & Binns, 2007; United States Department of State, 2008). Therefore, while it is important to acknowledge that the government's lack of resources in many ways stem from past problems and being one of the least developed countries in the world, it is also important to acknowledge that with proper regulation and administration of the country's tax collection system and natural resources more funds could be available.

President and administration. The president, Ernest Bai Koroma, and his administration, made up of cabinet ministers similar to other western-style democracies or republics, were primarily responsible for the running of the national government. Sierra Leone has 21 ministries: Finance and Development; Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation; Presidential and Public Affairs; Justice and Attorney General; Education, Youth, and Sports; Social Welfare, Gender, and Children's Affairs; Mineral Resources; Information and Communication; Trade and Industry; Transportation and Aviation; Health and Sanitations; Agriculture and Food Safety; Marine Resources; Housing and Infrastructure Development; Energy and Power; Employment, Industrial

Relations, and Social Security; Tourism and Culture; Lands, Housing, Country Planning, Forestry, and the Environment; Defense; Internal Affairs, Local Government, and Rural Affairs; and Minister of State (Sierra Leone High Commission, United Kingdom, 2009). According to the local people, the president and his administration worked toward postconflict community development by providing some of their largely limited resources for infrastructure development, formalized education, and community safety, which in turn assisted in increasing community cohesion.

Infrastructure. The infrastructure in the country was largely destroyed during the war. The government provided some of their limited resources for construction and development in these areas, responding to cries from the majority of community members who felt that with ample resources put into infrastructure, the communities would be more connected. Infrastructure in the areas of electricity, a more adequate water supply, and a network of roads was improved with the work from the government, but with limited resources and capacities for development, infrastructure in the communities remained quite poor.

Electricity. The government worked to build up the infrastructure of electricity by providing the lines and the turbines needed for electricity in the communities. Electricity was considered important for postconflict community development, according to local community members, because houses and community spaces could be lit at night deterring thieves from stealing. In providing electricity to the communities, investment was encouraged, and people were able to work longer hours. Electricity allowed people to use fans to cool down from the brutal Sierra Leone heat; enabled people to have refrigeration to keep leftover food; gave access to technology, like televisions, which

increased people's knowledge of the news from throughout the country; and increased students' educational abilities. One Lungi community elder explained the educational consequences of electricity. He said it created "more study time for the children, [and allowed the use of] electrical things to help the children learn. There are no computer schools in Lungi because of the electricity; it is just too expensive to run" (Ishmael, personal communication, May 29, 2009). Therefore, with properly working electricity, computers could be added to the schools, and education could be enhanced. By providing electricity to the people, the government would enable communities to work more directly and collectively on development activities.

Neither Lungi nor Makeni had working electricity during my time in each community, yet the government was credited in Makeni with installing "the lines and the turbines; we are only waiting for the water to generate the electricity" (Banura, personal communication, June 8, 2009). In Lungi, a community leader stated that "the government was trying to put [electricity] here especially because of where we are; we are the gateway to the country" (Rosaline, personal communication, June 2, 2009). Therefore, despite the lack of electricity in either community, many of the local people saw that some resources were being provided by the government toward the development of the infrastructure needed to supply electricity to the communities.

Other community members offered less praise of the government's efforts to bring electricity to the communities because they were focused on the end result, and not steps in the process. Without electricity, the local people were limited in their ability to work, and had to purchase kerosene lanterns, candles, or generators in order to have light at night. Generators were expensive both to purchase and to run, so only those who had

well-paying jobs, like working at the airport in Lungi, could afford these generators. During my stay in the summer of 2009, a gallon of fuel was approximately 5 US Dollars, which ran the generator for my small guest house for about five hours. With the average Sierra Leonean living on less than a dollar a day, 5 US Dollars for a few hours of electricity was an exorbitant price. An additional consequence of limited electricity, aside from less development potential, was that the ownership and ability to use generators created a divide between the haves or have-nots; as class distinctions were made highly visible. Although not everyone recognized the government's efforts because the communities were still without electricity, some progress had been made in terms of supplying electricity to the communities since the end of the war.

Water supply. The government had also been able to provide some resources to improve the water supply. The local people considered having clean accessible water essential to community development, as it would encourage those who fled during the war to return to the communities. Also, according to Tenneh (personal communication, June 4, 2009), a young mother, "pure water helps to prevent cholera and diarrhea ..." which is important because "sometimes people get cholera, and if you can't afford medical attention then you die" (Alie, personal communication, June 6, 2009). In addition, Selina (personal communication, May 30, 2009) a young woman from Lungi, said that "people have to go a long distance to the wells for safe water; it is a huge distance to find water." Therefore, accessible wells would bring people back to the community, improve people's health, and limit the amount of time individuals would have to spend fetching water. Ishmael (personal communication, May 29, 2009), a

community elder, saw a direct link between clean water and development: “We need to improve water systems so that things can develop.”

As with electricity, the supply of clean and accessible water was fairly limited in both Lungi and Makeni because the infrastructure was destroyed during the war. The local people credited the national government, specifically the National Commission on Social Action (NaCSA), in addition to international organizations and some community-based initiatives, with providing the resources to build wells in the communities. The ground water was considered to be relatively safe in both Lungi and Makeni, so these wells enabled people to access clean water to use for cooking, washing, and other necessities. Without them, people would be forced to collect water from streams or other above ground sources, which were more likely to be contaminated, or had to wait for the rainy season to collect rain water in buckets, hoping that the water would be plentiful enough to last through the dry season.

Although the government was credited with providing resources for wells in the communities, many community members were discouraged that there were still not enough wells to support all the people. Many families did not live close enough to partake in government wells, and those that did, often had to wait in long lines to receive the water necessary for their needs. Therefore, many still gathered their water from unsafe sources, like streams, other above ground water sources, or from rain in buckets, which could lead to cholera and other water born diseases. It was clear, that the government, as well as INGOs and local groups, was providing resources for the development of infrastructure for clean and accessible water, but accessibility was still an issue in the communities.

Road network. As with electricity and water, the road network was largely destroyed during the war, and community members felt that having good roads in their communities were important for community development. They reasoned that with proper roads, they would not have to spend as much time traveling between locations to get to work, to associate with individuals in other communities, and they could be assured that they would get to their destinations safely. If people were able to more easily and safely gather, the likelihood that people would work together to help develop their communities for the future would increase.

One of the specific projects of the government for improving the roads was that, according to Tenneh (personal communication, June 4, 2009) a young mother from Makeni, “there are drainage [ditches] being made in the town done by NaCSA.” These ditches along the sides of roads diverted water from rain run-off, and kept large potholes and cracks from forming in the mainly dirt streets. It was important to have these drainage ditches because when the rainy season came, many of the roads became impassible due to holes, puddles, and crevices in the roads. The government also provided resources for the creation of paved roads between towns, so that the country could more easily come together. An educator from Makeni argued that “the road network brings communities together. If the roads are not accessible, then the people cannot come together, so that is the reason why we applaud the effort the government has done in terms of infrastructure” (Banura, personal communication, June 8, 2009).

Although the communities received resources from the government for improvement to the road network, many of the roads were still in disarray and unsafe, thus limiting travel. Hence, the road network, as with electricity and the water supply,

while receiving funding for development from the government's limited resources, as well as the efforts from western and cultural influences, still needed further and continued attention. A solid infrastructure was important, as the majority of community members believed good infrastructure directly contributed to development. As Sinead (personal communication, June 4, 2009), a young woman from Makeni put it: "If we had water, electricity, and roads were available, then there could be more peace, the people [would] be more comfortable and peaceful."

Formal education. Another way that the national government worked to bring peace and development to the communities was by providing formalized education, according to community members. A government report (2006) on the action taken for least developed countries indicated that enrollment in primary school had doubled since the end of the war, and the government had worked to establish more vocational or skills training programs, especially for the youth. A preliminary UN report (Bennell, 2004) discussed one difficulty the government had in educational endeavors was that there was an insufficient amount of trained teachers, and little money to pay or train new teachers. The same report also discussed the lack of schools; 80% of primary schools were destroyed during the war, and although the government was working to construct new schools, it was a huge task to build so many (Bennell, 2004). Despite these setbacks, government efforts to provide formalized education enhanced community cohesion in two ways. The first was that formalized education promoted peace and togetherness for the community. The second was that formalized education gave students some of the skills necessary to contribute to the workforce, and to community development in the future.

Peace promotion and togetherness through education. The first way that the government's formalized education program contributed to community development was by promoting peace and togetherness by enabling students to learn to live and work well with their peers and community members. Karamoh (personal communication, May 30, 2009), a young male from Lungi, explained that the schools "help[ed] to build peace because they talk[ed] about [peace] with the students. They [taught them] to love one another, to be honest, and not to be involved in corrupt practices." Teachers and advisors, therefore, encouraged peaceful behavior by talking to students about avoiding bad behaviors, and staying in school.

The schools also promoted peace and togetherness by enabling the students from various backgrounds to work together. Banura (personal communication, June 8, 2009), a Makeni educator told me, "Education is a melting pot. Schools, institutions of learning, bring students from all walks of life [to] come to meet and interact.... The fact that these students are here, that helps to bring them together, to unite them." If students could learn to work together and build lasting relationships within the formal school system, these relationships should translate into the community, and help foster development after the students graduate from school.

Finally, by engaging parents and families in education processes, schools promoted togetherness. Selina (personal communication, May 30, 2009), a skills training student from Lungi, said that "When you go to school you have friends in school and you meet their families and your family grows, their mother is your mother, and you make a lot of family." Families, interested in their children's education, also met together through organizations that were similar to the American PTA (Parent Teacher

Association). Sharing a common concern over the academic well-being of their children created networks among parents and families, which enabled them to foster stronger relationships that could translate into the community, and advance community cohesion and development. Therefore, with these three techniques, government-funded formalized education enabled students to form relationships, and learn behaviors that promoted peace and togetherness both in the schools and in the communities, thus contributing to both community cohesion and development.

Skills for community contribution. The second way that the government's formalized education helped to create community cohesion and promote development was by funding schools that taught children the skills they needed for their future, and prepared them to enter the workforce. Unlike with the western and cultural models of skills training, the local people thought the government's formalized education provided skills necessary for community development because the more education people achieved, the better they would be prepared to take on economically viable jobs. With more local people in good jobs, there was more likelihood for peace because people would be happier and more comfortable in their, and their family's, lives and future. Tenneh (personal communication, June 4, 2009), a young mother from Makeni, described the importance of community involvement after receiving an education,

If you have a lot of educated people they can assist the community, not only through money but also by their understanding of information, and they can share that with the people who did not go to school and help them. Someone who is educated will not stray much. The jobs are prepared so they feel lively. The

husband and the wife will be closer when they are educated and can take better care of their houses because they are enlightened.

With an education, one could also “have an opportunity go overseas and explain the story of this country ... and bring back aid and help people unite” (Miatta, personal communication, June 5, 2009). When children were provided a formal education, they received the skills that would enable them to enter into a career and thus contribute to their community.

The community members recognized the many efforts of the government in providing formalized education in the communities, especially with their limited resources. The local people also acknowledged, however, that in order to enhance cohesion and community development, more could be done to make schooling accessible, and to provide highly qualified teachers. According to Wang (2007), the government had done a fairly good job focusing on education since the end of the war, but still had many areas on which to improve to ensure equal and fair access, and improve the ability for all Sierra Leoneans to receive an education.

With resources for government-funded education limited after the war, some of the burden for education was passed onto families. However, with families already struggling to pay for necessities like food and shelter, paying for children to attend school was often a great hardship. Families were required to pay school fees, in addition to uniforms, shoes, texts, and meals if their children attended school. The list of expensive necessities often forced families to decide which of their children they would send to school, since it often was too expensive for them to send all of their children. With only some children attending school, the opportunities for community development were

circumscribed. Many local people believed that the schools were the primary mechanisms that imparted values and beliefs supporting peace, and developed the skills needed to support economic development. When some children did not have access, they were less prepared to be involved in community efforts.

Often, when parents had to choose which of their children would attend school, they chose the boys, leaving the girls to stay home. Selina (personal communication, May 30, 2009), a student from Lungi enrolled in a skills training program, explained how the cost of schooling was advantaging boys over girls.

Some parents [were] not putting their girl child in school. Most of the boys [were] going, but not all girls. Their excuse [was] that parents don't have the money ... to send them to further their education, so they need help. Some [girls] stop as early as five because their parents don't have the money to pay for the child to go to school.

Many community members, like Selina, believed that all children should have the opportunity to go to school so that they could advance their lives, and therefore, their community. The government was also said to support the promotion of girls in school, so with their limited resources they created a program to help increase female student enrollment. They paid for some of the costs for a girl's education. Many families were confused about exactly what costs the government was paying, and unfortunately even with government assistance, the other costs associated with attending school were too high, thus once again forcing parents to choose which children would attend school.

In addition to the expense of attending school, many community members simply did not have feasible access to the schools. Some of the schools were in the outskirts of

the communities, and far from the children's homes. Unfortunately, in Lungi for example, some "students [had to] walk three miles to get to school" (Ishmael, personal communication, May 29, 2009). When children were forced to walk long distances to attend school, it made their days long and arduous, especially during the rainy season. It also made it difficult for the children to help their parents at home. While the government likely does not have resources to build more schools when they are struggling to replace the 80% that were lost during the war (Bennell, 2004), more schools in the future could help to alleviate some accessibility issues.

Another limitation that the local people saw in the government's ability to provide formalized education was the lack of qualified teachers. Teachers could attend several government colleges or universities for training as primary and secondary school teachers (Wang, 2007); however, only about half of the teachers in the schools were trained through these programs (Bennell, 2004). This may be in part because attending university was expensive for most Sierra Leoneans at over 750 US Dollars per year (Alie, personal communication, June 6, 2009). Those that were trained, often failed to return to their home communities and ended up leaving the profession in four years due to inadequate and untimely pay, and tended to go to work instead for INGOs (Wang, 2007). With only half of the teachers in school being trained, and those who were trained likely to leave, often the schools on the outskirts of the community had unqualified instructors. According to Ishmael (personal communication, May 29, 2009), a community elder,

Because we are so far out of the way, we need community teachers to volunteer to teach at the school because [properly trained teachers] could not live on the money that the community could afford to pay them. We have taken this problem

to the education inspectorate so they can employ the teachers at the school, because those that volunteer at the school are not very dedicated and many of the good teachers refuse to come to community schools because of the poor pay and long distance to travel.

In addition to the issues of unqualified teachers in the school, some community members also complained about incidences of teacher corruption. Samuel (personal communication, May 30, 2009), a Lungi community minister and father, complained that teachers often asked for money for private after-school lessons when the government demanded they should do it for free. As a result, he believed that the teachers were highly unmotivated to give extra time to their students. A community leader from Makeni agreed, and told me that in some cases teachers even requested payment for their services in order to correct students' every-day class assignments. Community members felt that the government should play a role in monitoring these activities to ensure students in government schools were receiving the best education possible.

Despite the limitations the government faced in its efforts to provide formalized education, such as access issues and teacher preparation and conduct, the community members felt positively about the school's ability to help the local people to build their skills for peaceful living and community contribution. With assistance from both INGOs and from community-based initiatives, the government may be able to address some of these limitations, thus encouraging better education for all Sierra Leoneans, and connecting all three influences in their postconflict community development efforts.

Community safety. An additional way that the national government helped to build community was by providing resources to maintain community safety. For the

local people to focus on development, they needed to feel as though their communities were safe spaces; free of crime and violence. The government assisted in providing this safe environment by maintaining both an army and a national police force, and by providing a court system to settle disputes not settled by the chiefs and police.

Army. The first effort by the national government to enhance the safety of the country, and the communities, was by funding a national army. The army was in great disarray after the war, as there were many sub-factions that were fighting against the rebels and each other. According to Banura, a Makeni educator, after the war the civil defense forces joined with other groups to create a cohesive army. This newly cohesive army was not only working toward providing a safe space for communities to develop, but also was becoming involved in building local capacity that could help citizens help themselves protect their communities. Banura (personal communication, June 8, 2009) said that by “invit[ing community members] to do simple military functions, people [could] work together to rebuild the country.” These simple training exercises provided a way for the community to engage peacefully with the army. Compared to the terror that the army struck among community members during the war, these new tasks were much friendlier to the development of communities, as they linked the community members to the army, allowing each to connect to the development process.

Police. The national government also provided a national police force to enhance community development. Community members felt that the police were providing a safe space for community development by attempting to resolve community disputes, preventing secret societies from forcefully initiating members, and protecting citizens against corruption or from people taking advantage of them. These activities were

important, as like the army, the police had a similar history of terrorizing communities during the war.

In addition to creating safe space through resolving conflicts, protecting against forced initiations, and limiting corruption, the police also had a role in directly contributing to community development. According to Banura, (personal communication, June 8, 2009) a Makeni educator,

Now there is a watch group and now the police are involved in community policing. The police help build schools, and they want the community to come together for everyone's betterment. This is a good project. The police now observe human rights.

Not all community members believed that the police observed human rights at all times. Those who criticized the police felt that their greatest limitation to creating community cohesion was their propensity to engage in corrupt practices. Some community members blamed the police for failing to combat forced initiations by the societies, for molesting women while in uniform, and for accepting bribes for the resolution of community disputes, as opposed to resolving disputes based on which party was in the right. Miatta (personal communication, June 5, 2009), a petty trader, discussed these bribes: "If you have money you are never wrong..... The police should not discriminate when someone is wrong. If you have money and are wrong, you should be wrong. They should not take bribes; corruption is bad." The role of the police in wrongly settling disputes contributed to the divide between the rich and the poor, as only the rich could afford to bribe the police officers.

Accepting bribes to solve community disputes also encouraged those who felt wronged, to take matters into their own hands. Sometimes, if a person was not pleased with the way that either the police or their traditional chief settled their dispute, they would visit a *witchgun*, or traditional witchdoctor, who used spiritual means of witchcraft to fight and kill people in the community, as a means of revenge against the other party in their dispute. The *witchgun*, using the magic of a cassava stick, can, according to the local people, wave that stick at the offender on the street causing them to die on the spot. While this tradition may be difficult for westerners to understand, those few who spoke about the *witchgun* claimed they had seen this phenomenon happen, and were very careful that their words against these *witchguns* were confidential.

It was clear from the participants, however, that utilizing the *witchguns* was a last line of defense in settling disputes, and most community members were confident in and preferred to rely on the traditional chief or the national police for dispute resolution. In fact, many community leaders felt that the police were working hard to bring order to the communities. The police attempted to identify *witchguns* and send them to jail or charge them a fine, and to prevent wrongful deaths caused by the *witchguns* and ensure community order. Overall, the community members felt the national police force was making a difference in the communities by providing a safe space for community development. Issues of corruption, however, would need to be addressed for the police to be fully engaged in creating community cohesion.

Court system. The final way that the national government was providing resources to enhance community safety was by providing a court system to settle disputes that were unable to be resolved by the traditional leaders or by the police. Disputes

between community members created a rift within the community; therefore, it was important for the government to assist in resolving tensions between community members. The local people described the courts as generally serving the communities by providing a forum for the local people to take up cases when they did not agree with the resolution made by the chief or the police. In this way, the courts contributed to community cohesion, as it was an additional group to help resolve disputes and restore community balance.

Taking cases to court was very expensive for the local people though, because of the lawyer and magistrate fees. People who could not afford to take cases to court had to rely on the settlement by the chief, whether or not they believed it to be just. Their inability to be able to afford taking a case to court also enhanced a divide between the rich and the poor. If a rich community member did not like the settlement by the chief, this community member could pay to take the case to court. If the other party in the dispute was poor, however, and could not pay to have their side represented in court, as there was no government assistance for these fees, the rich community member would often win the case. Therefore, the peoples' limited resources discouraged a just and equitable process in the court system.

Not only did money determine whether an individual could pay the fees of the court, it also, in some cases, provided access to the magistrate. According to Florence (personal communication, June 9, 2009), a Makeni community leader, cultural traditions in Sierra Leone dictated that those with community power should receive a token for their time spent in service to community members. This led to individuals like court magistrates to continue the tradition of accepting monetary tokens for their work. Some

might view this as a form of corruption, as money was accepted beyond their set salaries. I witnessed this kind of exchange first hand, by seeing a court clerk, as well as customs officials, both ask for and accept, extra monetary compensation while in Sierra Leone. The acceptance of this money made me curious as to the intentions of these workers in assisting community development, and whether this cultural norm was necessary, or a way to take advantage of their position.

Despite the government's efforts to contribute to postconflict community development through infrastructure development, formalized education, and community safety, it is clear that corruption is still an important issue that needs to be addressed. It is well known that corruption is an issue for many postconflict countries, and one that often needs to be tackled by the government and its citizens, as it tends to be embedded in the culture, and by the western organizations that filter aid and assistance into these governments. While some community members claimed that the government was working to fight corruption, there were others that acknowledged it was still quite a problem, and not only at the national level.

Aside from the examples of corruption with teachers, police, and court officials, the local people also were concerned about corruption in the management of government-run seed banks. According to several participants, the government's Ministry of Agriculture had promised that they would give agricultural seeds that had been saved during the war to farmers after the war, so that they could grow crops to sell and feed their families. Unfortunately, these seeds were never delivered to these farmers. As mentioned in the community-based initiatives section, the local people had formed

groups based on the promise of seeds for planting, and when these did not arrive, there was strain among the groups, and therefore within the community.

Some participants stated that the government organizations that ran these banks were corrupt, which could have explained why no seeds were received by the farmers. According to Emmanuel (personal communication, May 28, 2009), an airport worker in Lungi, the governmental officials would “take the money and not participate in the proper functions of their job,” or they would use the money granted to purchase seeds for their own means. One of the Lungi former community leaders blamed these corrupt practices on the government’s lack of oversight and monitoring of seed banks and other projects. Without proper oversight, the local people felt that government employees took advantage of their positions, and left people without necessary resources to promote community development. This impression of corrupt government officials was seen as damaging the relationships between the government and the local people.

Resources, in a country that had so few for the various reasons previously discussed, were very important. Resources were essential to promoting community development, as they helped to fund infrastructure development, formalized education, the creation of a safe community, and an equitable judicial system. Without the necessary resources, the government was limited in their ability to assist in developing the communities after the war. Aside from loans, grants, and other international monies, which often came into the country through the government, the only other resources available, aside from those which needed to be further developed through government management and administration of natural resources, were from taxes.

Although taxes had been collected in one form or another through the colonial period in the communities, there was not a formalized structure with which people were familiar and felt comfortable. Moreover, while many understood the importance of paying taxes to support development because “if you don’t pay tax then the country can’t develop” (Zaria, personal communication, June 5, 2009), the manner in which the taxes were collected was largely seen as unfair or corrupt, haphazardly levied on some more than others. Hadams (personal communication, June 8, 2009), a local tailor, said that:

In one shop, they had four machines and had to pay 20,000 [Leones]; I have three machines and had to pay 50,000 [Leones]. I spoke against the collector, and fortunately the police were around and understood what was happening. That is why there is no unity.

Also, some community members felt that the tax money was not being used to improve their communities. Hadams (personal communication, June 8, 2009), the local tailor, went on to say that he “[hadn’t] seen the tax money being used.... So what is being done with our tax money?” These unfair and corrupt practices in collecting and using taxes left community members somewhat conflicted about the role of taxes in postconflict community development.

The final way that the local people felt the government was challenged in contributing to community development as much as possible, was by engaging in political fighting. By engaging in heated arguments and sometimes even physical fights within the political parties, elected officials fractured the community by fighting themselves, and allowing that fighting to carry into the communities. Alie (personal

communication, June 6, 2009), a mechanic from Makeni, spoke about these types of party politics, and their consequences on community relations:

In African politics, if you are Party A and I'm in Party B, then we can become enemies and it tears community apart terribly. People fight over politics, if you are not in the ruling party you have nothing to say, you cannot go close to [those who are in the ruling party]. With this government this is new; it was never like this before.

Political fighting among politicians carried over into the community challenging community cohesion. A female leader in Makeni explained the process; "When party A comes into power, the party B people are removed and new people come in, even if they do not know what they are doing. They are bitter enemies and fight at the political houses" (Florence, personal communication, June 9, 2009). The community members believed that the fighting in the political houses trickled down to the community, and community members engaged in similar debates and arguments thus creating rifts among community members.

This discussion of the role of the president and his administration in postconflict community development has demonstrated that the government has made efforts, with its limited resources, to assist the communities through infrastructure development, formalized education, and community safety. With the government uniquely situated between western and cultural influences, it should be best able to provide resources for development, and enhance community cohesion; however, the local people felt that both corruption and limited access to or proper use of resources lessened the government's abilities to fully meet those goals. Banura (personal communication, June 8, 2009), a

Makeni educator, summed up the feelings of the many community members with whom I spoke by saying: “The government [was] committed to mov[ing] this country forward ... [but] more needed to be done....”

Members of Parliament and District Councilors. In addition to the president and his ministers, the Members of Parliament (MPs) and the district councilors were the second form of national influences on postconflict community development. Parliament in Sierra Leone, tasked with national legislation, is made up of two sections, the Paramount Chiefs, and the MPs that were elected from districts set up throughout the country. The MPs represented their districts to the national government and had offices both in the capital, and in their district. In larger areas, like Makeni, district councilors also were responsible for the delivery of services in their areas.

The MPs and council members contributed to postconflict community development, according to community members, by providing resources for local development projects. These projects in both Lungi and Makeni included opportunities for groups of local people to build roads in exchange for food, and to come together to build community centers, schools, health centers, and markets for people to gather together. Some projects supported by a former councilor in Lungi helped secure donations by “getting fishing gear” (Jemi, personal communication, May 27, 2009) to enhance the way the fisherwomen could work together to bring in more fish to sell at market. Other projects were organized around developing agricultural cooperatives. According to Zaria (personal communication, June 5, 2009), a community leader, the MP “has increased agriculture projects of over 1,000 acres. He does peace projects, cultivation of cassavas and vegetables. People farm these acres and then sell their

products.” The MP and district councilors also were credited by the local people for organizing groups “[to] help to clean the city” (Sinead, personal communication, June 4, 2009). They used “vehicles that haul filth in the city, and tricycles that can get into smaller spaces” (Hadams, personal communications, June 8, 2009). Each of these projects, according to the local people, helped to contribute to the betterment of the community.

These projects were limited, however, as the community members stated that few projects were funded, and only a few individuals were able to take part in each of them. In fact, as the projects were so limited, the majority of community members to whom I spoke were unable to communicate the role that MPs and district councilors played in community development. One local official in Makeni explained that this was often because the local groups, the MPs, and the chiefs all had to share in these projects and the MP tended to receive the least amount of funding and credit in the community for their work.

Availability of development projects were not the only limitation that the local people felt constrained the MP and district councilor’s efforts in community development. Many participants felt strongly that the MPs did not follow through on their campaign promises, and did not communicate well with the local people. As national representatives of their communities and districts, MPs were elected by the local people. During these elections, like some that occur around the world, political candidates discussed their aims for after the election, but as Ishmael (personal communication, May 29, 2009), a community leader from Lungi, explained, they did not follow through with their promises:

Politicians [had] come to the community during the elections when they need[ed] support, and [said] that they [would] help and do good things for the community, but once they succeed in winning their post, they say they are too busy.

Several other community members shared similar stories about how the MPs came and promised roads, electricity, water supply, and educational scholarships, but unfortunately, many participants in both communities did not see, and were still waiting for, the follow-through around these community development issues. One young woman in skills training explained that she “[had] a district member living in [her] community in Lungi ... [who] won but had done nothing to help development and he lives there in that community” (Lambri, personal communication, May 26, 2009). Campaign promises raised the hopes of the local people, but many felt that the MPs did not live up to these promises. It is important to note, that as representatives of the government, the MPs and district councilors likely faced the same difficulties in accessing resources as the president and his administration, which could have led to the lack of delivery on these promises.

In addition to feeling like campaign promises were ignored, many community members felt there was a communication gap between the MPs and the local people. After they had been elected, in many instances, the local “people [had to] book an appointment to see them. The local people [were] not used to booking appointments so they [sat] and wait[ed] for the politicians to come and fulfill their promises, but they never [came]” (Ishmael, personal communication, May 29, 2009). This lack of communication was important to note, as the local people hoped to engage in development with the MPs, but did not understand their closed-off appointment-based

nature, as it seemed to go against their communal and open culture. Addressing this issue of communication would allow the local people and the MPs to better connect, and likely to increase the understanding of the MPs role in the community.

Despite the development projects with which the MPs were engaged, the local people felt disconnected from that branch of the government. Like the president and his administration, the MPs could be uniquely placed to provide connections between resources and the community, and by engaging in better communication with the local people, some of these connections could be more effective for postconflict community development.

While overall national influences worked to provide their limited resources to the development of the communities and the country as a whole, issues of corruption, use of resources, and connection with the local people limited these efforts. The bridge that the government could have built between western and cultural influences by connecting resources to the local people was, therefore, only partially constructed. This left all three influences, western, cultural, and national, mainly working independently to enhance postconflict community development, as opposed to finding ways to work together to augment the strengths of each. In addition, this disconnection between the three influences left the local people disadvantaged; a situation that could have been ameliorated had INGOs, cultural groups, and/or the national government found ways to work well within and among them. These findings suggest that should the national government find a way to successfully bridge the gap between western and cultural influences, postconflict community development might be further advanced in Sierra Leone than it is today. I take up this topic in more detail in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five

Conclusions

This final chapter serves as a summation of the findings of this study, and will discuss the implications of these findings for Sierra Leone and other postconflict communities. In addition, this chapter will address the delimitations and limitations and the significance of the study. I also suggest areas of future research based on the findings from this research.

Summation of Findings

This study was focused on postconflict community development in Sierra Leone. Findings from my five-week qualitative study in the summer of 2009 in two Sierra Leone communities, Lungi and Makeni, suggest that western, cultural, and national influences and the interactions or lack of interactions among them account for the status of Sierra Leone's development at this time. The sections below will summarize these findings, and discuss their implications.

Western influences on postconflict community development. Previous research suggested that western influences on postconflict community development were largely the result of the actions and interactions of International Nongovernmental Organizations (INGOs). In this study, Sierra Leoneans credited these organizations for their ability to provide aid, assistance, and resources at the end of the war. INGOs assisted in the constructions of wells, community spaces, and houses for those left disabled because of the war. They also provided food rations, and assisted with health care and immediate necessities. INGOs also contributed through the initiation of development projects and programs, and through micro-credit loans.

Despite their obvious contributions, my research showed that it was during this stage of postconflict development where the local people felt the INGOs experienced some challenges, as they were not successful in connecting with the local people, and taking into account their cultural norms. Community members often felt that INGOs did not allow for them to have an equal hand in the development process, and that they would make promises about providing resources for the community and then not follow through. This left the local people unsure of their support for development. While they relied on the INGOs for funding and for their expertise, they wanted more assurance of their commitment, and they wanted to be more involved in the process. As previous research demonstrated, for western influences to be beneficial in contributing to postconflict development, they need to engage with the local people. In Sierra Leone, it was clear that there was a disconnection between INGOs and the local community members. In order for more development to occur, it appears that this gap will need to be addressed.

Cultural influences on postconflict community development. To better understand postconflict development I also examined the Sierra Leonean culture, and the influence it had on postconflict community development. Among the cultural influences reviewed were the role of the traditional leaders, community-based initiatives, and traditional societies and ceremonies. My findings determined that the traditional leaders were seen as providing a safe environment, settling community disputes, and acquiring resources for development. They were limited, however, in their abilities to always settle disputes in a fair manner, and to fully convey their role in development to local people.

They also struggled to ensure the needs of the people were sufficiently met by the resources coming in to the communities.

Community-based initiatives were found to bring the local people together through various projects and activities to contribute to development, but often had limited resources to carry out their activities, and to ensure the needs of the community were fully met. Finally, traditional societies were seen as bringing together their members and encouraging development among them, but were often not connected well to the community at large, thus causing controversies in the community, especially in regards to their initiation practices. Finally, traditional ceremonies were seen as supporting cultural norms and bringing communities together to celebrate life and the earth. They were viewed as successful in providing space for people to come together to discuss issues of development. They were limiting in their influence, however, because ceremonies were expensive, and typically only took place around certain life and seasonal events, and therefore, did not have the ability to provide continuous support to the community. The cultural influences' lack of financial resources and development expertise, as well as the fact that some cultural norms were still based on prewar assumptions, such as chieftaincy patronage and exclusionary societies, undermined community development efforts.

National influences on postconflict community development. My findings indicated that national influences contributed to postconflict community development in Sierra Leone by supplying resources in several areas, such as electricity, water access, and road networks. Due to limited resources for a number of reasons, however, the community's infrastructure needs were not yet met. The government worked to provide a formal education system to educate each child in the country, but issues of school access,

cost, and teacher preparation were limitations to full success. Finally, the government addressed community safety needs by establishing a largely trustworthy army and police force, but some officers continued to engage in corrupt practices. In addition to the limitations of each of the ways the national government was enhancing development, community members also discussed that the national government had a general propensity to engage in corruption, and have limited communication with the local people. The government's participation in political fighting also limited their ability to enhance community development.

Many of the limitations faced by the government could likely be improved with stronger relationships with the INGOs and the local communities. INGOs could assist with issues around resources, and the local people could help determine the most crucial infrastructure development needs, better ways to get more children access to schools, and work to connect officers with the communities they serve to possibly limit their engagement in corrupt practices. The government on many levels failed to make these connections, and provide the space for all three of these systems to work together to better their opportunities for change. Although they had created a National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA) to connect local needs to international and governmental resources, this relationship was not well established or carried out. In fact, Ishmael (personal communication, May 29, 2009) discussed how his village had been waiting for new water pumps from NaCSA for over a year. The findings of this study indicate that individual efforts on the part of western organizations, the local people with their cultural traditions and practices, and the national government are not likely to move the country

in the direction it needs to go. It seems certain that opportunities must be crafted to work collectively toward postconflict community development.

Implications of Findings for Sierra Leone

Despite the strides that have been made to help communities in postconflict Sierra Leone, it was clear from my observations and interviews that these communities were still quite far from achieving a sustainable peace. This was primarily because western, cultural, and national influences were largely acting independently from one another, and thus were unable to achieve the progress the communities desired. Data from this study suggest that in order to better facilitate development, each of these influences needs to find ways to embrace each other, and begin to work better together. INGOs need to find a way to ensure that their development methods are taking into account the needs and desires of the local community members, and that they are delivering resources as promised. Cultural influences need to find ways to share their needs and frustrations for development with both INGOs and the national government. They must also address their prewar cultural assumptions and exclusionary practices, in order to better connect with each other, as well as with western and possibly governmental influences. Finally, the national government needs to work on the effectiveness of its systems in place to connect INGOs and the local community, such as NaCSA. They should also design new systems that ensure that they are able to facilitate community development work that involves the local people, the INGOs, and the government itself.

Implications for western influences. Western influences were seen as especially important for providing aid and assistance directly after the war, and meeting the immediate needs of the local people. Difficulties arose, however, when assistance from

INGOs switched from aid to development, as there was limited connection with the local people about their needs during that stage. Better connections could be made with increased communication between INGO staff and the local people. This would require the hiring of both international and local workers, and setting guidelines for both sets of staff to follow that are reasonable and are culturally responsive. INGOs must put more trust in the local people, and must hire international staff that is willing to go to the communities, and communicate with the local staff. Also, INGOs should further interface with the chiefs of the community. The chief has an understanding of community needs, and can help facilitate communication between the organizations and the community members. By engaging in these practices, INGOs could heighten their understanding of community needs, and thus ensure their programs are relevant and have community buy-in.

Implications for cultural influences. Similarly, cultural groups and leaders need to do a better job of working with INGOs for development. One way cultural groups might communicate and work better with these organizations is through the local leadership. The chiefs have a pulse on the community through the meetings that are held there, and the hierarchical structure of chiefs and elders that can communicate the community needs with the chief. The local leaders are uniquely situated so that when they seek money from INGOs, they can articulate these needs with confidence. This makes the chiefs a valuable resource not only to the INGOs to ensure their programs are relevant, but also to the community so that the local people know that their needs are being communicated. In order to be as effective as possible for each group, the chief must be sure there are enough meetings to ensure that he truly does understand the needs

of the community. He must also do a better job of informing the community from where development projects and monies are coming, so that INGOs feel as though they are a part of the community, and their development as well. It might be in both the community and the INGOs best interest to have these organizations attend local community meetings and events to get an understating of the community, and show their presence there.

The chiefs are also important in specifying to the national government, much like the INGOs, how best to use monies received through taxes or through direct financing from western organizations. As the paramount chiefs are also part of the Parliament, they are involved directly with the government, and are therefore, in a unique place to articulate community needs directly to the source of funding for projects and programs. Chiefs need to more actively take up this role to ensure that they can receive as many resources as possible for their communities. It is then the chief's responsibility to communicate to the local people the role the government played in the development projects, and the monies received for them.

Finally, the chiefs can be useful in managing the connections and communication between the local community and the government by embracing the Members of Parliament (MPs) in the community. Many participants felt that they were disconnected from the MPs and the work that they did, both at a local and national level. With the assistance of the chief, the MP could be included in community meetings. This would be helpful, as many people were unfamiliar with the MP's meeting-setting policy. Having the MPs present at community meetings may serve as a way for them to understand community needs, and for the community to see that the MP has a real presence there. It would also be important for the chief, much like with INGOs and the national

government, to ensure that credit is given to the MPs for their role in community development. The chief could facilitate an understanding amongst community members that not only was he assisting development, but also that the INGOs, the government, and the MPs were all contributing in their own unique ways. When the community began to understand that there were many entities working toward development, and began to see the overlap between these groups, it would be easier to enhance this overlap and allow all three of the influences in the community to work together.

The chief and local community groups must also address the issue of cultural assumptions and preexisting norms to fully enhance development, as one of the issues for cultural influences limiting postconflict community development was the inequalities in traditional norms of the past. The chief was seen as sometimes settling disputes in an unfair manner, and the traditional societies were seen as excluding those in the community who were not members of their group. These habits likely stem from the strong patronage system of the past for the chiefs, and the history of divisions between men and women and various groups for the traditional societies. In order for development to be enhanced in the communities, as the majority of participants felt that cultural groups and leaders were positive for development, both groups must find a way to bring fairness and equality to the community, rather than enhancing divisions. The chiefs must settle disputes fairly and in the best interest of the community. The traditional societies must include the entire community in at least some activities, if not all, and must find a way to make their initiations more respectful of issues of education, and people's disinterest in joining. Creating cohesion within the community through culturally-relevant means that involve everyone, can enhance a relationship between

western organizations and the national government, as communities that are more connected and peaceful may be better candidates for development monies and projects.

Implications for national influences. The national government can also play a role in enhancing community development between all three influences by increasing the effectiveness of programs such as NaCSA, which serve to connect the needs of the local community to the resources of the government and the INGOs. Although NaCSA is designed to fulfill this function, it was clear from the community members that not enough efforts were being made toward the functioning of this system. If the system were functioning to the best of its ability, the local people could tell NaCSA their community needs, and then NaCSA would find funds and programs through the government or international organizations to meet those needs. This would streamline communication issues, and make sure the connections are made between all influences in the simplest way possible.

Another way that the national government could enhance their work in the communities, and with the INGOs, is by hiring and retaining quality employees. As discussed in past research and in the findings, government workers, such as the army, police, teachers, and civil servants, are often underpaid. In order to make up for this lack of payment they either quit their government jobs and go to work for INGOs, or they engage in questionable behavior as a way to earn more money. The government cannot increase many of these workers' salaries though, as they are limited by the loan agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that controls the salaries for these workers. In order to enhance quality in their workforce, the government should negotiate higher loans from the IMF and other groups so that they can better pay their employees,

thus retaining those that they have, and helping to recruit additional, higher-quality ones. As these employees often work in direct capacity with the communities, enhancing the quality of worker would enhance the relationship between the local communities and the government.

It is clear from this discussion of implications that there are many ways that western, cultural, and national influences could be linked to enhance community development. The challenge is that many of these links are either not happening at all, or are not happening to the fullest extent possible. If communities in Sierra Leone really want to increase their development from its limited state and move more toward sustainable peace, it is important that western organizations, cultural groups and leaders, and the national government begin to implement some of these suggestions to enhance their interrelatedness and thus development.

Implications of Findings for Other Postconflict Communities

As mentioned in Chapter Three, and discussed below, the findings of this study cannot be directly applied to any other postconflict community, as they are unique to the two communities studied. These findings do offer some, what Lincoln and Guba (1985) called, transferability to other communities, meaning that the general lessons of this study may be helpful to other communities in similar situations. Therefore, lessons learned around the interaction of western, cultural, and national influences may be helpful for other postconflict community development situations; as each are likely to receive outside aid, have norms and traditions for community interaction and development, and have a national government also involved in the process.

The first lesson similar contexts might learn from this study is that it is important for western organizations to be open to the cultural norms of the community context, and hire employees that are able and willing to serve as links between the local community and the organization at large. This likely requires international workers who are comfortable working in the communities, and community workers who are comfortable serving as cultural guides, and interpreting the norms and values of the community to the larger organization. It might also be important to draft norms and values that meet both the international organization's mission and vision, and serve to connect to the culture of the community. This way, all those involved with the INGO can feel comfortable, knowing that they serve the community's needs for development.

A second lesson for other postconflict community development contexts is the importance of community leaders, and their ability to connect to both their community members and to groups at the state and international level. As community leaders are more likely to know the pulse of the community, as opposed to outsiders, it is important for the local people, the state, and the international community to put their trust in them, and allow them to make connections for development between the various groups. Establishing this trust, however, might be difficult depending on the nature of the conflict, and the barriers that may exist between these influences already. In Sierra Leone, continuing with the chieftaincy system seemed to largely meet the needs of the local people and the government, but this may not be the case in all postconflict communities. In some cases rather than building or rebuilding trust, new leaders would need to be elected to serve this purpose. Whether a leader from before conflict, or a new

leader, it is important that the community have a leader that they feel has their best interests in mind, and can communicate with both the national government and INGOs.

One way that a local community leader can engage in enhancing the communication between the local community and the government and INGOs is by facilitating meetings. It would be important for the local leader to involve representatives from the government and INGOs in local community meetings so that the representatives can hear from community members, and the community members can understand from where the representatives are coming. In the same light, it would be important for INGOs and governments to include local leaders in their meetings and planning sessions, so that they can have a representative of the local community present and expressing their community's needs. A simple invitation to attend and be a part of meetings and planning sessions might make a large impact on how cultural groups can connect with those at the international and national level.

The culture itself may also play an important role in the development process for other postconflict communities. In some instances the culture may be a unique way to set specific goals and engage in development programs that directly meet the needs of all the people in the community. In Sierra Leone, however, there were issues of culture that stunted development, as opposed to enhanced it. Communities that are looking to develop after conflict should review their cultural norms and traditions to ensure that they are inclusionary of all people in the community, and are fair. This examination may not be easy, as the local people are often attached to their cultural norms and traditions, but may help to ensure that development in the community unites everyone, and works for the whole community's best interest. As previously mentioned, it may also be important for

the international community to find a way to embrace these practices, even if they are different from their organization's norms, in order to foster culturally-relevant and people-centered development.

Finally, the national government has a responsibility to also negotiate or craft arrangements with the INGOs and the local communities to address postconflict issues. Governments are often the receiving-agents of aid packages. Funneling the resources to the communities in a way that meets the community's development needs and meets the INGOs' mandate is important. An organization such as NaCSA might not be the best mechanism for every culture, but the government should find a way to link the development needs of the community with the funding and resource distribution desires of the INGOs. Not only does this ensure that the right funds are connected to the right projects, it also creates a communication system that is simple and direct, thus enhancing the ease by which these three influences can be linked.

Finding ways to connect the three influences, therefore, is essential to enhancing community development in postconflict countries. In Sierra Leone, each of these three influences were in their own way uniquely contributing to development, but were not taking advantage of overlap, opportunities to pool resources, collective communication possibilities, or finding new partnerships to assist in building communities further toward sustainable peace. Other postconflict communities may also face the disconnection of these three influences, and therefore, can rely on the lessons learned from Sierra Leone to help enhance their own community development potential.

Delimitations and Limitations

In order to fully understand the findings and implications of this study, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. Although primarily discussed in Chapter Three, I will provide a summary of my methodological limitations here. The first methodological limitation was the use of convenience sampling both in the selection of the communities and the community members to which I had access during my stay in Sierra Leone in May and June 2009. The communities were chosen at the discretion of Dr. Thorpe and the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE); therefore, I relied on their understanding of my interests, and their experiences for these selections. I acknowledged that this reliance could be challenged due to Dr. Thorpe's specific role as the founder of FAWE and as Chief Electoral Commissioner and Chairperson of the country, and the power of those positions. I worked to mitigate her role in this research by avoiding discussing my relationship with her unless deemed advantageous by my hosts.

Another methodological limitation was the role FAWE may have played in the communities. As each community had FAWE chapters that encouraged the education of women and girls and their involvement in community development, these communities may be more liberal and developed than others in Sierra Leone. As I learned during my stay, communities in the North actually had less female leadership than those in the South, so this may not have been as large a factor as initially thought, but still important to emphasize as a possible limitation.

Yet another methodological limitation that was discussed in Chapter Three at great length was conducting a study in a culture so vastly different than my own. It was

essential for me to acknowledge my bias as well the perceptions that many Sierra Leoneans have of Americans, in order for us to feel comfortable with each other, and to allow in-depth interviews and conversations. My ability to work with co-researchers assisted with the cultural divide, but it still must be acknowledged that had I been a researcher from the culture, my information and responses gathered may have been different than in this study. Working with a culture different from my own, and with people more comfortable speaking a language other than my own, I also had to rely on my co-researchers for translation of some of my interviews. As my co-researchers were not trained translators, their role in this interview process may have influenced the data collected, which would therefore, be an additional limitation.

I was also limited in my ability to observe cultural events. First, my stay was short; five weeks, with ten days in Lungi, and eight in Makeni. This was a very limited time in the country, and in each of the communities. Although I was fortunate to have tremendous access while there, a longer stay would have enabled me to become more familiar with the culture and the people. I was able to experience life transition ceremonies, but because I was there out of season, I was unable to witness some of the ceremonies of the traditional societies. Being limited in what I was able to see and experience was also a methodological limitation, as I may not have gained as much understanding of my findings, without participating in these events.

Also, I was unable to share my findings with the local people in the communities before I left, as I had initially intended. I was advised by my hosts that my data would be better received, first, after it was more polished; and second, if it were presented by my FAWE hosts, as opposed to by me. As these were my hosts, I conceded to their wishes,

but was disappointed I was not able to get the community's feedback on my study. The only feedback I got was very limited and was primarily from fact-checking during my interviews.

Finally, my analysis was focused on only two communities in postconflict Sierra Leone, and therefore, is limited in scope. My findings can really only explain the process of each of these communities, and are not necessarily indicative of the processes of development in other communities in Sierra Leone, or communities around the world.

Significance of the Study

Even though this study is not generalizable, the findings did, as discussed above, offer some insight, or transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), into the ways other postconflict communities may develop within Sierra Leone, or around the world, when those communities are of similar scope and dynamics to those communities involved in the study. The findings, therefore, delineated through thick descriptions of the case record, help to increase our knowledge about the influences that may be necessary for communities to develop in postconflict settings, and establish and maintain a sustainable peace, and why these influences were used. The lessons learned from this study may also inform understanding of similar communities in postconflict situations, and can give voice and insight into the strength and will of communities to move forward after conflict. It is interesting to note that although my findings could in no way be generalized to other communities in Sierra Leone, they did offer transferability, as people with whom I shared my findings in the capital city of Freetown felt that other communities in the country had similar experiences.

Areas for Future Research

This study has opened up some new avenues for research that would be interesting to explore in order to more fully create an understanding of postconflict community development in Sierra Leone. With the use of grounded theory, the connections and interrelatedness of western, cultural, and national influences on postconflict community development emerged as salient. As this framework emerged through the findings, I was only able to scratch the surface of the interrelationship between the western, cultural, and national influences in postconflict community development during my interviews. This study could be enhanced with further work around the specifics of these relationships, and their abilities to build upon one another for creating sustainable peace in postconflict communities. It would be particularly important to target those affiliated with INGOs and the government, as their voices were not fully explored in this study.

Due to the limited time frame of this research, only two communities were studied in the North. It would be of interest to study those communities more in depth over time, as well as other Northern communities to see if their experiences in development were similar, or different than those communities studied, and why differences may occur. Also, it would be interesting to compare communities in the Eastern and Southern regions of the country. These regions had different war-time experiences; as the rebels attacked these villages early in the war and then moved to the North, and homes and community structures were more likely burned, rather than looted in these areas. These differences may have allowed communities more time to develop, since the rebels were not in the communities up until the war ended, like in Lungi and Makeni. Also, the more structural

damage and greater need for building, as opposed to repairing, may have provided different cultural influences or community-based initiatives used for development in these communities.

In addition, the predominant ethnic and cultural group in the North is Temne, whereas in the South it is Mende. I was told that the Northern communities were more conservative, with stricter traditional societies and fewer women in political and community positions of power, which may have influenced development in these communities. Exploring further the role of cultural and ethnic identity, and their conservative or liberal views on the role of women and the traditional societies may provide additional insights to community development practices in the Northern communities versus the Southern communities.

As this research, due to its design and nature, cannot be generalized to other postconflict communities, it would be interesting to see if the findings are indeed transferable by studying other postconflict communities around the world for a comparison. While responses by the international community are likely to be similar, as aid tends to be offered in a structured way, the local practices in these communities and the national structures might differ, or be similar. It would be interesting to see whether the relationship between western, cultural, and national influences had the same tensions and interworkings in other postconflict communities as they did in Sierra Leone.

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Appendix A
Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study. I am interested in learning about the ways that your community has developed toward peace since the end of the conflict. I am hoping that you will talk to me about the culture, leadership, ceremonies, rituals, structures, and institutions that have helped develop your country since the war. I will be asking you questions about yourself and experience during the recent conflict, as well as the more general processes involved in peace development efforts since the conflict ended in 2002.

Background information

1. Can you share with me a bit about yourself?

Probe: What is your name?

Probe: How old are you?

Probe: Can you share with me about your background? Where were you born?

What about other members of your family? What is your ethnicity or tribal affiliation?

Probe: What is your role in the community, are you a chief, member or the elite, part of any community groups?

2. What was your experience during the recent civil conflict?

Probe: What was your age when the conflict began?

Probe: What were your personal experiences of the war? Did you have any involvement or were affected personally?

Probe: Do you remember what happened in your community?

Probe: Did you stay in your community or did you have to flee? If you fled, to

where did you go?

Probe: Do you know anything about what happened in other communities?

3. Where were you when the conflict ended?

Probe: How did you know that the conflict had ended?

Probe: What did you do once the conflict ended?

Probe: Would you share with me your initial experiences with your community after the conflict ended?

Community Development

4. When you came back to your community, what was it like?

5. How has the community managed to come together after the war?

Probe: Have there been any ceremonies or rituals in your community designed for peace and reconciliation? What were those ceremonies like and how have they influenced or shaped the community? Why were these ceremonies useful for development, or not?

Probe: How have collectives or groups of people influenced or shaped community development toward peace? Why are these groups useful for development, or not?

Probe: How has community leadership influenced or shaped community development toward peace? How has the community leadership, i.e. the chief and elders influenced or shaped community development? Why were these leaders useful for development, or not?

Probe: How have religious leaders influenced or shaped community development? Why were these leaders useful for development, or not?

6. How has the building of structures assisted with community development? Why were these structures useful for development, or not?

Probe: How has the building of housing influenced or shaped community development? Why was the building of these homes useful, or not?

Probe: How has the building of community spaces shaped or influenced postconflict community development? Why was the building of these community spaces useful, or not?

Probe: How has the infrastructure influenced or shaped postconflict community development? Why has this infrastructure been useful, or not?

Probe: How has the educational systems influenced or shaped postconflict community building? Why were these educational systems useful, or not?

Probe: How have the political institutions influenced or shaped postconflict community development? Why have these political institutions been useful, or not?

7. Did your community receive any outside assistance for development?

Probe: Did your community receive money or programs for development from the Sierra Leonean government?

Probe: If so, what was the money for, and what activities were carried out due to this assistance?

Probe: Were the activities designed by the government and are they similar or different to the kinds of development activities a community would do on their own? Why were these activities useful for development, or not?

Probe: Did your community receive money or programs for development from

local or international organizations?

Probe: If so, what was the money for, and what activities were carried out due to this assistance?

Probe: How were the activities designed by the international organizations similar or different to development activities a community would do on their own? Why were these activities useful for development, or not?

Probe: Can you see a difference between what your community would do traditionally and what a western organization would encourage you to do to develop toward peace? Is this difference important, and if so, why?

Probe: If your community did not receive funding from these organizations, why was that the case? Did other local communities receive funding, and why do you believe that was?

8. Are there other activities, events, beliefs, or practices that we have not discussed yet that have influenced postconflict community development? If so, what are those things and why do you think they are important to mention?

I want to thank you for your kindness in sharing your thoughts and experiences about the conflict and how your community has developed since the war ended. I will be transcribing this interview to paper and would like to share it with you when I am done so that we can be sure that I have accurately captured your thoughts, opinions, and feelings. I would be happy to answer any additional questions you may have at this time about my research and this process. Thank you again for your participation.

Appendix B
Chieftaincy Structure

Chieftaincy Structure

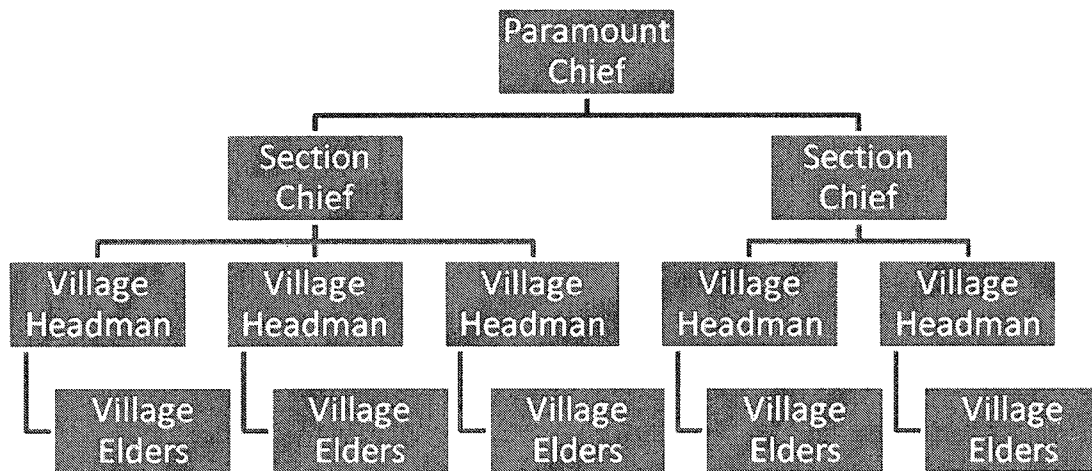


Figure 2. Chieftaincy Structure. This chart represents the hierarchical structure of the chieftaincy system in the local communities in Sierra Leone.