

Diasporas Advocacy in Sierra Leone:
A New Framework for Transitional and Transformative Justice

by

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ABSTRACT

The thesis engages diverse scholarship and debates on transitional justice, transformative justice, and diasporas studies, by placing the Sierra Leone diasporas into greater spotlight and complexity in understanding the country's post-war transition and efforts towards peace and development building. Diasporas issues have transformed remarkably in just a few decades from being characterized as burdens by host states and brain drain by sending nations. This narrative has improved, however, due to their transnational roles in enhancing the socio-political and economic development of the homeland and attracting the attention of policy and development experts, peace agents, and academics alike. This thesis argues that the diasporas is essential to both short and long-term changes essential to transitional and transformative justice. The thesis draws from in depth interviews and a survey of the Sierra Leone diasporas, and it places the diasporas at the center of analysis of Sierra Leone's transitional and transformative justice processes through an intimate ethnographic methodology.

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This thesis embodies essential episodes of my life's journey, starting with reflections on past and present, good and bad memories that continue to help shape my destiny. Despite its highs and lows, I encountered many people who steadfastly encouraged and supported me throughout this journey.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is motivated by my personal experience growing up in Sierra Leone and migrating during and after the civil war. After the war had officially ended, the loss of highly experienced and qualified Sierra Leone members – namely, the diasporas population that had moved to places like the United States and Europe – led to the opening of Sierra Leone’s immigration policy. It had passed a new law granting diasporans with dual citizenship, encouraging them to occupy any office of the land and to begin contributing more directly to Sierra Leone’s peace, recovery, and development. Improved security in the country and the prospect of fertile ground for investment opportunities succeeded in wooing members of the diasporas who flooded into and occupied top positions in government and the private sector.

Sierra Leone’s diasporas contributes about four hundred million dollars to Sierra Leone’s economy annually, which equates to about 25% of Sierra Leone’s budget (UNDP, 2009). Apart from being one of the largest contributors to local political parties in the country, the Sierra Leone diasporas actively engages in national and local politics. During the 2007 parliament, a considerable number of diasporas members held senior positions and were elected to parliament. Some diasporas actors undertake expensive trips to Sierra Leone to vote and campaign in support of their party and candidates. In fact, Sierra Leone has a rich history of leadership by diasporas actors, including its first prime minister Sir Milton Augustus Strieby Margai, who was the first Prime Minister of Sierra Leone from (1954 till his death in 1964), his brother Sir Albert Margai the second Prime Minister (1954 to 1967), and more recent leaders like, President Ahmed Tejan

Kabbah (1998 to 2007), President Ernest Bai Koroma, (2007 to 2018), and President Julius Maada Bio, (2018 to present).

Sierra Leone is a small West African nation, with a population of about 7.813 million people, 78% of whom are Muslims, 21% Christians, and 2% accounting for traditional and animist religions. Sierra Leone enjoys a harmonious relationship with its religious entities. Sierra Leone is multicultural with approximately 16 ethnic groups spread across the country, according to the 2015 Population Housing Census. The country covers an area of approximately 71,740 square Kilometers and borders The Republic of Guinea in the North and Northeast, Liberia in the East and Southeast and the Atlantic Ocean in the West and South. It has a coastline of about 300 miles with lots of mangrove swamps, numerous estuaries, and wide sandy beaches.

Due to its abundant natural resources and beautiful environment, Sierra Leone has for centuries been a magnet to foreigners. From its interaction with Europeans as early as in the 15th century, to British imperialism, Sierra Leone has a long history of diasporic transnational activities with the outside world. More recently, President Ernest Bia Koroma created an office of diasporas, seeking to formalize the connections to and roles played by the diasporas. Regardless of this rich history of the Sierra Leone Diaspora, there has been little academic scholarship explaining how and why the diasporas is crucially important.

Leadership by its diasporas community is crucial, but not fully understood in the academic scholarship. From 1991 to 2002, Sierra Leone was ravaged by a civil war that left of thousands of people dead, tens of thousands displaced and crippled the economy. Deeply divided along regional and tribal lines, a traumatized, and morally bruised nation,

the country relied almost entirely on the international community for its sustenance. Importantly, before the civil war began in Sierra Leone in 1991, the country's economy and infrastructure were already in shambles, and rates of poverty and illiteracy were very high. In fact, by the time the first bullets were fired, the country had already been relegated to the status of a failed state (Rushton 2005). The end of the civil war ushered the country on a challenging path to rebuilding, including efforts at national reconciliation and rehabilitation, justice reform and reintegration programs.

DIASPORA ACTIVISM

This thesis draws from my own personal experience and networks, as part of the Sierra Leone diasporas, to make sense of the diasporas' role in the homeland from the aftermath of the Sierra Leone Civil War up until today. Specifically, the thesis engages a diverse set of scholarship and scholarly debates, by situating the role of the Sierra Leone Diaspora in homeland processes relating to transitional justice as well as transformative justice relating to the country's continued efforts for peace and development.

The thesis borrows Fiona Adamson and Madeleine Demetriou's definition of diasporas as "a social collectivity that exists across states borders and that has succeeded over time to 1) sustain a collective national, cultural, or religious identity through a sense of internal cohesion and sustained ties with a real or imagined homeland and 2) display an ability to address the collective interests of members of the social collectivity through a developed internal organizational framework and transnational links" (2007, P 497). Similarly, Zubairu Wai emphasizes a definition of diasporas that goes beyond "experiences of migrations and displacements" by emphasizing the "socio-political and

cultural formations of displaced communities of people of Sierra Leone descent living abroad who consciously or otherwise define their ancestry as Sierra Leoneans and who construct imaginary ties and attachments to the nation state of Sierra Leone as homeland. (2012, p 46).

Even countries of the developed North like Ireland, Australia, France and the United Kingdom have come to recognize how impactful their overseas populations are. Israel, China and India have also benefited tremendously from their overseas populations (See: Boyles and Ho, 2022; Rewind and Segura 2014). Indeed, Boyle and Kitchin emphasize the importance of the diasporas for a home country's ability to engage in international diplomacy, peace and development (2013). Diasporas have been studied for their good and bad roles. They have been treated as both "peacebuilder" and "peace wreckers" (See, for example: Feron 2016; Martin 2019). This thesis is guided by a more optimistic view of the Sierra Leone diasporas population to the homeland. It builds on my own personal experience and contributes to a large scholarship that paints diasporas actors as pivotal for human rights globally (Kapur 2016, Sheffer 2013; Paterson 2005; Cohen 2005, Pellerin and Mullings 2013; Toivanen and Baser 2020).

In other words, my study reflects on the Sierra Leone diasporas on both the general and the specific. On the general level of engagement to the homeland, I cover extensively how through transnational ties, Sierra Leoneans living abroad have become very resourceful such that their contributions have also become indispensable in postwar peacebuilding efforts. Specifically, my study reflects on the binary relationship as a member of the diasporas community and the transnational roles and ties that link me to my country of origin, Sierra Leone. The intimate ethnographic research method helps

elucidate this intricate relationship of my immersion in both worlds. Growing up in the mid 1970s and throughout the 1980s provided me with a proper insight of the history and its related issues that progressively led to the civil conflict. My lived experience through the war in the early 1990s as an internally displaced person, my refugee situation in Guinea and Ghana would provide many lessons to be learned, not to mention my relationships with refugees from other countries like Liberia, Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, Congo or Tunisia.

Furthermore, my interaction with refugees, internally displaced people while working with international organizations like NMJD, GIZ and IOM after the war in 2002 would expose me to a wealth of knowledge and practical experiences on diasporas and refugee issues. Besides, my migration experience to the United States in 2016 through the Diversity Visa Lottery and its permanent residency status would offer a unique opportunity of encountering many Sierra Leonean and other diasporas groups living in The United States like me.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

This thesis addresses three core research questions:

1. How and why has the Sierra Leone diasporas influenced transitional justice, peace and development after the civil war ended in 2002?
2. What are similarities and differences between generational cohorts of the Sierra Leone diasporas, particularly cohorts who migrated before, during and after the civil war (1991-2002), in their role around transitional justice, peace and development? Why does this matter?

3. Beyond comparing the diasporas cohorts, how does the role of the Sierra Leone diasporas as a whole compare to the role played by other international and domestic stakeholders and organizations, in transitional justice, peace and development? Why does this matter?

Motivating this thesis is the desire to place the Sierra Leone diasporas into greater spotlight and greater complexity in our understanding of the country's post-war transition and efforts towards peace and development building. In doing so, the thesis fills important gaps in scholarly literature by showcasing how and why the diasporas is essential to both short and long-term changes towards justice, peace, and development. Without centering the diasporas in both transitional justice and transformative justice, the scholarship is not only missing a crucial part of Sierra Leone's story but also leaves transitional and transformative justice undertheorized. The insights and questions that guide this thesis emerge from my own lived experience as a Sierra Leone refugee and member of the diasporas. The thesis also draws from interviews and a survey of the diasporas. Thus, in addition to placing the diasporas at the center space, this thesis seeks to empower the diasporas by providing insights generated from their own experiences of being impacted by the civil war and injustices at home as well as taking on leadership roles in changing the country's future.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The scholarship relating to transitional justice, peace and development, and transformative justice, have all expanded our understanding of how countries recover and build after devastating civil wars. I draw from these areas of scholarship to better

understand how and why the Sierra Leone diasporas is so crucially connected to national recovery and (re)building.

In reviewing the scholarship for this section, I explain how the transitional justice scholarship heavily focuses on the role of international organizations like the International Court and actors, or the role of domestic institutions and actors. Similarly, I explain how scholarship on peace and development, as well as transformative justice, primarily pay attention to international organizations like the International Monetary Fund or World Bank, or to domestic politics, institutions, and actors.

By centering the Sierra Leone diasporas in the study of transitional and transformative justice, this thesis challenges the scholarship to rethink the binary of international versus domestic sources of progress. Diasporas complicate such clear divisions because they reside outside of the country, yet their identities and membership continue to be rooted in their homeland. The diasporas's role in transitional and transformative justice in their homeland relies on international as well as domestic connections. In reviewing the scholarship below, I conclude by acknowledging a few important works that have, indeed, paid careful attention to diasporas and that have established a new framework for situating diasporic actors into the study of "transnational transitional justice." I explain the strengths of this emerging scholarship and build an original concept of "diasporas homeland advocacy" that guides my analysis of the Sierra Leone diasporas throughout the thesis.

Transitional Justice

Transitional justice mechanisms have become so profoundly important that they

have become a set of standard practices for democracy and the rule of law in post-conflict societies (Lasaffer 2011). Subotic explains that transitional justice comes out to be viewed as “The move towards internalization of accountability for human rights and war crimes...” (2012 p 110), which is essential for a thriving democracy. Interestingly, while transitional justice scholarship addressing diasporic transnational roles is still in its nascent stage, there are some important debates that have emerged. Progressively, other researchers like Cross, K. 2021; Baser, B. 2017, Lambourne, 2008 have added transnational justice with peace and conflict to form a triad in their studies. Most importantly, scholarly works on diasporas and their cross-border roles relating to transitional justice have skewed towards a problematic and simplified "agents of peace" versus "peace wreckers" dichotomy (see Olonisakin 2020; Toivanen and Baser 2020; Cusato 2021; Orjuela 2017; Toivanen and Baser 2020). By contrast, this thesis seeks to better understand the advocacy role of the Sierra Leone diasporas (Rodriguez 2011; Adeniji 2021). It builds on the growing scholarship that asserts that diasporas actors can leverage their experiences in a peaceful resolution process in their countries of origin (Hall and Swain 2007; Clark, 2010; Haider, 2014).

When it comes to transitional justice from post-war conflicts, a challenge rests on how best to balance the requirements of forgiveness and punishment. Nations emerging from conflict can choose the path of forgiveness or truth commissions and adopt the South African model. Other justice systems like Rwanda employed punitive sanctions for gross human rights violators, and local truth commissions and remedies like the Gacaca court system. In Sierra Leone, unlike its Rwandan counterpart, The Special Court was based almost entirely on international humanitarian and human rights laws but a

substantially minimal adoption of local laws. The Special Court also had limited powers and was only able to prosecute “those who bear the greatest responsibility.” To further compound Sierra Leone’s transition to justice problem, traditional leaders took up arms to defend their country and some traditional leaders of the Kamajors (one of the civil defense forces fighting on the side of the government) overstepped international humanitarian law and the law of armed conflicts. Thus, Sam Hinger Norman and other heads of the Kamajors were found wanting for war crimes and crimes against humanity against the people of Sierra Leone.

It is clear from the scholarship that the Sierra Leone diasporas have been instrumental to transitional justice after the civil war. Diaspora actors lobbying for peace and promoting Sierra Leone’s peacebuilding efforts into the public sphere continue to demonstrate their importance in nation building. They pressured the international community to find solutions to end the civil war. Many members of diasporas provided witness accounts of their experiences on war crimes and crimes against humanity in The Special Court (Tunde Zack-Williams 2012; Haider 2014). This includes providing one hundred and seventy four statements that are featured in the final report by the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Young and Park. 2009).

Peace, Development, and Transformative Justice

Strangely at odds with scholarship on transitional justice, which prioritizes the response to critical events like civil wars as crucial for national healing and rebuilding, some scholarship on peace and development problematically generalizes challenges of a single region to be representative of the whole of Africa. The predominant image by the

global media of Africa paints a picture of a diseased, poverty stricken, conflict driven and backward continent. Dominant discourses have further attributed the root causes of Africa's woes to the legacy of slavery, colonialism, regional, tribal, socio-economic and political drawbacks, to the neocolonial driven foreign governments, multinational corporations coopting with the elites to plunder the continent of its rich resources (See Bah 2016; Aworawo 2001; Cook 2013; Samuels 2019).

A key contribution this thesis makes is challenging the separation of transitional and transformative justice. Fortunately, the generalized and over-simplified approach to studying peace and development in African nations is contrasted by scholarship that pays special attention to national histories, key stakeholders and communities most impacted. Kenneth Omeje and Tricia Redeker-Hepner argue that "... Africa is not as stagnantly trapped in tribal vendetta as many 'Afro-pessimist' perspectives and studies... portrayed" (2013, 8). Concentrating on the achievements of nations of the Great Lakes Region in Africa, Omeje and Redeker-Hepner reveal how countries like Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania, cultivate progress towards peace and development through local, community rooted strategies. Similarly, Bah cogently outlines the root causes of poverty, conflict and political instability in Sierra Leone and its linkages to corporate greed and exploitation (2016). As these scholars show, the ways in which power operates within African nations matter, especially for understanding processes relating to transitional and transformative justice.

This thesis contributes to the scholarship on peace and development that pays careful attention to the role of key stakeholders and impacted communities (See Reuster-Jahn 2016; Mortimore 2005; Steven Radelet 2010). In conceptualizing development, in

particular, the thesis turns to Nobel laureate Amartya Sen's development model, which extends beyond the econometric indicators like growth of gross domestic and national products infrastructural development (Amartya Sen 2010). Sen's linkage between development and freedom, and his rights-based approach to peace and development, are particularly important for thinking about why and how short-term transitional justice mechanisms in post-war countries lead into transformative justice that are long-term (Amartya Sen 2001). This thesis is grounded in the idea that freedom and rights are intimately linked to development, especially the right to education, health, and life chances (Miletzki and Broten 2017, 5; Saeed 2015; Jacobson 2016; Klein; 2017).

A growing scholarship on peace, development and transformative justice is recognizing the importance of diasporas members (de Haas 2010). Members of the diasporas community are crucial to long-term economic development because they provide invaluable financial resources through remittances and Foreign Direct Investment (Beauchemin and Safi 2020; Brinkerhoff 2011; Konte 2016; Park 2021; Serem 2021). A stream of literature supports the claim that diasporas actors participate in and promote peacebuilding and democratization (Baser 2015; Hall, 2016; Kostic, 2012; Lyons, 2006). They are also instrumental in facilitating diplomacy and international relations between their host countries and their countries of origin, which further supports their homeland national development projects (Cohen 2005).

Even diplomatic and specialized organizations/agencies have recognized the crucial roles of overseas population, as exemplified by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in 2016, which established an organization called Connecting Diasporas for Development (CD4D). CD4D links Sierra Leone diasporas actors with diasporas

groups from six European countries, the private sector, and educational institutions, in order to invest in education, health, agriculture and knowledge transfer in Sierra Leone. Located in Sierra Leone, CD4D also works with other international and regional organizations like the Migration Dialogue for West Africa (MIDWA), Euro-African Dialogue on Migration and Development (Rabat Process), the European Commission, ECOWAS and countries from North, West and Central Africa to tackle migration-related questions. The Sierra Leone diasporas community is being integrated into the country's development initiatives, like the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, the Millennium Development Goals are strategies designed to include the ambitious vision to transform Sierra Leone into a middle income nation by 2035.

Speaking on the important roles of the diasporas community in achieving the nation's development goals, one keynote speaker on the Sierra Leone Diaspora Agribusiness forum, explained: "... mainstream and institutionalize provisions for diasporas throughout policies in all sectors of the state, such as Diasporas are a valuable support to development" (IOM 2018, p 12). Reiterating the diasporas's importance, former IOM Country representative Mr. Sanusie Savage stated: "...the diasporas is a secret cornerstone for unlocking the potential economic development of Sierra Leone... "mobilize diasporas investment and agribusiness in the hope that they will in turn, continue to improve the country's image through maximizing the benefit in its nutrition and food security" (IOM 2018, p 10).

The Sierra Leone government made a similar conscious effort to establish the Office of Diaspora Affairs under its Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Relations, and stepped up its commitment to global and regional bodies that promote

diasporas and migration issues. This includes Sierra Leone becoming a member of the regional consultative process (RCP) of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which is responsible for discussing migration issues within the West African subregion. It also participates in the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) and works with the European Union (EU), to design strategies for enhancing safe migration across the South–South region. Finally, Sierra Leone is part of the Pan-African Forum on Migration (PAFoM), which brings together all African Union member States, the African Union regional economic communities, RCPs in Africa, United Nations agencies and intergovernmental organizations, in order to address migration governance.

Transnational Transitional Justice

My thesis builds on a rich scholarship on transitional justice, peace and development, and transformative justice by offering original analysis of the role that the Sierra Leone diasporas plays in both transitional as well as more long term transformative justice. Of particular importance for the thesis is Haider’s (2014 p 210) concept of “transnational transitional justice,” which offers the most developed framework for situating the diasporas within processes of transitional justice in a home country. Haider’s scholarship provides a critical linkage between the diasporas and transitional justice emerging in homelands. Despite their physical separation, Haider explains:

“Transnational activities can be considered diasporic when they involve national categories and particular identities, such as ethnic, religious or national groups” (2014, p 211). Transnationalism allows a diasporas to essentially stretch beyond communities and

range from abstract processes and activities to cross-border groups, movements and organizations. This crucial insight allows Haider to situate the diasporas within transitional justice as key actors. This includes the diasporas contributing to legal, political, economic and psychosocial developments that emerge after (and even during) a transitional phase to reconcile communities that experience violent fractures or events.

In addition to transitional justice, Haider also stresses the need to consider the diasporas's role in "transformative justice" too (p 210). She explains: "Diasporas can play an important bridging role, engaging in advocacy, outreach and awareness-raising... in host countries. The mere involvement of diasporas can attract greater media attention and raise awareness in host countries to trans-national justice processes and situations in the home country."(2014, p 217). Overall, Haider's work helps situate the diasporas as key actors by way of transnational mechanisms connecting them to transitional justice processes and outcomes, and she signals that a similar pattern might also exist when it comes to transformative justice.

Tricia Redeker-Hepner's scholarship on refugees, asylees and diasporic experiences on the Horn of Africa offers a similarly important foundation for how this thesis unpacks the role of the Sierra Leone diasporas. Focusing mainly on the Eritrean diasporas community, Redeker-Hepner's work examines the political dynamics of power, politics between and among diasporas groups and their counterparts in their country of origin (Hepner 2013; Hepner 2005; Hepner 2003; Hepner and Tecle 2013; Hepner 2012). Importantly, Redeker-Hepner reveals the strong role of diasporas for both transitional and transformative justice processes. Specifically, she reveals strong transnational ties between the Eritrean diasporas community and their counterparts in the homeland, and

affirms the diasporas' role in the socioeconomic and political transformation taking place in the homeland (2013).

Haider and Redeker-Hepner's work both resonate with the works of other eminent migration and diasporas scholars that link the diasporas to transnational justice interventions in reconciling divided societies (Bilsky, 2007; Young and Park, 2009; Schabas, 2004; Imran Kanu, 2021, Sesay, 2021). Haider distinguishes diasporas from transnationalism by stating that: "This examination needs to expand beyond the traditional focus on remittances and economic investment in order to explore more holistically the potentials of diasporas to contribute to peacebuilding, in particular looking at their participation in transnational justice and reconciliation" (Haider 2014; p.224). According to Haider, diasporas actors reveal overlapping roles of transnational justice and its impacts in transforming societies from a violent past into a pathway to social, economic and political development (2014). Portes and Yiu similarly explain that transnationalism involves multiple activities and ties that link diasporas groups to their countries of origin (2013). Their transnational roles go beyond economic and financial activities to include social, psychological and knowledge transfer across borders. Swain and Phan 2012 acknowledges that while transnationalism has existed for centuries, breakthroughs in communication, transportation and economic interconnectedness have facilitated and complicated this relationship.

A "DIASPORA ADVOCACY" FRAMEWORK

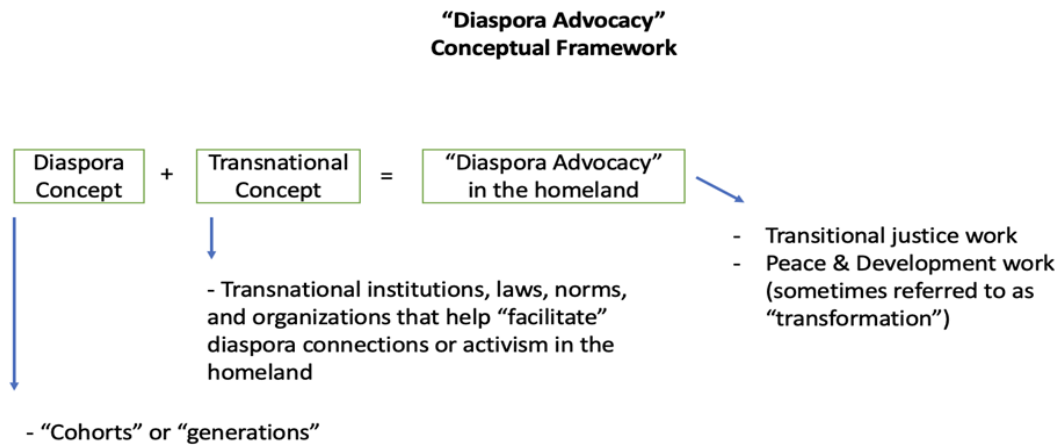
Building on Haider's notion of "transnational transitional justice" and the work of Redeker-Hepner and others that link diasporas members to both transitional and

transformative justice, this section introduces a new conceptual framework that guides the thesis. What I call the “diasporas homeland advocacy” framework (DHA) which aims to capture both transitional forms of justice and broader efforts relating to peace and development. Rethinking the diasporas as advocates who share the lived experiences of those they advocate for, helps us reimagine their role as crucial for transitional justice and for transformative justice. DHA seeks to capture the more complex, short and long-term role of the diasporas for producing change at home.

DHA draws from Haider’s transnational transitional justice framework but differs in a few areas. Most importantly, Haider focuses on “conflict-generated diasporas” - those who fled as refugees and asylees, and primarily seeks to identify the transnational mechanisms directly linking them to transitional justice efforts in their homelands. Remittances and investments made by the diasporas are two key transnational mechanisms that Haider highlights. By contrast, this thesis seeks to situate the Sierra Leone diasporas in greater complexity through multiple cohorts rather than the more bounded conflict generated diasporas population. Specifically, I include the Sierra Leone population who migrated prior to the country’s civil war, during the war, and after the war, as three distinctive cohorts that make up the broader diasporas. I also explicitly examine each cohort’s role in transitional justice activities as well as their role in transformative justice (peace and development) activities. Finally, the thesis offers a more dynamic view of the diasporas’s activism as having transnational and local mechanisms, which I argue is better captured through the concept of “diasporas homeland advocacy.” I will argue that the diasporas is active at different levels, including being part of cross-border social networks and alliances, working groups, task forces,

interfaith coalitions, and support groups in order to address complex social and policy issues.

Figure 1. Diasporas Advocacy Framework



Rather than focusing on a single cohort, the thesis finds inspiration from the work of Redeker-Hepner and of Berg and Eckstein, which situate their studies of the diasporas through multiple generational cohorts. Redeker-Hepner categorizes diasporas actors into different generations in order to better situate how different diasporas actors are influenced by the Eritrean Revolution (2014). Berg and Eckstein similarly conceptualize the diasporas along multiple generational cohorts in order to capture its diversity, especially their pre-migration experiences and history as well as their interfacing with one another (Eckstein, 2009, Berg and Eckstein 2012; Berg and Eckstein 2015). Employing this cohort approach, the thesis assesses the Sierra Leone diasporas community’s experiences by categorizing them into different cohorts (those who migrated before, during and after the Sierra Leone civil war).

METHODS AND APPROACH

My thesis utilizes intimate ethnography, which weaves throughout the various chapters of the study and incorporates my voice in a way that invokes Waterson's (2019) statement: *If I did it right with the research and the writing, I thought, intimate ethnography would bridge story and scholarship, bridging knowledge and understanding into the public conversations on critical issues* (2019, 15-16). Intimate ethnography empowers the researcher to be both a participant and a researcher at the same time. Lewin and Silverstein (2016) explain that this approach allows the researcher to also serve as the narrator in ways that allow for exploring critical contemporary and historical events throughout the research processes. Fassin (2015) adds that intimate ethnography is most suitable for studies that are aimed at targeting larger publics. Waterson (2018) similarly explains that there is an "afterlife of intimate ethnography" because of the ways that it can impact audiences and the wider public. This impact comes out of intimate ethnography because of what Ohnuki-Tierney (2017) describes as the intimacy of ethnographic observation, as "a deeply private and interior place" of knowledge production (p684). Waterson (1999) similarly explains, the ethnographer must recognize the "intimate space as a legitimate starting point for a critical inquiry into the relations between history and biography that could be captured in ethnography" (p. 9).

I approach this thesis through intimate ethnographic methodology and approach, with the desire to place the Sierra Leone diasporas into greater spotlight and greater complexity in our understanding of the country's post-war transition and efforts towards peace and development building. The intimate ethnographic approach I take is

fundamentally linked with the theoretical contribution my thesis makes to the scholarship. Without centering the diasporas in both transitional justice and transformative justice, the scholarship is not only missing a crucial part of Sierra Leone's story but also leaves transitional and transformative justice undertheorized. The insights and questions that guide this thesis emerge from my own lived experience as a Sierra Leone refugee and member of the diasporas. The thesis also draws from interviews and a survey of the diasporas. Thus, in addition to placing the diasporas center stage, this thesis seeks to provide insights generated from their own experiences of being impacted by the civil war and injustices at home as well as taking on leadership roles in changing the country's future.

I draw from experiences I have shared with other diasporas members of Sierra Leone living in the United States. In Spring Semester of 2021 while taking a Reading and Conference course with one of my professors, I was also interning with FEDSL-AZ as a course requirement for the Master of Arts in Social Justice and Human Rights program. The course was structured to focus on leading topical debates on diasporic issues, on which the focus of my study is derived. During our readings, my professor and I worked towards framing the research title and the method of approach to be conducted during the study. I would respond to the readings and complete an annotated bibliography, where I received feedback from my professor. Zoom meetings were also helpful by placing the readings into their various perspectives on the diasporic debate raised and their empirical claims.

This thesis draws from my role as an intern with FEDSL-AZ where I interacted with fellow Sierra Leoneans and acquired a wealth of practical knowledge that proved valuable to this research and my personal development. During this time also, I relied primarily on social media networks, like WhatsApp or through Zoom for meetings and conferences and less so on in person interactions because of COVID-19 restrictions.

In addition to my lived experience as a member of the diasporas, I gained personally from my internship; I conducted 12 open-ended interviews and 61 closed-ended surveys with members of the Sierra Leone diasporas living in Maryland, Virginia, New Jersey, Wisconsin, Illinois, Delaware, New York and Arizona. I intentionally sought out participants belonging to all three cohorts (who migrated before, during and after the civil war). Being able to ask open-ended and closed-ended questions to members in all three cohorts is crucial to capturing the role of the diasporas in transitional justice and transformative justice, and to compare these roles across the cohorts for their similarities and differences. Please see Appendix A for the interview instrument and Appendix B for the survey instrument. Importantly, rather than making causal claims grounded in positivist or statistical analysis, I unpack the interviews and surveys in order to describe and enrich our understanding of the complex role the diasporas plays. My analysis is built on the intimate ethnographic approach, where my lived experience and positionality as a member of the diasporas informs the key insights from the interviews and surveys.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The thesis is organized to introduce my story (Chapter 2) and the history of the Sierra Leone diasporas (Chapter 3) prior to unpacking the interviews and surveys, where

other diasporas members' experiences and perspectives are uncovered. This is intentional and intended to slowly reveal the existence and complexity of the core concept this thesis seeks to develop: "diasporas advocacy." This concept lies at the heart of each chapter. My story in Chapter 2 explores my role in transitional and transformative justice, and situates my story as a historical timeline demarcated by before, during and after the Civil War. The history of the diasporas that I provide in Chapter 3 seeks to establish familiarity and context behind the diasporas's activism, with a focus on how the injustices that the diasporas has experienced throughout much of the country's history as well as the critical event of its modern civil war (1991-2002) both shaped the diasporas's role in fighting for transitional and transformative justice. With my story and this history laid out, Chapter 3 and 4 broaden the thesis to include the experiences and perspectives of other Sierra Leone diasporas members in order to showcase the various ways that the diasporas is at the forefront of transitional justice and transformative justice in Sierra Leone. Finally, the conclusion chapter ends the thesis by explaining why centering diasporic advocacy in peace and development studies is crucial.

CONCLUSION

The primary goal of this study is to inspire scholars, policy experts, members of the diasporas community and other major stakeholders in the search for solutions that would help utilize diasporas' potentials for peace and development in a sustainable way. It also seeks to fill in the gap of literature on the transnational role of Sierra Leone diasporas in the development of their countries of residence and especially in their

country of origin. This effort could be directed towards creating and generating investment opportunities, job creation and technology transfer.

This research has potential among diasporas actors in diplomacy and can also be useful for other researchers, politicians, think tanks, local and international refugee organizations on how diasporas issues can be utilized to advance peace and development.

Sierra Leoneans, both at home and in the diasporas, will view this study as an important document on the influential role of diasporas community throughout Sierra Leone's history and how best they can harness their diasporas population to achieve positive development initiatives through collaboration, effective dialogues and enhance economic, business, or educational opportunities.

By the end of this study, the researcher would have acquired a wealth of knowledge and experience in diverse fields of diasporas studies and how those skills can be harnessed for further research.

CHAPTER 2

SITUATING DIASPORAS ADVOCACY IN MY LIVED EXPERIENCE

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I tell the story of how my life experiences before, during and after the war has shaped my relationships and responsibilities as a member of the diasporas. I connect my personal history (before, during, after) as formative for my current role in transitional justice, peace and development. Through my life history, the chapter reveals why the diasporas has such deep roots and is so invested in Sierra Leone's progress relating not just to transitioning from its civil war, but more broadly with regards to the country's economic and political welfare. My lineage and culture further deepen the connection I have with my homeland. It is through my story and experiences that I begin to argue that centering the diasporas in the scholarship on transitional and transformative justice is crucial. My story reveals why and how the diasporas has a deep connection to activism and justice, which is rooted in history and in my experience of the civil war.

I currently lead in many areas of advocacy as a member of the diasporas. I am an Executive member of the Sierra Leonean organization in Arizona FED-SLAZ, I am a leader in my local church, and an active member of a renown Sierra Leone political party in the United States. I participate in and assist in the framing of important decisions including raising funds for a Sierra Leone multipurpose community center in Arizona. I also participate in supportive efforts for fellow diasporas members living throughout the United States, in areas such as weddings, christening, or funeral ceremonies. I also contribute and help plan and execute development projects back home in Sierra Leone

with a focus on emergency/ disaster relief projects. I contribute financially to my political party, lobby individual politicians and party delegates home and abroad on matters bordering on peace and development in the homeland. On some occasions, I participate in designing joint statements on policy and human rights issues including campaigning, lobbying and withholding funding as a tool to bring pressure to bear on political parties and/or their agencies in adopting diasporic driven policies.

The Sierra Leone society is communal like in nature, glued by extended family ties and intermarriages, and children are partly owned by the society as a whole, or so it is believed. Hence, a successful child is expected to plow back to the community that helped raise him/ her. By implication therefore, I represent different communities that range from my institutions of learning- schools and colleges, the places I lived as well as my ancestral home (the places in the North of Sierra Leone from where my descendants hailed even when I was not born there.) One of the schools I attended, for instance, has a detailed list of contacts of us diasporas outgoing students connected through WhatsApp and Facebook where we plan, design and implement school development projects. In most of these projects, I help finance any development initiative of my choice, like furniture, scholarships, awards, sanitation or building. I also give technical advice, and mentorship to present students and other related supports. With my small-scale agribusiness project in Makeni, Northern Sierra Leone, I have provided employment opportunities for six people. From part of the profit obtained from the business, I also help nearby schools and the elderly. In my mother's village, I support one of the primary schools and a safe drinking water project.

MY STORY BEFORE THE WAR

The period of my story is reflective of my experience and understanding of the events, from economic, political instability especially during the APC one party dictatorship and the factors that precipitated the people's migration during this era. On the other hand, the classification of the Sierra Leone diasporas into generational cohorts,- before, during and after the war- not only creates ease, it also reveals some interesting findings with a chain of events spanning throughout the study. For instance, both the survey and interview portrays that in spite of its complex multidimensional composition, the Sierra Leone diasporas is closely linked and contributes immensely to their homeland. The survey and interview demonstrate diasporas contributions through remittances, knowledge transfer, education, human rights infrastructure and other transnational transitional justice, peace and development interventions to the homeland.

I was born part of a generation of Sierra Leoneans to have been gravely impacted by what has been widely considered as “ The Resources Curse Phenomena.” As a matter of fact, this phrase starkly epitomizes a group of people whose descendants' own territories blessed with valuable minerals and resources and who, instead of benefiting from those resources, are instead plagued with conflict, exploitation and injustice. This is precisely the fate of my clan which has fallen prey to exploitation from external powerful forces and whose internal vices have also aided and abetted their sufferings for generations.

Both my mother and father had no form of formal education despite both of them being born from powerful traditional ruling families. As custodians of their territories both parents supervised and owned lands vast in some of the world's precious minerals

and natural resources like the Bumbuna Waterfalls. My mother was the eldest daughter of the family but as tradition dictated being a girl child she had no entitlement to her father's possessions including land. To make matters worse, educating girl children in her day was considered a waste of resources as their roles were considered to be confined to house and childcare related activities. My father was one of the provincial youths to be conscripted into the British Colonial army in Sierra Leone, with no skills training or benefits after retirement.

Lacking any form of formal education, and determined to create a better future from the life that had impoverished and ostracized her, my mom escaped with her only surviving daughter to Freetown where she met and married my father. My mother met my dad with two other children, and had four children with my dad. We may not have compared to our rich neighbors, but our parents worked hard to help us achieve a better future and with an avowed faith in enabling us to surmount the peasantry status to which they were being confined. Alas, those hopes were ruined by a feud over insurance money between one of my uncles and my dad which resulted in him transferring the anger onto our mom and eventually leaving the house, abandoning us.

It was obvious that the absence of our father symbol took a heavy toll on the family but even as a single parent, my mom worked very hard and manually to cater for our wellbeing and also ensuring that all of us were educated. I was very, very close to my mom. As the last born, after my younger brother succumbed to measles my mom lavishly threw her love on me in compensation of the absence of a fatherly love. A self-styled disciplinarian, my mom had what it takes to push her children to maximize their full potential. She will forever be remembered for her generosity, meekness and in making

people happy, especially her broad knowledge in oral folklore/storytelling and parables. She had a mastery of the art of coining every living experience to her stories and parables with appropriate moral lessons always following. Not only was she passing on her experiences to us, we also learned lots of valuable skills in such interesting ways that would lure even our rich neighbors' kids to the shack we called home. I grew up having only my mother providing for our every need and wellbeing. My mother always had perfect excuses to give even when our father was missing in action for many years.

My dad, who had been missing in action for over a year, showed up a week after my ninth birthday and in what looked like a belated birthday gift, he did what every father must, carried me for registration at one neighboring school- Olivet Baptist Primary School in Freetown. The excitement of starting schooling was overwhelming, especially with the assurance of my new pairs of blue shorts and white shirts , new pair of shoes, a backpack crafted from bamboo tree with some books, pens and an assortment of new school items. Yet, amidst the euphoria, I wondered how I would cope with friends my age who started school two years prior. My dad bade farewell and promised to come back as soon as he was done harvesting his cassava at the province in Lunsar Town in the North of Sierra Leone. Cassavaman never came back.

As a primary school pupil in the 1980s, I had very little experience of adequately analyzing the causes and the effects of the political and economic mishaps that were crippling our country. I was equally not knowledgeable enough to contribute to the impacts of The International Monetary Fund (IMF) Conditionalities and the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) dominating public discussions that would come close to provoking our teachers to throw punches at each other. Meanwhile, the devastating

consequences of these policies offered much more evidence than words could sound. As always, the unstable rate of petroleum products and its black-market prices coupled with its domino effects in escalating commodity prices, drove more families below the poverty line as it did in Sierra Leone. The devaluation of the Leones against the dollar and the capital flight amidst the smuggling and pillaging of the state's resources by corrupt state officials and their business counterparts would make an already bad situation even worse.

Even though Sierra Leone had adopted the international human rights laws that protect children and ensure that they maximize their full potentials, my childhood and indeed many like me, had ours punctuated by insecurity and offered little opportunities. This frighteningly deplorable state of affairs would progress right into my youth and adversely affected my adult life.

I can hardly remember a time during my entire childhood and youthful stage when there wasn't any violence of some sort: If Sierra Leone Labor Unions had not issued an ultimatum for better wages, students or medical workers would be on strike. In those days as, gang violence, prostitution, drug peddling and crime rates increased, the culture of impunity held sway. After seventeen years in power, President Siaka Stevens' went in blatant violation of the constitution by handpicking an army strongman, Major General Joseph Saidu Momoh as his successor in 1985. This political move proved very divisive and alienated a significant number of the Sierra Leonean population. Although the nation had become more polarized, escalating tensions along tribal, regional, and ethnic lines, it was the economic situation, facilitated mainly by the implementation of the IMF conditionality and the laying off thousands of workers that struck the immediate

and devastating consequences. For instance, almost half of my peers could not make it past primary level for financially related matters.

President Siaka Stevens meanwhile was a shrewd politician, who had exerted total control over state institutions. Politicizing the security forces, president Stevens appointed the police and army bosses to parliament; so when he handpicked President Joseph Saidu Momoh a Major General of the Sierra Leone Army as his successor in blatant violation of the constitution, there was not much the rubber-stamped parliament could do. Meanwhile, his ardent supporters were spinning his devastating policies as steps towards national cohesion.

It did not take long to realize that even a change of government could do very little or nothing to improve the decades of bad governance and economic degradation. On the contrary, the situation got even worse. The global financial crisis of 1986 had wreaked a terrible toll on weaker economies like Sierra Leone. This global economic shock coupled with the overburdened domestic crises, the president in just two years in office, declared an economic state of emergency in 1987. As Poverty intensified, so also did the death rate as doctors diverted medical equipment meant for public use to their private clinics, healthcare workers would abandon their patients. It was not uncommon for operations to be carried out in the dark or without anesthesia. The lucky few would be charged exorbitant fees, people on emergency units left to die while the mortuary units would leave dead bodies to decompose in their demand for better conditions of service.

This pervasive form of state capture by the elites coopting with their counterparts in the business sector and their special interests amidst worsening cost of

living for the ordinary people was a premonitory warning that something worse was bound to happen.

We on the other hand were blessed with a mother who would not be deterred by this tough condition. Bringing her hard work and ingenuity, she was single-handedly able to weather the storm and catered for her family even in the toughest of times. Families crumbled, divorce rates increased, school dropout youths turned prostitutes and “Rara Boys”- “ragamuffins” developed a gang culture when violence would become the first option. Once thriving communities would be mushroomed with ghettos where resentments and frustrations were fermented. The deplorable state of conditions became so rampant that it either forced businesses to close or scared entrepreneurs or investors away. Worse still, as the government implemented the merciless IMF and SAP conditionalities of reducing its workers, new university graduates were joining the army of unemployed youths nationwide by the 1980s and 90s.

Prioritizing our schooling, our mom ensured that our extra times were put into profitable use, lest any of us end up in the ghettos. Meanwhile, the allure of gangster lifestyle- the partying and music, the friendships were more appealing to me than the boring hard work and discipline to which my mom had subjected me.

Though uneducated, my mother’s farming skills were remarkable. From selecting the high yielding crops, to nursing and preservation, she also mastered the farm management skills of being able to cater for her family needs. Her traditional mixed cropping of growing rice beans and corn in both swamp and upland farms during the rainy seasons was one of her rewarding skills. During the dry season, she switched to growing different varieties of vegetables using the rice husks and animal waste for

manure. She also reared goats and sheep and kept local poultry in a barn in our backyard. Although she was very good at savings, she also sold or bartered some of her livestock when there were issues requiring higher financial solutions.

Plowing large fields and nursing the crops was one thing, preventing rodents and birds from devouring the crops was another issue altogether. There was no need to complain about rodents, as gaming grasscutters, squirrels, beavers or guinea pigs were not just a favorite culture but also very rewarding as delicacies needed for our hard work. But scaring birds, especially the stubborn gregarious weaverbirds was very stressful and time consuming. Armed with slings and catapults as our most potent weapons to take on the weaverbirds, we would position ourselves on makeshift huts serving as watch towers from where we would throw a barrage of stones on the schools of birds as they tried to descend on our crops.

These birds proved to us how much of a threat they could pose to our crops with maneuverings, cleverness and endurance. Dividing themselves into smaller units and columns, some would fly overhead to the far end of the farm and at the same time another unit would fly very low trying to outflank us. Just when our attention would be directed at the dispersed schools of birds, other smaller units would have landed around some grasslands or bushes hopping towards the farm. Our toughest moments were whenever it rained, and that always gave the birds the upper hand.

These were the sorts of struggles we inherited in a country that offered very little or no opportunities for its citizens. Knowing full well that our labor from the farm was our only source of livelihood, we knew we had to devise a strategy to contain these birds before they brought our family to the brink of starvation. One fateful day we mobilized

and planned a sustained attack targeting the bases of the weaverbirds in the dead of the night when they had gone to roost. This sustained jungle warfare coupled with the element of surprise helped us to drastically reduce the weaverbird's population and drove the remnants deep into the forests.

At the state level, the politics of patronage reigned supreme as absolute power evolved around the president, who was sustained by party loyalists. This patron-client relationship helped weaken state institutions even further and exacerbated the pillaging of state resources for private gain. After having consolidated himself in power and supervising a corrupt government for seventeen years, one would have expected that the octogenarian dictator would take steps towards expiating his wrongs, instead, he chose to do the worse. He would flout the dictates of the constitution to impose his will on the people of Sierra Leone. Instead of taking the path of democracy, President Stevens selected a military general, Joseph Saidu Momoh as his successor in 1985 amidst the turbulence hovering over the nation.

Realizing that the country was in recession and deeply divided, the new leader embarked on programs designed to unify the country and revamp the economy. First, he introduced sweeping reforms: On the reconciliation drive, the new president responded to the yelp for a multiparty system of government to replace the single party dictatorship which critics believed had generated more problems it was meant to alleviate.

He also set up the Peter Tucker Commission that led to the promulgation of a new constitution in 1991. This new democratic dispensation was cut short by the rebel incursion later that same year, despite the negotiations and reforms.

MY STORY DURING THE WAR

The story surrounding my experience during the war covers a narrative concerning my family background, and the struggles my family and I encountered through the economic and political instability that dominated those periods. Not only does my story narrate my history, it also tells my passion through history. The main takeaway of this story is that even though I went through considerable difficulties during political, education, and economic difficulties during the war era, I have grown up knowing that if I am in a position to help, it is my responsibility to do so. This section uses my story to demonstrate the nature of forced migration and sends a cryptic message as to why peace must be the only option in securing a better future for all Sierra Leoneans.

When the conflict first started in March 1991 in a tiny village of Bomaru in Southern Sierra Leone, the government was quick to dismiss the attackers as “ragtag boys,” “bandits,” “criminals” from the Liberian side of the borders and assured the public to remain calm as swift and decisive actions would be taken to restore sanity. The weak disaffected, demoralized military gave the RUF, who had distinguished themselves not by their tactics or bravery, but by the savagery they unleashed on the civilian population the impetus to intensify their campaign of terror. The unprecedented rules of engagement were captured by international media outlets which tuned the world’s attention to the horrendous nature of the conflict in Sierra Leone- mass killings, rape, burning of whole towns and villages to the use of child soldiers.

Emboldened by their gains made on the field and proven to be more than ragtag criminals, Revolutionary United Front would turn their attention to their grand agenda: They had vowed to replace the APC Government they accused of being corrupt, inept and dictatorial. The RUF had a two-track approach to accomplish this diabolic plan. First, entrepreneurial warlords like Charles Taylor, who by proxy provided the RUF the support to annex and plunder the resources rich territories like the diamondiferous areas of Kono, Tongo, or Kenema in the Southeast or “blood diamond”- to finance their war efforts. This was a game changer for the rebels and so also was the destruction of important infrastructure that helped bring the already beleaguered APC government to its knees. Some who could not fathom how a country endowed with abundant resources could glide into such a brutal conflict branded the Sierra Leone conflict “ a senseless war.” A deeper dive into history, however, unveils multiple but interrelated factors that range from injustice, one party dictatorship, suppression of opposition figures and dissenting voices to high rate of poverty and unemployment as the main causes of the conflict.

The “NPRC Junta Boy’s “and the Overthrow of The All Peoples’ Congress

Distraught about the lack of proper equipment and poor conditions of service at the warfront, a group of young soldiers stormed Freetown and overthrew the government on April 29, 1992. It was early in the morning and people were going about their business. Like many other high school students, I was in school that morning when the news of the coup was made public on the national broadcasting station. Pandemonium gripped the whole city as people ran helter-skelter, looting ensued, multiple arrests of

former government officials and extrajudicial killings of top APC officials were carried out. Not even the farm and livestock from which our family got its sustenance were spared by thieves. The National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) as they called themselves composed of young military officers, all in their twenties, inexperienced, received a hero's welcome by the public who were tired of the APC's 23 years of misrule. The junta leaders promised to bring the war to an end and return the country to democratic rule.

Dressed in military fatigues with their trademark Ray Ban sunglasses and escorted by fleets of brand-new SUVs, the "Khaki boys" were the new role models for young men and the attractive young ladies who fell prey to their luxurious lifestyles. Without a second thought, I made moves to enlist for the military cadet course after completing high school. The popularity of "The Liberators" as they were called, began to wane when they began to conduct themselves as the very corrupt politicians they replaced and so did my desire to build a career in the military. Abandoning the welfare of the people and their promises to end the conflict and restore democracy, they resorted to personal enrichment, intimidation, and the desire to continue staying in power. Petty jealousies, mistrust and division set in and led to the ousting of the junta leader Valentine Strasser in a palace coup by his second-in-command Julius Maada Bio in January, 1996.

The RUF capitalizing on the animosity of the junta, intensified their military campaign on capturing mineral rich and strategically important areas. My distant relatives from both my mom and dad's lineage, whose resources had been exploited for generations, would this time become a major flashpoint for being rich in minerals and its

strategic importance of housing the hydroelectric dam. Deliberately targeting the civilian population, the rebels indiscriminately massacred thousands of civilians in their bid to capture and control the dam and gold fields. Some relatives who survived the onslaught found their way in the capital and sought refuge in our home. The arrival of our relatives was an added burden to the already tough condition my mother had to shoulder as a single mother.

One of the biggest gains for the RUF was the mistrust and cracks within the security system which was exploited to the fullest. The RUF recruited people in sensitive government offices and the military who acted as moles leaking sensitive state secret and classified information. Under mountains of pressure by the international community, the new junta leader, Julius Maada Bio was forced to conduct elections and return the country to civilian rule in the same year in 1996 and power was handed over to Ahmed Tejan Kabbah of the SLPP Party. Meanwhile, the corruption, betrayals and low morale of the military continued in earnest under the new government. The civilian population who had had enough of the treachery of the military decided to form civil defense forces- The “Kamajors” in the South, the “the Donsos” “The Kapras” and “Gbethes” in the North to defend themselves and their communities. In expression of their frustration in, and mistrust of the military, the term “Sobels” was coined, indicating that the soldiers who had taken oath to protect lives and property had traitorously transferred their loyalty to the rebels instead.

This treachery was manifested in another coup in May 1997 when Major Johnny Paul Koroma overthrew the government of Ahmed Tejan Kabbah to form the Armed

Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) comprising members of the RUF to rule the country. The action attracted stiff resistance from the public and total condemnation by members of the international community. The AFRC Junta went a step further to break open the central prison, and free some of the most hardened criminals, who joined the rebels and the malcontent soldiers to transform the country, especially for those of us living in the capital city of Freetown, into a living hell. Starvation held sway as food was weaponized, looting, reprisal killings, arsons, lynching, rape and other atrocious crimes were committed during the junta reign until they were ousted by ECOMOG forces in 1998.

A Narrow Escape from the January 6 Massacre

The breakaway faction of the military, their RUF counterpart with support from Charles Taylor's NPFL Rebels regrouped and launched an offensive of a colossal scale on the capital Freetown on January 6, 1999- a day Sierra Leoneans will always remember. It was a quiet Sunday morning at about 5 am when most residents would still be in bed, that the rebels stealthily positioned themselves in strategic positions of my community in Calabatown in Eastern Freetown, cutting off all escape routes. It was only when, to my astonishment, I found myself in the net of heavily armed combatants, most of whom were conscripts in their teens that the premonition I had a couple of days earlier that something terrible was going to happen began to make sense to me. Like most residents, I was overwhelmed by a sense of betrayal when I came to understand that the ECOMOG Forces on whom I had banked my faith for protection, abandoned their post at

Jui Junction in Freetown the night before, as the rebels march triumphantly and captured the Eastern and Central parts of the capital city.

Unprovoked, the trigger-itching combatants started their campaign of terror, publicly executing people they accused as “Collaborators.” Like flocks of sheep led to the slaughter, the rebels ordered everybody out of their houses, setting buildings alight and shooting indiscriminately at the crowd killing many and wounding others. Those who refused to join the exodus were either shot or set afire in their houses and left to perish. It was only after we were being trapped in the crossfire between the advancing rebels, who were firing heavily at the ECOMOG Forces from behind the crowd, that we realized that we were being used as human shields. The January 6 attack was very well executed to capture a large portion of Freetown, but at the expense of the lives of countless Sierra Leoneans. Besides those who died in the crossfire, those who attempted to retreat were ambushed and shot at. A substantial number of people were swallowed by the piles of quicksand around the seas and river sides. Others in their doomed attempt to cross the Atlantic drowned. I was among the lucky ones to have escaped and live to tell the story of what looked like one blockbuster movie “Escape from Sobibor” which chronicled the escape of Jewish prisoners from a Nazi concentration camp.

With my life hanging in the balance, I escaped onboard a rickety and overcrowded boat to Conakry in Guinea. The trauma from the war experience coupled with the pang of pain from worries for my family and loved ones in my war-torn country was a constant nightmare. For almost a year, I was in constant fear of suffering the fate of many young men my age who were wrongfully arrested and subjected to inhumane

treatment in one of Guinean prisons or even killed. I had a sigh of relief when I managed to migrate to Ghana, where I lived till peace was restored in Sierra Leone in 2002.

MY STORY AFTER THE WAR

The roles of the Sierra Leone diasporas population after the war portrays them as key stakeholders in the country, although no literature acknowledged how profoundly important Sierra Leone's overseas population could be to the homeland. Issues like these have driven my passion to showcase their indispensable roles as well as advocate for their involvement in post-conflict peace and development. Again, through my story and experience, I show the resilience and the concerted effort born out of the bond between diasporas actors and the homeland. This is very important for transnational justice, peace, and development because it helps elucidate the how and why the reciprocal relationship between diasporas should plow back to their homeland and vice-versa.

Listening to the gory details of survivors who took the risk to venture through the Sahara Desert or the Mediterranean Sea while working for the International Organization for Migration in Sierra Leone reminded me of my forced migration to neighboring Guinea and Ghana during the conflict in my country. The prospect of migrating to the United States on a permanent visa status was considered a breakthrough not just for my wife and I, but also for both families. The popular culture in our society is that one is indebted to one's family and community, especially those who supported them during times of need. Aware though I was of how reasonable it is for one to plough back in the lives of those who supported me, I was shocked at the untamed expectations of close

family members as my wife and I battled with meeting the living cost in the United States, much less living the American dream.

Among the unforgettable lessons I learned about my migration experiences to the United States, I also learned how stressful and expensive someone of my previous status. Some of my sisters were very cooperative, deploying themselves at different government departments like the Immigration Department and the Births and Deaths Office to help secure my travel documents within the stipulated deadline. Sometimes it would require us paying “search fees” to corrupt public officials to search for documents far higher than the official rates. The cost for medical and visa fees plus all other expenses was worth the outcome of being granted the permanent residency to the United State.

Amidst the fanfare, prayer service, and family meetings, my pastor Reverend Momoh Conteh prayed for me and my family. His sermon encompassed themes of sin, righteousness, and salvation. Rendering a piece of advice, he cautioned against what he called “backsliding” or the temptation of chasing the pleasures of life other than seeking God. However, it was the words of my mother, our heroine, whose prophetic words would leave an indelible impact in my mind: “My God has been so good to me. Against all odds, God has spared me and blessed my children through perilous times. I have seen good and bad times but today is one of my best days... To witness my last born successfully complete university, get married and most importantly my generation will span to the Whiteman’s land. I may not live much longer to participate in these glorious moments, but I will be joining my ancestors as a victorious woman.” She passed away a month before my departure to the US.

Accompanied by family members, friends, and some neighbors, I boarded a Brussels Airliner from Lungi International Airport enroute to the United States via Belgium. After almost ten hours of waiting, I boarded an American Airliner which flew me to Dulles International Airport in Virginia. It was in the month of November 2016, and it was snowing heavily when I joined my hosts in Alexandria, Virginia. From an apartment on the fifteenth floor of the London Apartment, I gazed towards the busy street. I could see lots of people, defiant of the heavy snow, going about their businesses. Exhausted and shivering from the cold, even in my thick winter coat, the thought of homeless people under bridges and scavenging for food could not skip my mind. Lost in my own thoughts, I was shocked to realize that there could be beggars in the richest and most powerful nation, not to mention those living in the streets. As I prayed and retired to bed that night, I assured myself then that I would accomplish my dream in America and not land into a nightmare. It took me several days before I could come to meet with all the people I was living with in that single apartment. I came to understand later that all of them worked two to three jobs, so that some of them spent several days in their workplaces and spent precious little time in the house. Sharing a common bond as Sierra Leoneans, all eight of us were privileged to get to know one another one fateful Sunday. With plenty of food and drinks, my hosts took turns to acquaint themselves with their personal stories and experiences while promising to help in their own little ways. Haja Kabbah was the friendliest of all my hosts. All of them, she told me, would contribute a particular amount of money to cover the huge cost in bills and food after every pay period. Apart from working many jobs and making some money, Haja Kabbah advised, one should be even wiser in spending if one is to succeed in one's goals. As a way of

example, she illustrated how they strategized to be able to meet the high cost of \$2000.00 monthly rent for a single apartment. Haja and Princess, commonly called Cess Pee, shared one room and paid \$500.00; Kadiatu Bangura and her son occupied another room and paid the same amount plus the cable bill. Mr Victor Parsons and his wife Lydia paid the remaining \$ 1000.00. Realizing that I was worried about my financial status, she assured me to be calm and that I would not be bothered with any form of subscription until after I started earning.

My Virginian hosts were very supportive to my wife and I. Despite their busy schedules, they took turns to take us for appointments until we received our Green Cards, Social Security card and working documents. After a little over three months, my wife and I joined my uncle in New Jersey, an industrial state with a high concentration of Sierra Leoneans.

My uncle rented and paid a month's rent in an apartment we shared with two other Sierra Leoneans. With our documents that qualified us to work in the United States, we landed ourselves a warehouse job about eight kilometers away. One gentleman from my new community with whom I worked the same shift would give me a ride to work for a fee to help with gas. Since we were all Sierra Leoneans and live on the same kinds of food, we were able to save on the cost of groceries.

Also in New Jersey, I registered with local Sierra Leone Organization, and soon became an active member of the Mabohande Limba Development Organization. From the church where I fellowshiped, to the organizations and tribal affiliated groups in New Jersey provided some kind of a symbiotic relationship in ways that helped strengthened our national identity. Strangers, old and new friends alike, provided some

support while we were trying to secure any kind of job we can to make a living. I was not the only one to have attracted such supports. Archie Stanley who had been instrumental in helping me secure my driver's license taught me what had already become a culture when I tried to offer him a gift as a token of my appreciation one fateful Saturday. Turning down the gift, he lectured me saying: "I know how grateful you are for my little support, but I don't need any gifts. If you think you owe me, pay it back by helping other people are most in need. Besides, I am only paying the debt I owe many years ago and that's the way we do things over here"

We were left with less than \$200 when we arrived in our new state. Thanks to Uncle Daniel Sara Turay who loaned us some money for a month's rent. Armed with all the working documents and in a desperate mood to match up to my financial obligations, including the debts owed and the \$500.00 debt that was due in less than three weeks, I contacted families and friends to help me find a job. Any job would do. Afterall, these were desperate times and we needed to survive.

Multiple feedback to my inquiries pointed to an active young man called Abdul Mansaray. Abdul migrated to The United States from Sierra Leone in his teens. Abdul told me he had spent eighteen years in the US and confessed to having made some decisions he was not proud of. In his thirties, he had already fathered six children with multiple women, two of whom had taken him to court for child support. I was stunned and taken aback when I learned about what child support truly meant. I pondered over what it would look like had Sierra Leone been like The United States that has such appropriate remedial actions to discourage bad behaviors.

Abdul picked me up the next morning to his workplace at L'Oréal Warehouse a few kilometers from my house. With my resume and other working documents in place, it didn't take much time to complete the application process. Within two days, I received a phone call requiring me to pick up some safety gears and that I could start work that very day if I wanted to, I was told. Of course, I responded on the affirmative.

With my goggles, steel-toe shoes and reflector vest on, I was deployed at the packing section and Galo, who happened to be the longest serving staff of the company, shadowed me.

The job at L'Oréal was labor intensive and I hated every bit of it. The incessant noise from conveyor belts, the creaking sounds of cranes and forklifts were deafening. As though the CCTV cameras were not enough to expose any hideouts, the supervisors, who like taskmasters, would deploy themselves in watchtowers to enforce company laws and ensure that staff performed their every task. As hours turned into days and days to weeks, I came to learn more about Galo who had an illustrious seventeen-year career with the company. Galo was one of the most hardworking people I have ever met. He was like a roving staff and could work in every department in the company. Companies like L'Oréal with flexible recruitment processes, were attractive to a pool of new migrants like me with all the requisite working documents in need of quick cash as well as undocumented migrants.

My new job in the healthcare field after four months of hard work at L'Oréal was absolutely not my dream job, but it was at least less labor-intensive meaning, I could put in more hours of work and I could make some more cash. My wife and I had to pick up multiple jobs even if it came at the expense of our quality time for recreational activities.

For the first time after nine months, we could at least pay all our bills and save for the future. By the time I thought that things were beginning to take their normal shape, we started encountering mountainous pressure and unreasonable demands from families and friends. Foremost among them was one of my elder sisters who, having been overwhelmed by the notion that America offers instant wealth, refused to be persuaded about my ordeal. My heart raced one Saturday evening after the vicissitudes of a whole day's work when Maima's call came in:

“Hello”? A crack and a beep sound followed by a voice. It was the voice from one of my sisters in Sierra Leone from whom I had not heard from for a couple of weeks . “Yes KallieI hope everybody is doing great. Sorry for the”.An interruption. “Since you went to America, you have turned your back on us and now even to call and check on us is a problem..... People have been saying that only a few people go to that country and remain grateful to their families they left behind..... Maybe you want to become like Mariama (Mariama Marrah is our eldest sister who migrated to the US, nineteen years before me) who had completely turned against her family.....!””Ma let me explain.....” her voice erupted. ““Hello? Wait let me explain.... But you don't understand give me chance to explain.....” She yelled before I could make another statement. “....One last thing, you can choose not to care but at least pay me back the money you loaned for your flight ticket..” “Hello?” No response, “hello but you have to ...” She hung up.

I have grown up believing that submission to God is the main mantra for a successful lifestyle when faced with any situation as I committed myself to prayer and recitation of bible verses. It was only after combining fervent prayers with hard work,

however that the miracle I was craving for took effect. Thanking my late mom for imbibing her powerful traits in me. Working two jobs each, my wife and I were able to join one of the Osusu Scheme, pay all our bills, settle all our outstanding debts, and still left with some surplus for savings. The Osusu is a financial scheme in which a group of people will agree to contribute a certain amount of money, the bulk of which goes to one person. The same process is repeated over and over again until the full circle is completed. The Osusu scheme was introduced in Sierra Leone by ex-slaves way back in the 17th Century and remains very popular to this day.

After planning on our relocation to Arizona from New Jersey, my wife and I joined separate Osusu Schemes. We were amazed at how fast we were able to meet our budget estimate for our relocation and the compilation of a small-scale business to meet some of the needs of our people back in Sierra Leone. Learning from the mistakes of the past, we invested more resources while planning on our trip. Our plan of action took into consideration factors like safe communities co-inhabited by Sierra Leoneans, one that was also close and offered better job opportunities. Drawing from feedback from my long list of sources, I subleased an apartment in the Phoenix area from a fellow Sierra Leonean I knew several years back home. We integrated quickly into the Arizonan society, settled our financial bills, found a job and bought a used car to facilitate our activities.

Believing that my academic pursuit should be tailored towards my career goals, I took the giant step towards pursuing a course leading to the award of Master of Arts in Social Justice and Human Rights Program at Arizona State University in little over one year upon arrival.

My relationship with the Sierra Leonean community in Arizona started with me joining the Federation of Sierra Leoneans in Arizona (FED-SLAZ). When the university offered me the opportunity of interning with any organization or institution of my choice, I chose FED-SLAZ. I was elevated to the executive position of the organization, an opportunity that would open new opportunities and support structures that are instrumental for my study as well as my goals in life.

CONCLUSION

Unlike other studies which strictly distinguish the roles of research subjects and objects, my study employs an intimate ethnography method. Deeply rooted in anthropology, this method's dialectical thinking processes offer dual responsibilities whereby in simultaneity, the researcher also becomes a participant in the process of addressing multiple essential issues reflective of a vast audience. The study also therefore ensures the prospect of a rich literature in exploring the contributions of the Sierra Leone diasporas to the homeland in its encompassing nature. This chapter fulfills the unique opportunities by which as the researcher, I narrate my story as a diasporas who is also deeply immersed into the Sierra Leonean community, first by having been born and raised in Sierra Leone and also as a diasporas interacting with other Sierra Leoneans in the United States. More important also, being born before the war and experiencing the conflict firsthand, and also being able to contribute to Sierra Leone's recovery processes from my diasporic transnational roles relative to the experiences of other diasporas actors gives more strength to the findings outcome.

CHAPTER 3

THE HISTORY BEHIND GENERATIONS OF DIASPORAS ACTIVISTS

INTRODUCTION

The history of forced migration differs over time, creating a SL diaspora community with a rich and complex identity. This chapter overviews this history of the diasporas' early formations all the way through today, with a focus on making distinctions between those who migrated before, during and after the civil war. Most importantly, this chapter also draws from intimate ethnography, interviews, and surveys, to show that despite such strong varied historical processes of forced migration, the SL diasporas population is incredibly strong and united in its connection to the homeland. Diasporans who migrated before the war are just as connected in their service to the peace and development processes in Sierra Leone as those who migrated during the war and after the war. All three also perceive the role of the diasporas similarly, as well as the prominent problems that remain vital to future successes for Sierra Leone's peace and development.

It is extremely difficult, if not impossible to talk about Sierra Leone's history without talking about its ten years of civil conflict. Equally impossible to ignore are the major players like the Sierra Leone diasporas community, who for better or worse participated and are greatly influenced by the conflict. Pursuant of the Diaspora Homeland Advocacy, and the development of the three Sierra Leone diasporic framework- before, during and after the war- not only reflect on the study's structure but also shows their unity and strong transnational ties to the homeland. As would be

discussed later in this study, these transnational ties have also produced indelible footprints, spanning throughout the nation's history. Today, the Sierra Leone diasporas form a significant minority but their roles in their home country have become an indispensable player in post-conflict recovery. This study explores the short and long term transitional and transformative justice to peace and development in a bid to capture the diverse forms of diasporic-homeland interventions in Sierra Leone.

HISTORY PART 1: FORCED MIGRATION

Historical evidence shows that the Limbas, the Lokos, and the Sherbros or Buloms, were the original inhabitants who lived in what is presently known as Sierra Leone 2,500 years ago (UNHCR, 2016 p 31). Blessed with fertile land for agriculture and livestock, huge natural forests and wildlife, many waterways and abundant raw materials, Sierra Leone was attractive to whoever came in contact with these beauties. It was little wonder therefore that migrants and mostly refugees fleeing the protracted conflicts, in the Sahelian Kingdoms and the Jihadists in the troubled Middle East, North Africa, and the Horn of Africa found the fertile and densely forested regions of Sierra Leone their haven. Another record (Binns, 1994) confirms that the concentration of economic or religious conflict related activities can be attributed to the population boom in Sierra Leone during this era.

Binns also observes that long before Western influence, ancient African empires such as the Nubian empire, the Mali, Songai and the Ghana empires established trade routes and migrated deep into the Western parts of Africa for religious, commercial purposes. It was thus obvious that bitter rivalries between and among warlords, religious

strife, and the quest for supremacy for mineral resources led to the disintegration of these empires resulting in dispersed populations seeking sanctuary elsewhere. Migrants and mostly refugees fleeing the protracted conflicts in the Sahelian Kingdoms and the Jihadists in the troubled Middle East, North Africa, and the Horn of Africa found the fertile and densely forested regions of what is now Sierra Leone a haven. The historic importance of Sierra Leone on the global stage first manifested itself during the 1870s with the battle for control of trade routes and mineral resources among the empire of Samori Toure, the British and the French empires. Although Samori was defeated by the joint forces of the French and British, his empire that stretched from Sierra Leone to Mali left an impressive impact of Islamization in Sierra Leone that continues to date (O’Sullivan, 1983).

The European Encounter

The very reasons that drew migrants from different parts of Africa to Sierra Leone- economic, political or strategic- were among the same reasons that attracted imperial powers from Europe and the Middle East. While this section takes this traditional state-centric approach into cognizance, it also seeks to examine how they relate functionally to the new diasporic formation and socio-political and economic factors that characterize their peace and development roles. Besides, the events that led to the civil war in Sierra Leone changed the course of history, and, more significantly, reinforced the role of diasporas as a significant minority in the nation’s peace and development processes. Gillsäter (2019) also endorses this view when he said, “...

Refugees and irregular migrants escaping major conflicts (both men and women) tend to be highly educated relative to the national average in their country of origin.” (p 31).

When the Portuguese sailor, Pedro da Sentra first arrived at the West Coast of Africa in 1462, he must have been captivated by other things, the luxuriant mountains which he named “Sierra da Loa,” a Spanish word for “Lion Mountains” and from which the name Sierra Leone was derived. Pedro Da Sentra’s pioneering activities encouraged other Portuguese, most of them traders and Christian Missionaries, to establish contacts with native Sierra Leoneans. Some of the Portuguese intermarried and settled in Sierra Leone with locals. Trade also flourished between the two nations. Portuguese mastery of the art of masonry is evident in the stone carved monasteries and commercial buildings in Bonthe Island and the capital Freetown. The Dutch also made their presence felt through trade but could also be remembered for their notoriety in bombarding the Freetown colony over its rivalry with the British. Even the French had an interest in Sierra Leone, but it was the British who had the upper hand.

Slavery

The Portuguese may have been the first Europeans to establish contact with Sierra Leone, but it took one British sailor, Sir John Hawkins, to change the trajectory of history forever by pioneering the Transatlantic Slave Trade in 1562. It was in those formative years that John Hawkins kidnapped 300 Sierra Leoneans and smuggled them across the Atlantic for sale as slaves in the Americas (Strickrodt, 2006) . The huge profits derived from the sale of slaves created huge wealth for traders and brokers (Kelley, 2016). According to Kelley, slave traders and famous Sierra Leonean families formed tight

bonds through intermarriage, producing powerful families further facilitating a vast network interconnectedness. “ Many of the second generations were comfortable in two worlds, which made them ideal brokers”(Kelly, 2016, p79). What started as a daring act of kidnapping and human trafficking escalated into a lucrative business representing a dark history that would go down as one, if not the most, grotesque human rights abuses and forced migration.

A plethora of exhaustive studies have implicated European empires like Great Britain, Portugal, and France to be directly involved in the slave trade which provided a huge chunk of the wealth of European empires at the time. Estimating the magnitude of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, Hawthorne (2011) who, in his study generated a census from slave ship manifests, put the number of Africans transported across the Atlantic Ocean to the West from about 10.7 million to 12.5 million between 1500 to 1863. These statistics, like all censuses, cannot be said to be a precise estimate, yet the mere magnitude and the direction of the flow of forced migration is, and as it has been, an interesting area of research. Increase in number and scale of warlords, intertribal warfare, depopulation, hunger and starvation have been characterized as some of the negative impacts of slavery on African nations. Whatley and Gillezeau (2011) lay emphasis on the crucial elements of slavery in framing ethnic identity and political authorities across the globe.

The statement resonates with and establishes an intricate relationship on the notion of black identity in North America for instance. More specifically and closely related to this study, is how slavery generated different identities of people like the Gulinas “Rice People”, the Akus, the Yorubas, the Hausas, the Creoles and their

transnational ties with Sierra Leone that form an important piece of the puzzle in unpacking transnational roles of Sierra Leone Diaspora in peace and development. Indeed, the impact of slavery and slave trade, and the relentless efforts of philanthropists and human rights campaigns would generate greater implications that would change the cause of history forever.

The British Abolitionist State

Even before the Abolition of slavery and slave trade, laws were passed by the British Parliament in 1833, and efforts were underway to secure a place where ex-slaves would be resettled. Influenced by the growing humanitarian activities in Europe, the British in 1787, in collaboration with human rights activists and Christian Missionaries established a British Crown Colony of Sierra Leone, an abolitionist state. The British experimented their project in a large swarth of land later known as “The Province of Freedom,” today known as the Freetown Peninsular starting with 400 ex-slaves and eleven white prostitutes. Another wave of ex-slaves of about 1,200 arrived in Sierra Leone from Nova Scotia, now Canada in 1820. A third ship load of 600 ex-slaves known as the Maroons were also resettled in Sierra Leone. The sociolinguistic and cultural identities generated by these new settlers born and raised in Europe, North America and other African nations, especially as people can be malleable and can exhibit multiple identities, may pose new insight to this study.

Additionally, the resettlement of an estimated 85,000 African re-captive slaves rescued by the British Naval Vessels from slave ships as a measure of enforcing the anti-slave laws, swelled the ranks of the Sierra Leone Colony. Although the British Crown

Colony of Sierra Leone became successful, it came at a great cost of death from hunger, diseases, and conflicts between the local inhabitants and the new settlers over land disputes. Nevertheless, the debate regarding the role of Great Britain has come with mixed feelings among historians: Some are of the view that Britain's frantic efforts helped facilitate the abolition of slavery and slave trade worldwide (Strickrodt, 2006). This act of salvation by the British "acts of salvation" would tend to obscure their involvement in trafficking of millions of Africans to the New World between 1670 to 1833 during the Transatlantic Slave Trade for instance.

The United Kingdom's main intention for creating "The Province of Freedom" was made clear by one British statesman who intimated that "... the colony would demonstrate how the African Diaspora could be re-settled in Africa and effectively transfer ideals of free trade, civilization, and Christianity to indigenous communities. This "Province of Freedom" would serve as an example to the rest of the world of how Africa could be integrated into global trade systems, without recourse to the trade in slaves." (Whyte, 2016 p 232). This British experiment of democratization, liberalization, and free trade also had their justifications on philosophical works of like Karl Marx, John Lock, Max Weber. Inevitably, the desire to establish and protect the legitimate trade in commerce of the huge resources of African states both for exploitation and a potential market was the main lifeblood of the capitalist West. The Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 sparked off imperialism and the scramble for and partition of Africa underscore these trade concessions.

The Interior of Sierra Leone

According to DeCorse, 2015, understanding the historical and complex dynamics of the African cultural settings should be of prime concern in undertaking African Diaspora Studies. Koinova and Tsourapas 2018 share the same view when she affirms that diasporas populations are inextricably linked to their homelands.

The larger portion of present-day Sierra Leone also has been referred to differently during different political dispensations. First, the British called it the protectorate- meaning people living beyond the colony, now Freetown were titled as British protected persons. It would later become the interior and now the provinces. Although the territories that formed the protectorate were fiercely contested for by the external forces of Samori Toure, and the French, it was the British who had the upper hand in devising a governing structure that integrated the diverse ethnic groups in the protectorate and amalgamated those territories with the colony in 1886 to become the Sierra Leone we know today. These multicultural ethnic groups, most of them migrants from different regions of Africa, were governed by the British under a system called indirect rule. Under this system, the British resident or district officer acted as a liaison between preexisting indigenous power structures of the traditional rulers and the British Crown. In other words, the protectorate people and their traditional rulers were subjects of the British King or Queen. The colony on the other hand was the administrative headquarter and was directly governed by a governor with administrative support provided by the educated Creole elites.

The Mane Invasion

The Mane invasion of Sierra Leone is a significant case in point. A warrior tribe, The Mane people, descended from the crumbled Malian Empire around the 16th century. (Peterson,1960). Their search for a suitable place to reside took them on a marathon to Liberia before settling in the Southern parts of Sierra Leone and forming the largest ethnic group in the country today, the Mende. Brave, well organized, and better armed, they battled with and overpowered the Sapes who lived along the Scarces Rivers of Sierra Leone and confiscated their lands in 1545. In addition, the Manes plundered other minority tribes like the Lokos, pushing the Kissi's farther South. The Temnes put up a fierce resistance and defended some portion of their territories, the Limbas surrendered some of their territories along the planes but stopped the advance of the Mane warriors towards the mountainous regions of the North. The determined invaders went deep South into the Sierra Leone territory subduing other minority groups like the Konos, the Kisi's, Yalunkas, and the Vai's. The Manes, now referred to as the Mendes are the largest ethnic group in Sierra Leone. The Fulas, who are mainly traders and nomadic people migrated from Futa Jallon in Guinea to Northern part of Sierra Leone, in the North of Sierra Leone to trade and pasture their livestock. The Fula people constitute about 10% of Sierra Leone's population according to the 2015 census. The Susus are believed to be the descendants of Soumaore Kante, a powerful warlord in the Mali empire. Kante was defeated in Kirina in a battle that would result in the Susu kingdom's collapse. The Susu people are scattered across many West African countries of Senegal, Guinea, and some in Sierra Leone across the Scarces rivers. The Mandikas are descendants of Samore Toure, a Muslim cleric had an ambitious plan to claim the territories from Guinea, Mali, Ivory

Coast that was once the Wassoulou Empire to some portions of Guinea and Sierra Leone for himself. He was defeated by combined British and French forces in 1898. Today, a total of approximately sixteen ethnic groups constitutes the complex multicultural society of Sierra Leone.

The Creole Diaspora

The efforts of religious, human rights activists and philanthropists finally paid off when slavery was made illegal in 1807. Meanwhile, this great achievement came with a sting in the tail as the threats of humanitarian disasters posed by freed slaves piled up in cities of Europe and America. Great Britain with support from a host of Christian missionaries and human rights campaigners reached a resolution to help these unfortunate people cultivate better lives for themselves. For all the opportunities it could offer, Sierra Leone was chosen as the best place to relocate ex-slaves. Together with its humanitarian backers, British secured a vast piece of land around the peninsula of Freetown they named “ The Province of Freedom”. This British project of resettling ex-slaves back to their ancestral homeland is reminiscent of the Jews migration from captivity in Babylon.

The British project of resettlement of ex-slaves progressed in earnest with the establishment of an emancipation state in what is now Sierra Leone. By 1787, the first batch of 411 ex-slaves and 11 white prostitutes had arrived in Freetown from Great Britain. Then, between 1792 to 1808, the British evacuated 1,200 blacks from Nova Scotia, Canada, and 550 Jamaicans to be settled in Freetown. In 1820, before Liberia would be founded for the resettlement of ex-slaves roaming the streets of the United

States, a total of 88 African Americans joined their counterparts who had arrived from Great Britain to their new home in Freetown.

Human traffickers who smuggled slaves even after the laws in slavery and slave trade were made illegal, had their ships confiscated by the British Naval Squadrons along the Atlantic Ocean. The British Naval squadron intercepted human smugglers on the high seas and rescued about 85,000 Re-captives. This new set of individuals were called "Re-captive" because they were rescued from their captors and brought into Freetown, where they settled in freedom. These new settlers originated from different West African Countries, and they also helped spice up the colony's diversity that helped swelling the ranks of the colony people.

The end of Slavery and the scientific breakthroughs in engineering, such as the invention of the steam engine that made travel much safer and accessible, coupled with the creation of the antidote for the deadly malaria disease may have helped the migration flow to and from Africa and helped improve trade. However, these new breakthroughs would intensify a new scramble for Africa and its vast resources badly needed by the new industrialized West. Furthermore, Western nations needed the strategic importance of having a dominant foothold in peripheral territories and having a competitive edge in containing other rival powers in their race to maintain global supremacy. Otto Von Bismarck, whose imperial ambition had grown considerably, prescribed a peaceful partition of Africa among 13 other nations in what became popularly known as the Berlin Conference.

Probably motivated by the 1885 Berlin Conference outcome, the British government ordered the colony of Freetown to craft laws to annex the territories around

the colony and extend its borders. In 1896, the British amalgamated the interior, which constituted local kings and traditional heads with the colony to become Sierra Leone as it stands today. The two main contenders for territories on the West Coast of Africa were the British and their French counterparts. They agreed to create borders for administrative convenience and their economic and strategic advantages. The British left behind porous and ambiguous border divisions in their spheres of influence. In Sierra Leone, like in other parts of the world, the borders created resulted in dividing tribes, cultures with different nationalities, identities, and citizenry; some of which amounted to disputes over territories, as in the case of Yenga, and Pamalap, to which both Sierra Leone and Guinea are claiming to be their territories.

Linguistically, the interactions between and among the new settlers and their colony inhabitants generated the Krio language. Even interestingly, it also creation of a significant minority of people in Sierra Leone called the Creoles . The Creoles established strong transnational ties between Sierra Leone, Great Britain and the United States like the "Gullah rice people" in North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, whose ancestry has been traced to Sierra Leone (Massally et al, 2021). Also, this minority group would transform themselves into significant minority to becoming the ambassadors that promoted British civilization to other parts of the world (Thayer, 1991). Evidence of this transnational connection are still being established as researchers and archaeologist, with the help of DNA, continue to discover people who trace their ancestry to some parts in Africa. A case in point is the ancestral link found between the Caracu people of the Caribbean and the Temne of Sierra Leone. .

Many other ethnic groups like the Syrians and the Lebanese migrated from their troubled region in the Middle East to settle in Sierra Leone in the 1860s. Skilled in trade, they became bitter rivals of the Creoles whom they threatened to replace in the trade sector. The animosity reached a high point in the 1890's, resulting in a series of riots called the "Syrian Riot." Among the minority groups in Sierra Leone, the Syrians and Lebanese have become the wealthiest retail merchants and traders in the diamond business.

HISTORY PART 2: CIVIL WAR (1991-2002)

The nature and conduct of the conflict in Sierra Leone was really baffling to most analysts as it fell short of conforming to the patterns of intrastate conflicts raging across the African continent. The illusive nature of the RUF leadership and its lack of any clear-cut ideology would also add to the puzzle. External players would always add to the complexities of a conflict as it did in Sierra Leone where players like Charles Taylor, countries like Burkina Faso, Ukraine were linked to the RUF and Mercenary groups like the Executive Outcomes, Sandline fought on the side of the government. Besides external influences the ethnic and factional fighting was considerable cause for concern, not to mention the influence of "Blood Diamond" and its role in fueling the conflict.

Discrepancies over the factors responsible for the Sierra Leone conflict remain unresolved to date. Some scholars blame the cause of the conflict to social, political and economic factors within the country (Wai, 2012, Lindberg, 2003). To others it was the decades of bad governance, injustices, and acute poverty (Stovel, 2010) in addition to the grudge that had flourished for decades and been exploited by the warring factions to

recruit from the mass of disgruntled and unemployed youths (Mokuwa et al, 2011, Keen 2005).

The Emergence of the NPRC Military Junta in Politics

Riddled by corruption and incompetence for decades, the state's institutions and indeed the government had become so weak that it could not even provide for the basic needs of its citizenry, not to talk of fighting a protracted war. With poor intelligence, weak state institutions and the lack of early warning systems would further increase the risk level and exposed millions of Sierra Leoneans to danger. For instance, the vast majority of Sierra Leoneans were caught unawares during disastrous periods like the January 6, 1999, invasion of Freetown that costs the lives of thousands of Sierra Leoneans. Unlike the AFRC Junta, the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) couple-plotters or "The Liberators" ' as people called them were less brutal the people of Sierra Leone.

Not only did the "The Liberators" ' failed to deliver on their promises, they would instead started pursue the path of personal enrichment as the RUF continued claiming more territories.. Their popularity of the "Junta Boys" declined rapidly and division along factional lines intensified. In the ensuing rift, Julius Maada Bio who was second in command ousted his boss Captain Valentine Strasser in a palace coup in 1996, but under public pressure from the international community, he continued with the electioneering process and handed power to a democratically elected government in 1996. In little over a year, however, the democratically elected government of Tejan Kabbah was overthrown in 1997.

President Kabbah was ousted by a combined force of military officers and RUF who called themselves The Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). The public outrage was overwhelming over the decision by the AFRC Junta to form an alliance with the RUF. The transfer of loyalty to a brutal organization from their avowed and sacred duty of protecting lives and property was an unforgivable error. This act of treachery was captured by the word ‘‘Sobels,’’- a caricature of the military rebel collaboration.

Civil defense forces ‘‘Kamajors’’ in the South, the ‘‘Donsos,’’ the ‘‘Kapas’’ and the ‘‘Gbethes’’ in the North sprang up as people took desperate moves to defend their communities. Ahlman in 2013 argued about the element of the resource curse phenomenon, especially the roles of alluvial diamonds in fueling the war and how big corporations like De Beers, were implicated in the Blood Diamond saga.

By the late 1990s the security situation in the country would decline to such a situation as to force investors and nations to recall their nationals from Sierra Leone. This would lead to a corresponding increase in the state of migration of Sierra Leoneans, but it was under the reign of the AFRC/RUF regime that the scale of migration was at its highest. As the war progressed, the RUF gained more territories to vastly outnumber and outgun the Sierra Leone military.

The reign of terror perpetuated by the junta regime failed to subdue our will to stand for our rights, our dignities and support them, but rather students, clergy, teachers, and people from all walks of life were steadfast in our resistance to what we considered an act of betrayal by the military and disdain for such an unholy alliance.. Escalating tensions, attacks and counterattacks ensued throughout the junta period until they were ousted in February of 1998 by a joint group of ECOMOG Forces. Hunger and starvation

reigned supreme as food was weaponized; tens of thousands of people were killed in crossfires in towns and cities. This is besides and deliberate acts of mass murder, rape and arsons under the junta's infamous "Operation No Living Thing," and "Operation Pay Yourself." . Hopeless, and frustrated I joined hundreds of people cramped into a dilapidated inboard machine boat enroute for Guinea.

I was actually just one out of the almost half of the country's population of Sierra Leone to be displaced by the conflict, creating by far the highest amount of outmigration in Sierra Leone's history. Yet, according to one (UNHCR, 2011) report, there were still about 10,000 refugees and asylum claims in the United States, 70,000 in Guinea, 40,000 in Liberia, and 5,000 each in Ghana and Gambia. Even while I was an internally displaced person, up until the time I sought refuge in Guinea and Ghana I witnessed and benefited from the charity of Sierra Leoneans living in the diaspora.

On the other hand, there are studies like Smith and Stares (2007), Akinsulure-Smith & Smith (2012) that link some diaspora actors to activities that help fuel conflicts in their homeland. Similarly, accusations have been leveled against Sierra Leone diasporans like Omrie Golley, Allieu Kamara, Allieu Kabbah and Steven Bio for their engagement with the RUF. As has already been discussed in the previous chapters, this study concerns itself with the tremendous roles diasporas play in the peace and development of Sierra Leone. Besides, it advocates for more diasporic involvement in the transformative processes of Sierra Leone.

Tejan Kabbah's Government of Technocrats Diasporic connections

Although I have provided sufficient evidence of the roles of diasporas in Sierra Leone, it was during the reign of President Tejan Kabbah that their contributions in politics were more prevalent. A diaspora himself, President Kabbah drew from the pool of highly qualified Sierra Leonean diasporas actors like Dr. James Jonah, Mr. Kanja Sesay, Albert Joe Demby, Dr. Alpha T Wurrie Professor Septimus Kaikai, Dr. John Karimu, the list is inexhaustive. Some diasporans like Dr. John Karefa Smart headed their own political parties and many more held top positions in government and the private sector, courtesy of an amendment of the immigration laws that granted people with dual citizenship to hold any office in Sierra Leone. As (Orjuela 2017) rightly puts it diasporas play various roles, some visible others latent but most of them securing their vested interests in the homeland.

In many ways, international humanitarian laws like the Refugee Rights of 1951, granted tens of thousands of Sierras Leoneans rights to resettle in United States, Europe, Australia, Canada, and Asia to comply with those nations' humanitarian and refugee laws and obligations.

Most of these Sierra Leonean diasporas, their organizations and groups would become advocates, lobbied their host governments to respond to the plights of their counterparts in Sierra Leone. Many more Sierra Leoneans diaspora members took advantage of the Family Reunion and asylum laws and were successful in helping families and loved ones migrate to the West. Another area of diasporas' intervention was through the transfer of knowledge and technology. For example, many diaspora experts

in medicine, engineering, and law provided their expertise mainly through the United Nations and refugees Organizations to the already beleaguered nation.

There was also a proliferation of diasporas actors working on the international media outlets advocating, organizing political meetings in refugee camps, showcasing the plight of the Sierra Leoneans to the rest of the world, and providing voluntary services. As the breakdown of almost all government financial institutions became apparent, diasporas became one of the primary sources of support for their relatives back home. Most Sierra Leonean families were solely reliant on remittances and other forms of sustenance from diasporas as the spate of poverty increased.

Through these multiple levels of engagements, the Sierra Leone diaspora community grew in number and influence. It must be noted however that even with the length of time and distance diasporas have managed to nature and maintain their ties and through transnational links that connect them to their home country.

HISTORY PART 3: DIASPORIC CONNECTIONS AFTER THE WAR

In the diasporic framework I developed, I discussed the three diasporic cohorts and how these classifications are relevant in understanding the Sierra Leone diasporas formation and migration experiences. The mass exodus , facilitated by forced migration, would create a reservoir of Sierra Leoneans overseas whose resourcefulness if well utilized, could help in no little ways to the transformation of the homeland.

Although international laws like that of The 1967 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) protocols, hardline governments in member states can influence the rate of migration at some level. For example, The United States

was the highest recipient to refugees and asylees from Sierra Leone. Added to the refugees and asylum provisions, the Hart-Cellar Act, which allowed immigrants into the United States based on family ties and special skills. Diversity Visa Lottery Program, the 2002 Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act also allocated immigrant visas to countries like Sierra Leone that are underrepresented in the United States. Other migration provisions Sierra Leoneans benefit from are, the Immigration Act of 1965 that allows people from countries that are underrepresented in the United States or that sent fewer than 50,000 immigrants in a five-year period and the H-1B Status which allows people with specialized skills to migrate to the United States.

Correspondingly, the predominant issues guiding the debate on diasporic roles is no longer the notion of brain drain versus brain gain, but rather how best diaspora members can be lured to help transform their homeland.

This notion of brain gain is reminiscence of President Kabbah's national reconciliation drive which reformed the 1973 Citizenship Act in 2006, allowing Sierra Leoneans holding dual citizenship rights to hold any office in the land. According to (Mason, 2008), this law opened the flood gates for Sierra Leonean diasporas jetted into the country and occupied political offices, invested in areas like agriculture, housing, transportation, mining, and other sectors of the country

Sierra Leone Diaspora in Recent Peace and Development Initiatives

Although the prewar era serves as a significant milestone in building the Sierra Leone diasporas, my study will also explore diasporas issues around the conflict and

post-conflict periods around which my study is mostly situated. Also importantly, the study will also utilize the literature and historical background as they relate to the study.

Lots of Sierra Leoneans benefited from the increasing tolerance of political participation, reintegration policies. President Kabbah wasted no time taking advantage of the pool of highly educated and skilled Sierra Leonean diasporas in America and Europe to form his "government of technocrats" in 1997 and opening the political space to accommodate people with dual citizenship in government positions by repealing the 1973 Citizenship Act, which placed restrictions on diasporas political participation in Sierra Leone. Closely linked to the World Bank Diaspora Initiatives (Pellerin and Mullings 2013) which proposes diasporas interventions in peace and development, President Ernest Bai Koroma took a more proactive approach by instituting an Office of the Diaspora Affairs in 2007. Post-conflict governments attempted to enable more diasporas investment, diplomacy, and socio-cultural exchange between Sierra Leone and its diasporas communities but not without some difficulties.

Although Octogenarian career politicians like Dr. John Kerefa Smart and Dr. Abass Bundu, from the diasporas, still play a prominent role in Sierra Leone, younger diasporas like Dr. Kandeh Yomkella and Mohamed Bangura and many more diasporas are making their mark, reinforcing thesis that diasporas have potential to shape the politics in their homeland (Baser, 2015). In addition, the more development-oriented diasporas are also directing their attention to running non-governmental organizations like Berny's Hope Foundation, The Sierra Leone Diaspora Network, Sierra Leone New Jersey Organization among others undertake peace and development projects in Sierra Leone.

Transnational Civil Society Organizations operated overseas by Sierra Leone
Diasporas are creating serious impacts as government hostilities towards free speech and
arbitrary arrests and detention of journalists become a common occurrence at home.
Courtesy of social media platforms like Facebook, tweeter, Tik Tok, and YouTube
channels, there has been a proliferation of online platforms, which unlike media
organizations back home need not fear any forms of reprisals, espouse critical opinions of
their home government. The Africanist Press, an investigative reporting media group,
based in Philadelphia in The United States, is one such medium that stands out in holding
public officials accountable by exposing corruption and promoting democracy.

CONCLUSION

It would be very difficult if not impossible to unearth the true potentials of the
Sierra Leone diasporas community including its formations as well as its complex web of
transnational connections to the homeland. From tracing the issues of forced migration, to
the European encounter, the impact of slavery the Mane invasion, the Creole diasporas
group to the civil war this chapter provides the history and context of the background of
the study. It also provides the basis for the thesis' three distinctive diasporic cohorts-
before, during and after the war. Crucially, the historical perspectives of Sierra Leone
evidence the strong transnational links that had long existed, and flourishes today.

CHAPTER 4

DIASPORAS ADVOCACY ACROSS COHORTS

INTRODUCTION

Sierra Leonean diasporas in the United States are clustered in the East Coast. Mainly around Maryland, Virginia, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Minnesota. A few reside in the West Coast like California, Arizona, Texas. While reasons that drive them to such clusters may not be pinned down to any verifiable reasoning, factors relating to job opportunities could be a formidable reason. Another reason is the close friendship and family ties that draw people to live among their kinds, a character that is more common among Sierra Leoneans: A character trait that emanated from the close family, tribal and regional attachments they share. Before one migrates to the United States for instance, he or she is directed to a close family or friend who mostly provides an affidavit of support and help with personal care and important information like- grocery stores, malls and even job opportunities. My migration experience revolves around the same trend as it did all those I know and interviewed.

Additionally, the conflict in Sierra Leone also greatly impacted the migration pattern and indeed the increase in the number of Sierra Leoneans in the United States. The refugee and asylee status helped swell the number of Sierra Leoneans into the US, especially to states where there were already a great concentration of Sierra Leoneans as one study puts it (Kallon and Dundes, 2010). Sometimes it is due to a loss of a member, an emergency, the fear of isolation and the quest for socialization, the need for security or

similar factors that bring people together. The formation of Sierra Leonean diasporas organizations is a result of some or all of these factors.

In this section, I present the role of diasporas in Sierra Leone peace and development by also looking at the role of local communities, both individual and collective on a transnational scale. The first way to start could be the two main popular tribal organizations: The Limba Mabohande and the Mende Tegloma Organizations. Both formed by two different Sierra Leonean ethnic groups living in the United States but with almost the same purposes.

INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS' STORIES

Building on Haider's conflict generated diasporas approach as well as Redeker-Hepner's generational cohorts' approach, I separate the analysis of interviews with members of the Sierra Leone diasporas based on whether they migrated before, during or after the civil war (1991-2002). This approach helps capture whether the civil war shaped their experiences differently, and whether this matters for understanding their advocacy roles relating to transitional and/or transformative justice in the homeland. For example, one might expect that the cohort migrating during or after the war would be more likely to engage in transitional justice work because of their personal experiences and traumas. At the same, all of the cohorts might share experiences relating to economic or political challenges unrelated to the civil war, resulting in all three cohorts engaging transformative justice work. Through my intimate ethnographic approach, I not only share the experiences of each participant I interviewed, but I also offer some reflections

of my own to unpack differences and similarities across the three cohorts (before, during and after the war).

What are the limits of the generational cohort approach or framework? The war itself can be over-inflated as the root cause of diasporic advocacy. As I explain through my lived experience (in chapter 2) and in the historical development of the Sierra Leone diasporas (in chapter 3), the reasons behind the diasporas' role in transitional and transformative justice are many. They include the rich historical lineages that connect the diasporas to the homeland, many historical events and challenges, in addition to the civil war. The perspective that the civil war frames a diasporas' entire role is inaccurate and problematically focuses on transitional justice (short term advocacy) without considering their role in transformative justice (long term peace and development). In the analysis of each cohort below, I specifically seek to unpack how and why each cohorts' experiences and advocacy work are linked to either transitional and/or transformative justice, and I draw connections across cohorts whenever possible.

I was able to conduct 9 interviews in total, with 2 participants who migrated before the war, 4 participants who migrated during the war, and 3 participants who migrated after the war. My analysis below follows this order.

Before The War 1 of 2 Interviews: Moonah's Transformative Justice Work

In this section, I introduce Moonah Turay. Moonah was introduced to me by one of her brothers, Mohamed Turay who happens to be a close friend and co-worker. It was during the process of the interview that I learned that Moonah and I shared a lot in common. Not Only do I share the same surname as Moonah, we also both hail from the

Limba ethnic group, sharing the same history, language and culture. Moonah migrated to the United States before the war broke out in Sierra Leone. She holds a degree in Political Science and philosophy. Leaving Sierra Leone for the United States when she was in her teens; she later married and had children here in The US.

Moonah's reason for migrating to The United States was health related. Due to the poor health condition in the country before the war, she had to be flown to the United States. This interview showcases the long span of poor health conditions even before the war started. Moved by the sufferings she witnessed first hand while working with an organization dealing with refugees, Moonah persuaded her other siblings to revive an NGO her mother had started in support of vulnerable women and children in Sierra Leone, which they did.

Moonah's interview captured the role and spirit behind the diasporas's transformative justice work, which I highlight briefly in this section. While there was little mention of transitional justice relating to post-war reconciliation, this is not surprising given that Moonah had migrated prior to the war. Moonah joined her five family members after migrating to the United States and began her diasporic advocacy efforts by pulling their joint resources together to undertake development projects back in Sierra Leone. Summarizing her family's contribution to the homeland Moonah had this to say:

My mom started an NGO in 2008 because she had a burning desire to help improve the lives of women and children in Sierra Leone after the war, so we use the foundation to support the village ...So our support is minimal, we pay salaries of two teachers, we send money for feeding, but that assistance has been

transformational. Now these children, all of them passed the National Primary School Examination (NPSE), not one failed.

She stressed that their foundation, unlike large and multilateral agencies, is devoid of any strings attached. Their beneficiaries, she said have the freedom to choose their paths, as she states:

Our organization also lends cash money to women with no interests, this has helped lift lots of them out of poverty..... we don't impose on them what venture they should undertake; nor do we have any string attached. They do have the freedom to do what they want and that has proven quite successful.

Moonah also revealed impressive and philanthropic venture on what she can do single handedly:

Even as I speak, I am having goosebumps. When I went to Sierra Leone in 2018, it was to help a school. Pathetic case, the villagers had to start a school because their children would have to walk to go to the school assigned to them. That was happening in my father's village. So I was teaching in Abu Dhabi. I left after my time ended, I took all that I have been saving for six years and donate to the village project.

Before the War 2 of 2 Interviews: Chernor's Transformative Justice Work

My second interviewee for the pre-war period is Mr. Chernor Maju Jalloh, a Sierra Leonean who was a student in Russia when the war broke out in his country. He migrated to the United States where he joined other Sierra Leoneans and canvassed financial and material support in areas such as education, food security and sanitation.

Mr. Jalloh, who lives with his wife and children here in the US, also assists members of his extended families in Sierra Leone.

Mr. Jalloh is also a Sierra Leonean diaspora who said in the interview that he was born and educated in Kabala, Northern Sierra Leone. He was a beneficiary of a Russian scholarship before the war broke out in Sierra Leone. Upon the completion of his studies and the subsequent return to his country, he learned that his town had been fiercely attacked by rebels he said. He landed in neighboring Guinea where he claimed asylum. He told me he had to contact relatives in the United States who assisted him in facilitating his migration to the US. Because it was his relatives that assisted him to be successful, he is indebted to support, especially the children of those who helped him succeed.

Like Moonah, Chernor had migrated prior to the war and much of the advocacy work he engaged in for the homeland focused on development. Importantly, however, Chernor highlights some efforts relating to the war in a way that showcases how transitional and transformative justice are intimately related. He explained:

During the war my family had their houses burned. They had nowhere to go, all their crops were destroyed and looted. I had to send money for them to go to Freetown, which was more secure at the time.

Chernor's experience of loss during the war, even when he was not physically present, profoundly shaped his work to support rebuilding and securing essential resources needed by his family and local community. This work prioritized education in particular. These were his exact words:

Personally, I am responsible for many people in Sierra Leone. I pay school fees, I pay house rents, and buy books. Even with my paycheck coming, I already have

people in Freetown and also my village to support from my little paycheck. If I don't do it for them, who else will? It's not easy, oh.

His contribution to the development of his homeland is not bound to sending resources from the United States to Sierra Leone. Chernor is an active member of an organization led by his community back home, who, like other such organizations, contribute in diverse ways to improve the homeland.

According to the organization I belong to, Koinadugu Development Organization, we help people, we build and refurbish school buildings. For example, we renovated our school, The Kabala Secondary School (KSS). Then we give money to build mosques and we also buy buses to take students to school and back. We did these things on our own, our school buildings were very dilapidated, we did it out of our pockets.

During the War 1 of 4 Interviews: Fatmata's Transformative Justice Work

I was fortunate to gain a wealth of knowledge from Fatmata Daramy, one of the most outstanding Sierra Leone diasporas women in the state of Arizona. An extrovert, Mrs Fatmata Daramy is one of the heads of the Muslim Jamat, and FED-SLAZ Organization and an active member of a major Sierra Leone political party, a fund raiser who campaigns vigorously and often travels back home to canvass support or pursue her political agenda. Apart from her educational, agricultural support, Fatmata is passionate about children welfare which led her to open an orphanage in Sierra Leone.

Fatmata said she uses her influence in working with religious and state institutions of building local institutions that uphold human rights. Her orphanage program tries as

best as possible to target children whose relatives were worst affected by the war. Fatmata said her community development engagement works are concentrated on strengthening grassroot people in Sierra Leone which she believes would go a long way to peace and reconciliation and prevent the relapse of another conflict. Making reference to the role of Sierra Leone Interreligious Council she uses her Islam religion and other mixed methods in her charity works in her home country as she states:

For me I do a lot back home with the little I have. I am not rich, I just completed a mosque in a village I know nobody. I empower women to make gardens, so they can make money. I also have an orphanage where I send money for their feeding every month. Like during Ramadan, I donate rice and a lot of stuff.

Most of the participants I interviewed that were directly affected by the conflict were in one way or another sympathetic and supportive of the amputees, war wounded and the population of Sierra Leone that were orphaned by the conflict. It is little wonder therefore that people like Fatmata would prioritize these groups of people. Although some people were held accountable for the Sierra Leone conflict, people like Fatmata also understand that unless the reconciliation processes address core causes like the injustices and lack of livelihood amenities for the ordinary people, sustainable peace and development will be impossible to accomplish.

On a broader level, Fatmata said she places the Sierra Leone diasporas community among the most influential stakeholders in the country. She mentioned a long list of diasporas groups and organizations in Europe, Australia and Asia which she said are contributing a lot in Sierra Leone before highlighting what she referred to as the little she and her political party wing do occasionally. She states:

The Sierra Leone diasporas play many roles. We do many things. Forget the money we send every month and like for me is every paycheck remember oh plus the group home business I told you about, I spend a lot of money to set it up. Take the Corona sickness also just we the women wing of the party in Arizona, we raised ten thousand dollars (10.000) to help people of Sierra Leone during the lockdown and this is just the Arizona SLPP Women's wing I am talking about here.

Fatmata said she is very active in politics and that she leverages her social media influence to canvas support for her political party. As a diasporas actor and a sociable and influential person both in Sierra Leone and abroad, she is able to sway lots of people to support her political party during elections. She admitted that some of her colleagues from the diasporas would take expensive trips to Sierra Leone in support of their party.

Remittances. We send money a lot, oh. Like me I send from my paycheck a great deal. While you were calling, I was transferring an amount of \$ 250, that money will feed plenty of people. Also imagine when there are emergencies, sometimes you have not even pay your bills, but if you don't do it somebody is going to die.

During the War 2 of 4 Interviews: Dumbuya's Transitional & Transformative Justice Work

My wife and I lived in the same neighborhood in New Jersey with Mr. Dumbuya and his family. Mr Kolleh Dumbuya and his family have not set up a charity organization, but they are renowned for supporting organizations operating in interested fields in Sierra Leone. His wisdom and mentoring skills draw many Sierra Leonean diasporas to him for counseling and insights. Equally generous, his eldest daughter,

Abibatu helped me with a loan to buy a car, not to mention the groceries, petty cash blankets during one harsh winter.

Mr. Dumbuya said he left the Sierra Leone military before migrating to the United States during the immediate aftermath of the war. His military training and discipline earned him lots of survival skills, putting those skills into use, he was able to relocate with his children to the US he said in his usual eloquent manner. Mr. Dumbuya is retired from active service but his service to his home country Sierra Leone and the diasporas community seems far from over. Using his vast knowledge oratory skills, Mr Dumbuya is an embodiment of peace within the Sierra Leonean community. Mr Abdulai Kolleh Dumbuya is one of the leading figures of Mabohande Organization, New Jersey chapter, charged with the responsibility of settling disputes, counseling and mentoring young Sierra Leonean in the US.

Mr Dumbuya is also a great writer and poet who puts his writing skills to preach peace and justice to Sierra Leoneans home and abroad. Mr. Dumbuya serves as a peace ambassador delivering speeches, lectures in person and virtually to different communities and forums. Mr Dumbuya also writes and researches on contemporary justice reconciliations, national cohesion as he emphasizes on Sierra Leone's post-conflict interventions. With his role- modeling effects on the younger generation, Mr Dumbuya has attracted a large following on social media on his philosophy of peace and reconciliation. My Dumbuya told me much of his works are dedicated to justice, reconciliation and dialogue. Reflecting on his works, Mr Dumbuya made this statement.

I have deliberated and written a lot about the TRC Recommendations which I believe is a very useful document. As a proponent of Martin Luther King and

Mahatma Gandhi, I believe in non-violence and by doing so, I believe I have in my little way recruited thousands of Sierra Leoneans home and abroad on the principle of abstention from violence. Through social media and other tools I am working towards curbing the culture of violence and impunity that prevailed during the conflict... We cannot let that persist in our society...

Mr. Dumboya's story is just one of many Sierra Leonean diasporas who apart from their financial contributions, are transnationally connected to and act as agents of peace and reconciliation to their home country. The significant majority of interviewees use social media to connect and contribute meaningfully, thereby acting as great influencers to the home country. This factor also helps facilitate and solidify the recommendations pointed out in the TRC Report geared towards achieving the overall goals of transitional and transformational processes in Sierra Leone.

He also contributes individually to assist friends and families in Sierra Leone by helping with school fees, paying medical bills on top of his contributions to different diasporas organizations destined for the homeland, he told me:

As for me, I believe in my penmanship more than any other tools at my disposal to help reconcile my people.... diasporas are an indispensable part of Sierra Leone and for obvious reasons. With remittances alone, diasporas boost the economy of the country a lot also because of money talks. They also campaign for human rights and democracy and hold the government accountable. They also speak to power and raise issues of accountability and because they are well informed and have great listenership, the government is bound to take them seriously. But again if

only they will forget about this rivalry thing and partner with the government in development, things will grow fast in Sierra Leone.

This multiple forms of engagements with the motherland can be cultivated into attaining the overall transitional and transformative justice outcomes. This is among what this interviewee was alluding to when he sounded the idea of a synergistic relationship between the Sierra Leone government and its diasporas population on peace and development matters.

During the War 3 of 4 Interviews: Yakawa's Transformative Justice Work

Mr. Charles Yakawa is one of my pastors living in Arizona with his family. A member of FED-SLAZ he is one of the counselors of the Sierra Leone diasporas community and helps settle disputes among Sierra Leoneans. Mr. Yakawa lives with his family in Arizona, the United States but was able to establish churches in Sierra Leone. Although he lives here in the United States, he oversees his churches efficiently thanks to the use of the internet he said laughing as he proceeded with the interview. Mr. Yakawa migrated to the United States on an asylum status and later fulfilled the requirements for citizenship. He is an active supporter of the SLPP political Party.

Reacting to their roles in Sierra Leone peace and development, Mr Yakawa like the other interviewees identified the contributions of the diasporas as extremely important. He also acknowledged knowing colleagues who are also diasporas actors who occupy top positions within government and the public sectors in Sierra Leone. Diaspora, he said have proven their worth in every facet of - from remittances, knowledge transfer, capital investments to social and diplomatic relations.

When Mr Yakawa spoke about the influence of the Sierra Leonean community in the nation's peace and development on its multidimensional levels, he was not just making mention of diverse ethnic, regional or linguistic differences. He was also making reference to the different diasporas groups across different countries and continents like Australia, Europe and Asia to be constitutive of the Sierra Leone diasporas community. This diverse sets of people have as he puts it “ A reservoir of knowledge and untapped resources that can be profoundly useful in nation building”

When he reflected on the diversity and structural formation and the diasporic transnational groupings, it also clearly reinforces the idea that a single diasporas actor can for instance be multitasked by engaging in transitional and transformative, peace and development at individual, group or community levels. This showcases the resourcefulness of the diasporas as exemplified by Mr. Yakawa.

Like I said, I belong to an organization called Tegloma, it means development in Mende. I am also a member of my political party as well as FED-SLAZ and also a clergy. In all of these groups and in my individual capacity, I contribute to peace, I contribute to justice and also to development in Sierra Leone. In fact, there are times when I have to respond to all of these tasks at the same time.

During the War 4 of 4 Interviews: Mankota's Transitional & Transformative Justice Work

Doctor Kamara migrated to the United States during the civil conflict in Sierra Leone. A refugee in different countries, he migrated to the United States together with his wife and children through the refugee resettlement program. Dr. Kamara is also an active

member of the Sierra Leone diasporas community FED-SLAZ. He also plays a very important role in politics by serving as the secretary for the All-People's Party in North America. Dr. Kamara is a household name among Sierra Leoneans in Arizona. He often heads the organizing team in planning social events, funeral arrangements and fundraising drives for other activities.

Dr. Mankota said he suffered immensely from the war in Sierra Leone and that he has dedicated much of his work towards maintaining peace and justice in the homeland. Peace he said is a priceless commodity and without justice there will be no peace or development. He describes justice, peace and development as a tripod, stating that without one the other two can hardly work. It is on these three pillars that he said his works evolve, citing one of his landmark works Dr. Mankotra had this to say:

Broadcasting on my radio program to Sierra Leone via Facebook , we discuss the need to reconcile the nation by trying to build the regional and tribal divide. We also refresh our memories on TRC Recommendations and create a forum for discussion and settling our differences through dialogue among other things.

Talking about development, Dr. Mankota wasted no time to back his claims with statistics, stating:

In fact, it is a statistical fact that diasporas alone pump an estimated five hundred million dollars (\$ 5,00.000.000) into our country's GDP. When you pump that sum of money into that small economy, you should know what that means. So, I believe we have lots of power and respect for diasporas in Sierra Leone, truly, without diasporas Sierra Leone would have been much worse in terms of poverty. We are

the biggest funder in terms of development in Sierra Leone. A lot of diasporas have investments in the country, they have investments in every area and sectors.

The media program is Dr. Mankota's initiative towards transitional and transformative justice. As has already been highlighted, the doctor also contributes in different capacities either through FED-SLAZ, his political or religious groups to his home country. Like Mr. Dumbuya, Dr. Mankota sees dialoguing through mass media channels as a useful tool for reconciliation and development.

After the War 1 of 3 Interviews: Fatmata's Transformative Justice Work

Fatmata Sesay is one of the most outstanding female on religious, ethnic and political related organizations in Arizona. She doubles as a secretary for the Tegroma Organization for the whole of North America and the secretary general of the female wing of her political party. Fatmata's competence has been unrivaled by any of her contemporaries as exemplary accomplishments motivate other women to emulate her. She is an advocate for education, creating awareness on female empowerment through education. Fatmata holds a teacher's degree and is presently pursuing a master's course in health administration here in the United States.

I believe diasporas are the backbone in Sierra Leone. It is the money diasporas remit in that country that keeps it going. They also invest in all sectors, health, agriculture, infrastructure, you name them. But I believe the government should partner with its diasporas to build that country. There are countless opportunities for diasporas to impact Sierra Leone.

Like other interviewees, Fatmata reacted to her support in Sierra Leone's peace, development, transitional and transformative justice. Apart from her support for her family in Sierra Leone, Fatmata told me she extends assistance to her former schools and vulnerable women and girls. Fatmata told me she is working on a project that offers a model kind of education that meets the demands of the world's market in Sierra Leone. She believes in accessible education for all, but also insists that education should be qualitative and transformative. She also believes that girl children in Sierra Leone have lagged far behind and should be prioritized.

Fatmata equated quality- affordable education for Sierra Leone as transformative is the kind of education Amartya Sen would term as "rights-based approach to education". Indeed, this pattern of education could be the bedrock for sustainable peace and development. Like Dr.. Mankota and other interviewees, Fatmata, emphasized the roles of diasporas in promoting peace and development in Sierra Leone. Opposed to the laws restricting diasporas participation in politics, she supported the rights and freedom for all Sierra Leonean including its diasporas population whom she saw as major development partners that continue to invest heavily in the country. Reiterating, she highlighted a few diaspora actors like, Sir Milton, and Albert Margai Tejan Kabbah including the present president Julius Maada Bio who have attained the highest office in Sierra Leone.

After the War 2 of 3 Interviews: Joseph's Transformative Justice Work

Joseph Gijay Kargbo is one of my nephews who migrated to the United States after the conflict. Joseph suffered from the decade-long civil war but with support from

one of his uncles went through university in Sierra Leone before migrating to the United States. He lives in New Jersey with his wife and child. Working two jobs, Joseph manages to advance his educational pursuit in a course leading to the award of Masters in Engineering. Like the majority of Sierra Leoneans, Joseph supports one of the leading political parties in his home country.

Upon his arrival in New Jersey, in The United States, Joseph registered with Mabohande Organization on advice from one of his uncles who assisted him with lodging, taught him to drive and provided him other forms of sustenance until he could secure a job and stand on his own, he told me. He also received other means of support and mentorship from the Sierra Leone New Jersey organization, he added. These forms of support structures are crucial in times of need but also with their different cleavages, help construct the subsets of the homeland. He recounted his role in Sierra Leone's peace and development summarizing:

I am an example of those people who suffered a lot during the war. Growing up in Sierra Leone I had very little opportunities, but today I am an influencer among my peers and my entire community. My little contributions to my schools, my family members and colleagues here in America have been transformational..... For example during the mudslide we contributed through Mabohande and the Sierra Leone Organization in New Jersey.

As a young and patriotic individual Joseph is also registered with his political party through the New Jersey US branch. All other those I interviewed except Mooner are strong political party stalwarts, whose support both financially and material provide the highest support for political parties in Sierra Leone. On top of assisting families and

friends back home and following his passion in engineering, Joseph is not deterred from pursuing his desire for providing affordable housing, water and sanitation in his communities in Sierra Leone. An old alumni, Joseph also supports his former schools.

After the War 3 of 3 Interviews: Mannah's Transformative Justice Work

Mr. Mannah, like Joseph, migrated to the United States after the war. Originating from the Southern part of Sierra Leone, he migrated to the United States with his wife and children through the Diversity Visa Lottery. He first lived in California with his family, but was convinced by one of his kinsmen to relocate to New Jersey where he was convinced of better employment opportunities and lower cost of living by comparison.

I happen to know Mr. Mannah first as a neighbor and later as a coworker at a medical company in New Jersey. Bounded by economic reasons, Mannah, me and my wife plus one of our other neighbors, all of us new arrivals who happened to be working at the same job and shift, decided to use one car. This kind of symbiotic relationship in which my colleagues would subscribe for fuel in return for the rides to and from work I offer was also helpful for me to cut down on running cost. Even after everyone of us had had a car of our own we became more connected and bonded on other areas such as “the osusu” saving scheme as trust amongst us increased. Responding to his role as a diasporas in peace and development to his homeland, Mr Mannah had this to say:

My brother, we have to be wise to be able to navigate our way..... I must live on a tight budget line to respond to emergencies to one's families and friends back in Sierra Leone. If you don't do it someone is going to die, or someone will drop out of school or starve or something...But it's a blessing to be in a position to help. Life

in Sierra Leone is so tough there are no jobs, terrible health facilities and hunger, without the help of us from the diasporas, I can't imagine what the outcomes will look like.

This kind of mutual coexistence and those cultural and religious activities that facilitate the sense of communal living that exists back home are some of the driving forces behind the clusters of Sierra Leonean communities that exist in many states in the United States. Mannah is a member of the Tegloma Organization, a supporter of his Sierra Leonean political party, although he is also registered with the Sierra Leone diasporas umbrella organization. On his take on the influence on diasporas influence to Sierra Leone, Mannah had this to say:

Sierra Leone diasporas, we are politically active. We influence all sectors in that country. In fact, we set the agenda in Sierra Leone and many people rely on us, they believe that we have answers to every problem..... As for the opportunities, there are numerous here that we have acquired and that we can transfer home to help build the nation, but there has to be the political will first and foremost....

As has been exhaustively discussed, through these organizations and individually, members of the diasporas community provide considerable support in both host and home countries welfare activities. According to Mannah, diasporas have overtaken most of other peace and development partners in Sierra Leone. The multiplier effects in providing education, health, infrastructural and economic support are so valuable that they should not be taken for granted.

ORGANIZATIONS ORIGINATING OUT OF DIASPORAS ADVOCACY

The generational cohort framework helps to better situate the history and lived experiences of the diasporas, but also has limitations because there are so many shared experiences across cohorts and a deeper history that connects them as a diasporas' community. In addition to the role of individuals belonging to each cohort, it is crucial to capture the essential role of organizations that the diasporas have put in place to support its advocacy in transitional and transformative justice. These organizations are essential because they provide a type of infrastructure linking the diasporas across continents, providing support structures for Sierra Leoneans to build their lives after migrating and helping facilitate their roles in diasporic advocacy. It is also helpful to situate the origin and evolution of these organizations along the same time period that demarcates each cohort (before, during and after the war).

The infrastructure for diasporic advocacy in Sierra Leone pre-dates the civil war by nearly two decades with the origin of the Limba Ethnic Organization. This provided an important source of support for later generations of the diasporas fleeing the war. Once the war had ended, the emergence of many other organizations continued to expand the basic infrastructure for the diasporas to have mobility and engage in diasporic advocacy. The section below provides a brief overview of key organizations emerging before and after the war, highlighting their connection to diasporic advocacy.

Organizations Originating Before the War

This section briefly describes the significance of three organizations. Tegloma, an organization based in the United States, Europe and other nations across the globe, is an organization representing the largest ethnic group in Sierra Leone. Mabohande, a Limba ethnic group in The United States and around the world is representative of the Limba people and forms the third largest ethnic group in Sierra Leone. Berny's Hope Foundation was founded by an individual diasporas member in the United States before the war but supports health, agriculture all over Sierra Leone. These organizations serve as support structures that provide assistance to diasporas members in the United States also. As can be observed from most of the individuals I interviewed, most new arrivals receive assistance for securing jobs, shelter documentations and training. While they provided much needed support to Sierra Leoneans before the war, they continue to provide assistance to the Sierra Leonean diasporas community and the homeland.

Tegloma: Mende Ethnic Organization

Tegloma is derived from a Mende word meaning ‘development.’ It is an organization of the Mende ethnic group founded in 1975. Throughout its establishment, the organization has contributed remarkably to seeking the welfare of its members in the diasporas. At the same time, the organization made its mark in promoting peace and development through economic health educational enhancement in the homeland. It is one of the biggest and oldest Sierra Leonean organizations in the diasporas, the largest membership is based in the United States.

Over four decades, Tegloma has been supporting diasporas across the diasporas. It has also been instrumental in promoting agriculture, supporting community development, youth development projects, and education in Sierra Leone.

Mabohande: Limba Ethnic Organization

The organization was founded in 1982 in New Jersey, the United States. After the funeral service of one Sierra Leonean, members of his ethnic group were aggrieved with the way and manner his funeral procedures were carried out. After the funeral, they had a meeting, the outcome of which was the establishment of a humanitarian organization which among other things seek to protect the interests of its members. The success of the organization would spread to other states such as Maryland, Virginia, Georgia, Texas, Ohio, California, Pennsylvania and recently in The United Kingdom.

The organization secures its funding through subscription, donations, and fund-raising activities. I was given a warm welcome by Mabohande members. I quickly made friends and became a member; I was also assisted with my driving lessons and information that landed me a job. The organization grew in influence and scope to provide support to the homeland. The organization makes frequent donations such as school materials, scholarships, clothing to Sierra Leoneans, the president told me during my interview with him. They also supply food to mosques and churches during religious holidays in the country, the president said. During emergencies, they assist with assortment of goods to victims, he told me.

Berney's Hope Foundation

This organization operates in Sierra Leone, its president, and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) lives in Maryland in the United States. A nongovernmental and charity organization, Barney's Hope Foundation helps vulnerable people especially women and children in Sierra Leone since its establishment in 1987. Its area of operation is mainly community development. In agriculture, the organization supports communities from manual and subsistence farming with mechanized farming equipment like tractors for plowing. The organization also builds schools, hospitals including churches and mosques.

Organizations Originating During the War

The decade long civil conflict in Sierra Leone was as brutal as it was long. What's more, its rate of destruction affected every corner of the country, displacing half of the country's population and killing tens of thousands of people. The brutality of the conflict and the suffering of the Sierra Leonean people attracted considerable sympathy and actions to alleviate peoples' suffering. Sierra Leone diasporas actors and organizations from different parts of the world offered their assistance to the people in various fields of endeavor. In this section, I concentrate on just two out of the many diasporas driven organizations created between 1991 to 2002 to assist their kinsmen in the home country.

Saving Needy Children

This organization was created in 1999 by a Sierra Leonean diaspora from the United States. Saving Needy Children concentrated on advocating for the rights of children, providing educational, health support to children in Sierra Leone. While

supporting children in Sierra Leone during the war in key regions of the country, they were particularly concentrated in the Amputee Camp in the country helping maimed women and children. The organization continued with its works after the conflict, concentrating mainly on education and the health sector.

Sierra Leone Central Union (SLCU)

An umbrella organization based in Holland Sierra Leone Central Union is composed of 14 registered organizations in the country. It was established in 1999. It works towards integrating Sierra Leoneans in the Netherlands as well as to stimulate actions towards stimulating the Sierra Leone diasporas in the Netherlands towards enhancing the development of the homeland. During the war the Netherlands attracted a huge concentration of asylees and refugee population into the country. During the war era, this organization and its affiliate members acted as a support structure to the large influx of Sierra Leoneans in the country than the support they could render to their homeland and understandably so. At the end of the conflict, attention was directed towards post-conflict peace and development with beneficiaries all over Sierra Leone.

Organizations Originating After the War

The war itself sparked the creation of even more diasporas led organizations to support transitional and transformative justice in the homeland. Like the other organizations before and during the conflict, these organizations are acting as support structures and advocates for human rights, peace and development in the homeland while also serving as support structures to their diasporas members. These organizations were

founded by diasporas individuals or groups outside of the homeland- in this case Europe and the United States. As could be observed from their goals and key thematic areas, they contribute in no small ways to addressing Sierra Leone's post-conflict recovery.

Hope for Lives in Sierra Leone

The founder of Hope for Lives in Sierra Leone lives in Maryland in the United States. The organization started its operation in 2011 with assisting artisanal fishermen in the Western Area of Freetown. Later, it extended to healthcare, education, and support with computer laboratories for educational advancement. In 2013 for instance, they built a library for the St Anthony's Primary School and equipped it with thousands of books. In 2019, they established a computer lab for the same school. They also helped the Milton Margai School for the Blind with motorcycles.

Diasporas For Sierra Leone (D4SL)

Twelve women from Belgium and The Netherlands were motivated to establish a charity organization after a fund-raising exercise for victims of the mudslide disaster that killed over a thousand people and displaced thousands more. This organization is unique in the sense that unlike other organizations, it caters for the aged population of Sierra Leone. Although their main source of funding is through personal subscription and fundraising activities, these women have not been deterred from slicing from their personal finances providing items like wheelchairs, clothes, provision.

One of the founders whom I interviewed said that the aged are among the poorest of the poor and the most neglected in Sierra Leone. Referring to the 2015 Population and

Housing Census, the project coordinator said one of their long-term goals is to provide housing for their beneficiaries and equip it with items that enhance the safety and comfort of elderly people. They are also working with government agencies and other local organizations to accomplish their goals.

CONCLUSION

This chapter provides a foundation for connecting my lived experience and supporting my argument that the diasporas play a crucial role in transitional and transformative justice through unpacking interviews I conducted with multiple cohorts in Sierra Leone's diasporas. Theoretically, the chapter contributes to scholarly debates and the push towards a cohort and event based framework for studying diasporas. Through comparing multiple cohorts of the diasporas' involvement in activism, I show that the Sierra Leone Civil War was indeed a critical event that shaped and sparked activism. I also show that this event is not the only factor shaping whether or not, or how, the diasporas are involved in their homeland's processes for transitional and transformative justice. All three cohorts (who migrated before, during and after the war) have deep ties to the country and its history, which motivates their activism.

CHAPTER 5

CENTERING DIASPORAS IN TRANSITIONAL AND TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE

INTRODUCTION

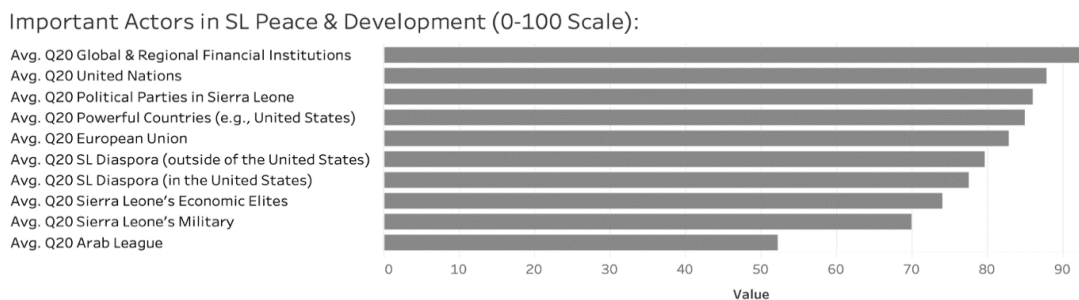
As part of my intimate ethnography, I conducted a survey with closed ended responses with the aim of highlighting diasporas actors' perspectives about the key actors and institutions working on transitional and transformative justice in Sierra Leone. The survey includes 62 participants, all of whom are members of the Sierra Leone diasporas and recruited through Facebook and What's App. By including the diasporas's role alongside the roles of international and domestic actors and institutions, the survey results help to situate the diasporas at the center of transitional and transformative justice work, complementing my story and the stories of other members of the diasporas (Chapters 2 and 4). Importantly, I situate my experiences and interview participants' experiences in my explanations of the survey responses. The survey reaffirms what I have argued throughout that thesis: the Sierra Leone diasporas are important stakeholders in the country's processes towards peace and development.

SITUATING DIASPORIC ADVOCACY AT THE CENTER

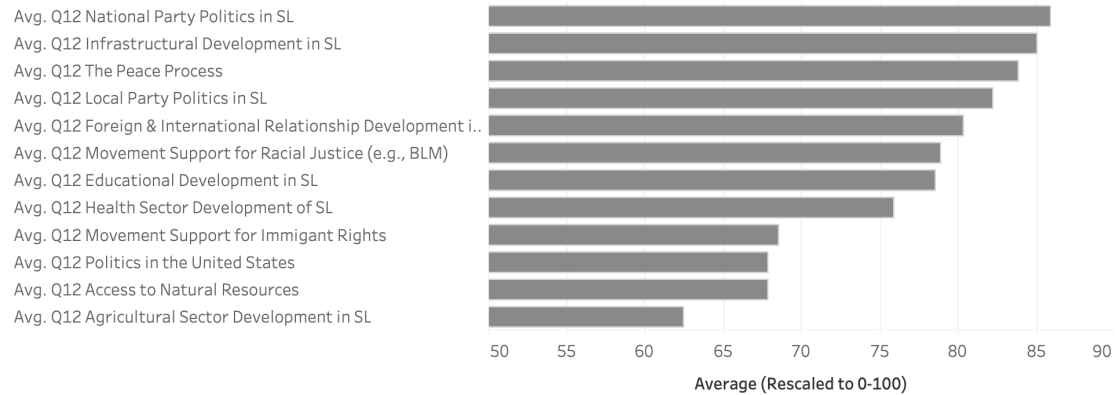
In the survey, I asked participants two separate questions in order to capture who the diasporas views as the most influential organizations, agencies and actors for the Sierra Leone peace and development process. The first question asks participants to rate how influential each of the listed groups are on Sierra Leone politics, peace and

development, with the options of rating them as having “no influence,” “minimal influence,” “strong influence” or “don’t know.” For Figure # above, I rescaled the results by assigning 0, 50, or 100 to no, minimal, and strong influence. I then averaged all participant responses in order to provide an overall ranking from most influential to least influential, as highlighted in Figure # above. The second important question the survey asks is specific to rating the diasporas’ role in key areas relating to transitional justice and transformative justice, with similar options of rating them as having “no influence,” “minimal influence,” “strong influence” or “don’t know.” I similarly rescaled the responses on a 0 to 100 scale in order to provide an overall ranking of where the diasporas consider themselves to be most influential and least influential. Together, these two survey questions help to situate the diasporas among other key institutions, as well as situates the diasporas along specific areas that are key to transitional and transformative justice.

Figure 2. Situating Diasporas Advocacy



SL Diaspora's Self-Perceived Role in Peace & Development

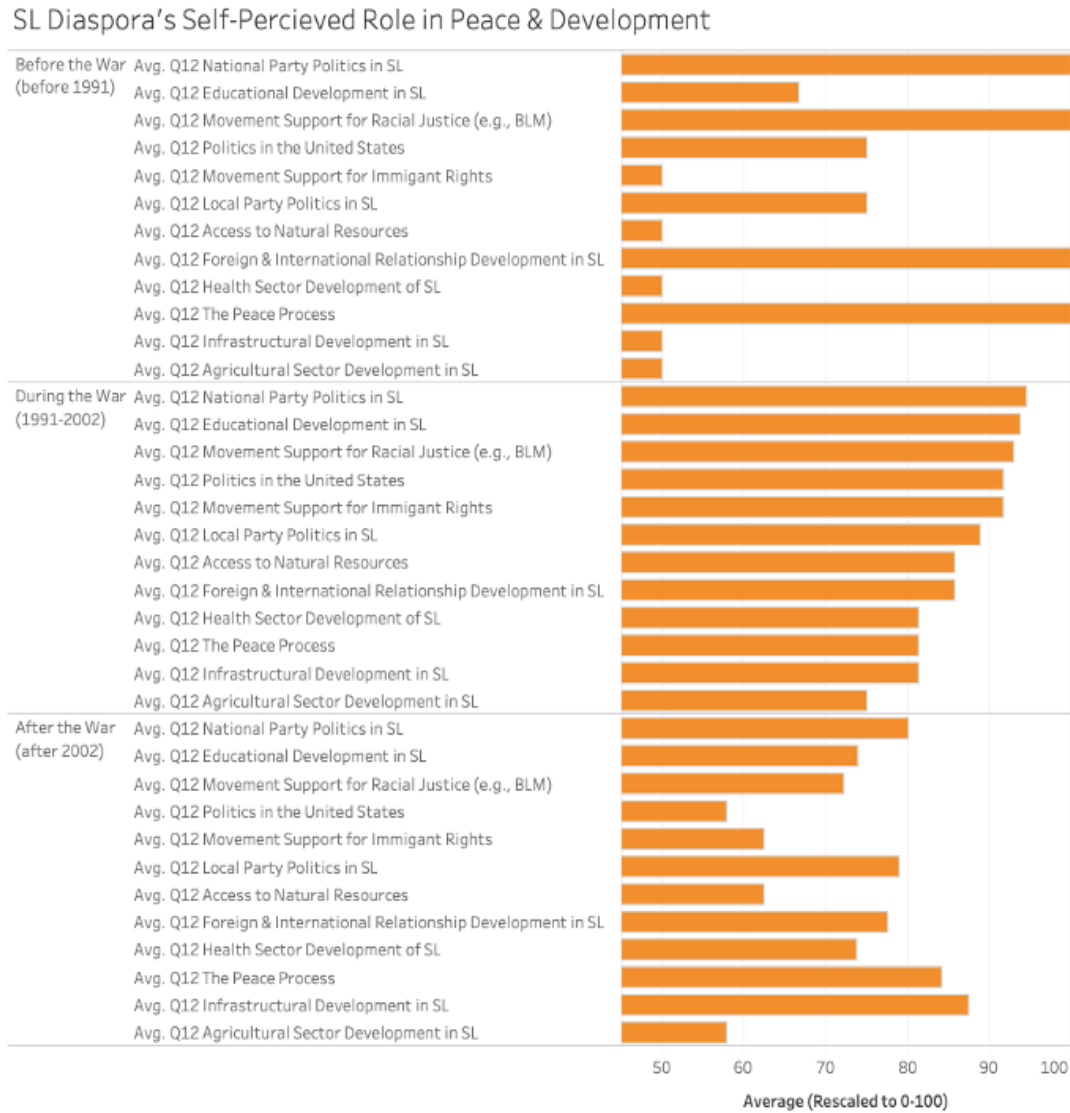


The United Nations Organization (UNO), the European Union (EU) and other regional economic organizations wield considerable powers in Sierra Leone peace and development. The United Nations and its specialists, for instance, operate in all regions of Sierra Leone. They employ tens of thousands of Sierra Leones and benefit millions more. Agencies like The World Health Organization (WHO) works with government partners and locals to ensure the highest standard of the health of Sierra Leoneans. Although the agency has a permanent presence in the country, their efficiency is often credited during emergencies as was proven during the Ebola disease and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) helps poor communities all over the country to fight hunger and help ensure food security, United Nations' Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) works towards the development of women and children, the list is inexhaustible.

Like the United Nations, the European Union agencies like German International Organization (GIZ), European Union Aviation Safety among others are operational in Sierra Leone and impact on the lives of millions of Sierra Leoneans. Sierra Leone political Parties for obvious reasons are very renowned with some with representations

across the country. The military are also popular for their professional roles and their notoriety in staging coups and mutinies.

Figure 3. Cohort Similarities in Diasporas Advocacy



Lastly, an important framework guiding this thesis is the idea that history and events can shape a diasporas into multiple cohorts. I therefore asked survey participants to self-categorize into a cohort (migrating before, during or after the war), in order to

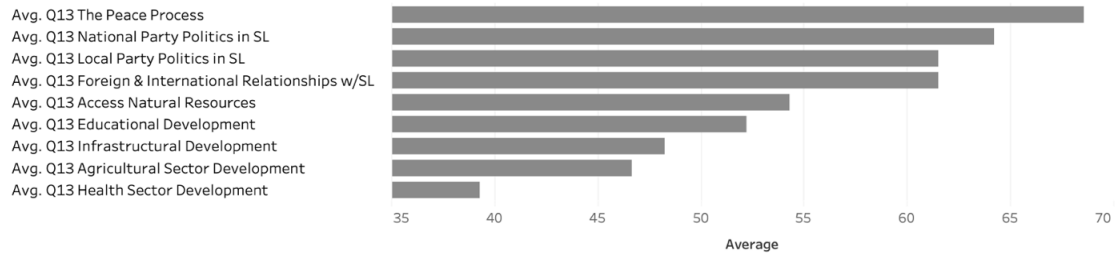
explore whether or not there are significant differences across the cohorts. Please note that there were very few participants in the cohort for migrating before the war, and most of the participants were from the cohort of migrating during the war. This prevents a perfectly clear comparison between the cohorts. However, as I explain in previous chapters, the multiple cohort framework is helpful but also limited. The most important takeaway is that the survey shows much more similarity than differences across the cohorts. This signals that all cohorts view the diasporas' roles (in other words, they view their roles) as crucial to transitional and transformative justice.

PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

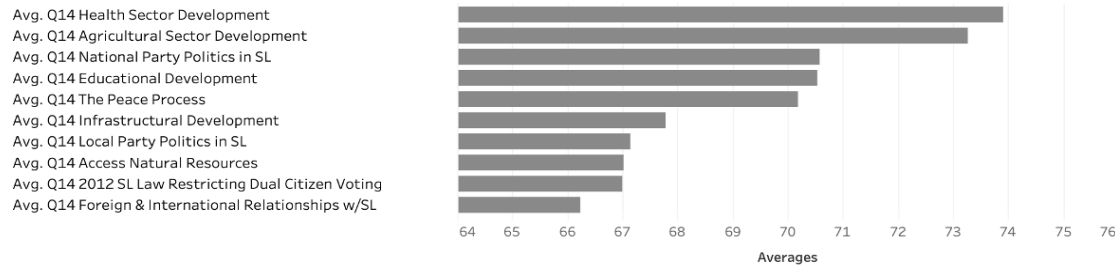
To gauge progress and current problems in transitional justice and transformative justice in Sierra Leone, the survey asks three separate questions. First, I ask participants to rank the level of progress made after the war ended in 2002 across a range of areas (*on a scale of 0-100, with 0 indicating little progress, and 100 indicating a lot of progress*). Second, I ask participants to rate problem areas to measure their level of importance on a similar scale of 0-100 (least to most important). Third, participants rate the same problem areas but with a focus on their level of importance for their family, on a similar scale of 0-100. Together, these three questions help capture what has been achieved and remains to be achieved when it comes to transitional and transformative justice. I unpack the various rankings on areas where progress has been made from the perspective of the diasporas. I also bring in findings from the interviews and my own understanding whenever relevant for explaining differences in where progress is being made.

Figure 4. Progress in Transitional and Transformative Justice

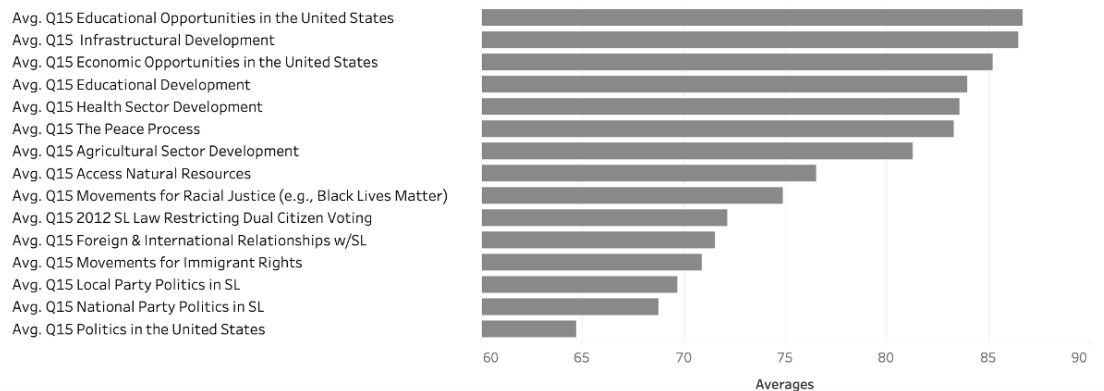
Progress Achieved (0-100 Scale):



Important Problems Today (0-100 Scale):



Important Issue Areas for Your Family (0-100 Scale):



Progress Towards Peace

An inordinately high score was expressed by participants on their perception of the status of the peace process in Sierra Leone. This high rating may be attributed to a number of reasons: On the democratic front Sierra Leone has conducted four free and fair elections and smooth transition of power. Efforts to establish a free press saw the passing of the Freedom of Information Act, the setting up of the Independent Media Commission.

Situated in a region that has a contagion of military interregnum, Sierra Leoneans have since 2006 enjoy smooth democratic transition and more recently, had the death penalty abolished. Participants view peace and development as inextricably linked.

The transition to peace after 2002 spearheaded a new dispensation for disarmament, national reconciliation and other peacebuilding efforts that also stimulated economic growth. These social, economic and political factors ensure the fulfillment of rights from which overseas populations have benefited immensely for over two decades. Sharing his thoughts, Amara Mannah, one of my interviewees sums it up thus: ‘.....There would be no development without peace..... and vice versa..... Even if we build the most beautiful skyscrapers, construct manicured paved roads and bridges, live not in harmony we live a vain life.....all vanity.’ Expressing the seriousness he attached to peace, another respondent told me that his online broadcast programs to Sierra Leone are purely about peace. He termed peace as ‘.....priceless and most valuable asset Sierra Leone needs to succeed....’

It is not surprising, given that peace has made so much progress, that the survey results place peace in the middle rather than high up on the list of pressing problems still facing the country. What this ranking implies is that respondents believe, though there is no violence or conflict going on in the country, it does not imply that everything is going on amicably well. The success in the area of improvement in the rule of law, democratic participation, and political rights, may have resulted in the peace process being considered appreciable. While the survey did not clearly spell out the reasons in depth, the interview did. For instance, interviewees raised issues like access to justice and economic opportunity- unemployment as areas that need great improvement.

Progress on Infrastructure

Even before the outbreak of the conflict in 1991, the infrastructural sector was in a terrible state. Only a few in towns and cities were paved, some of the roads linking towns and villages had bridges that had long outlived its expiration period making traveling hours very long and dangerous. Constant blackouts due to lack of a stable energy supply was a common phenomenon. With only a few hospitals and even fewer medical staff to cater for the sick stacked in overcrowded wards, the death toll was on the increase.

If the state of infrastructure was bad, the conflict could only have made it worse, as it did during the war. Renowned for their demolition style arsonist attacks on towns and cities lost major infrastructure after sustained periods of the war. Sierra Leoneans across the globe are still commemorating the loss incurred when the rebels and their alliance launched an attack on the city on January 6, 1999 the destroyed buildings in their tens of thousands. Meanwhile, the country is still grappling with having to repair the damaged infrastructure left by the war while at the same time being faced with the challenges of erecting new ones. The responses of diasporas on the poor state of infrastructural development may feature these issues, but it also mirrors the poor planning, corrupt practices in the award of contracts which at most times result in substandard buildings.

These concerns were spelt out clearly by Dr. Abu Mankota, one of my interviewees who states:

All of these political leaders receive huge funding from us diasporas but when they attain power they gang up against us by legislating bad laws like this new law

banning diasporasns from running for political office, they become more corrupt than the ones they replaced...Appointments and contracts are awarded to party loyalists and not by meritlook how fast one can grow here. I was in Freetown last year, ...no light heavy traffic, overcrowding.... This is shameful....

The state of infrastructural development in Sierra Leone received a tough response from my interviewee. One observable reason was that all my interviewees were impressed with the development enjoyed in the United States, the light energy efficiency, roads, internet opportunities and are frustrated with the power outage, bad roads, poor sewage system and a host of other problems. Implicating diasporas, one of my interviewees captured these anomalies in a few words:

Progress on Education

Responses on the status of education in Sierra Leone on education ranks at midpoint on the survey scale. This of course has its reasons but with some cryptic messages. The main outcome revealed in the survey puts education on an average and suggests that much more needs to be done to improve education in the country.

Responses from the survey, interviews express interest in the improvement of education in the country. The need for education to be given priority also reflects on the Sierra Leone development plans like the Sustainable Development Goals, The Agenda for Prosperity and The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Some of the interviewees lay emphasis on the quality of education especially for the girl child. The interview detailed what should be the focus of Sierra Leone educational system. Sharing Fatmata's vision, Dr. Abu Mankota shared his views on Sierra Leone development.

Why are our universities producing thousands of Engineers every year but people take their machines to local Mechanics. Why do we employ foreign contractors to fix Roads, erect buildings while we have an army of unemployed Engineers roaming idly in the streets.This is serious stuff. I believe our universities should be designed to meet the demands of modern development trends. Our diasporas brothers and sisters can help fix some of these problems but our politicians are playing games with us.

The poor linkage between the educational system in Sierra Leone and the demands of the job market find their expressions in the interviews.

The expressions made by diasporas on Sierra Leone's educational sector sounds very clear. While it may be acknowledged that some progress has been made in the areas of child education, increased in tertiary education, there is much more to be done with education. One driving factor for this outcome may be the importance diasporas attach to education. I was able to verify this in the interview where participants lay out what could be the reasons why the educational sector of Sierra Leone should receive much support.

The curriculums from lower level to the highest levels of education should be revisited and tailored towards meeting the needs of the development of the country. All stakeholder, parents, teachers government must be involved and and finances provided to achieve this first step to nation building.

Issues like access for millions of children especially in remote communities, quality of education were voiced out strongly as areas that need special attention. A colleague with

almost two decades of experience in the field of education told me during our interview told me what he believed to be the solution to Sierra Leone's education problems:

Progress on Health

Respondents from the survey and interview were emphatic about the status of the health sector in Sierra Leone. Comparing the health situation in the West to Sierra Leone, they complained about the lack of qualified medical personnel, poor equipment to the deplorable infrastructure in the health sector in the home country. The high death rate from preventable diseases like cholera while overcrowded hospitals, lack of sufficient medical staff and poor sanitary conditions in major towns and cities are appalling were expressed in both the interview and survey. Sharing her ordeal, one of my interviewees told me she migrated to the United States on health grounds and decided not to return after having witnessed the opportunities the United States has to offer as compared to her home country Sierra Leone.

Another told me he has been suffering from multiple health conditions and had undergone several surgeries to the heart and kidney. "I would have been history by now. I have been sick since I was twenty-one.... I have survived major surgeries and I am still alive and past seventy years... thanks to the US." I know about three diasporas actors who had to facilitate the migration of their family members to Ghana for better medical attention. The lack of medical equipment and personnel, lack of proper incentive that help drive professionals for greener pastures are some of the appalling issues plaguing the health sector in Sierra Leone. More appalling still is the grueling statistics exposing the state of the health sector in the country. According to (Carshon- Marsh et al, 2021), the

maternal mortality rate is as high as 510 deaths per 100.000 live births. Over 60 % of people in Sierra Leone before the age of 70 years most of this death are caused by preventable diseases. An estimated 31.1 % deaths are recorded per 1,000 live births.

According to one study conducted by WHO (2019), the number of doctors per person ratio rates at 3 physicians per 100.000 individuals. Such statistical reports are indeed scary and form the basis for appropriate actions by the diasporas community. Apparently, one of the people I interviewed while describing the health situation in Sierra Leone puts it this way “our peripheral health units (PHU’s) stand as empty concrete structures with nothing but pain reliever that helps facilitate one’s transition into the afterlife.”

Moreover, witnessed from the health situation in Sierra Leone, there could be no doubt as to the reasons for the low scores ascribed to that sector. The lack of qualified medical officers in the whole of the country. Also, the critical shortage of medical equipment, overcrowded hospitals, high death rates from preventable diseases are factors that can be attributed to this result. Even worse, the infant and maternal mortality rate in Sierra Leone is among the highest in the world.

Progress in Agriculture

The priority given to the agricultural sector can to a large extent be attributed to the rate of poverty and hunger in the country. According to the 2022 Global Hunger Index, Sierra Leone ranks 112 out of 121 countries. The government of President Julius Maada Bio has, on paper, prioritized agricultural productivity but not much seems to be changing on the ground.

The government, in collaboration with donor agencies are devising new innovations to boost commercial farming, luring investors to the sector but there is much more to be desired. According to a report by (Green Scenery, 2011) an estimated 60% of Sierra Leoneans are sustained by the agriculture in Sierra. Unfortunately, the mostly subsistence farming system coupled with the bottleneck policies and cost of machinery and fertilizers are limiting locals to invest in the agricultural sector. Most of my interviewees stressed that an effective partnership between Sierra Leone and diasporas can help solve the hunger crises in the country.

One of my interviewees told me that he knew a couple of diasporas who have invested in agriculture. Another diasporas colleague impressed me with his soybeans production which he argues has provided jobs for many Sierra Leoneans. A couple of other interviewees also told me they are into the agriculture business, though on a small scale.

Unlike other nations of the world, farmers do not have access to favorable loan deals, the ones that are available charge very high interest rates. Berny's Hope Foundation is a quintessential example of diasporas organization making a huge difference in Sierra Leone. The organization for instance provides communities with the machinery to farm huge portions of land they would find difficult, if not impossible to plow with local tools. A little percentage of the harvested produce would be paid to the project to help with the running cost and ensure sustainability.

As an individual originating from an agrarian family and a farmer myself, my experiences resonate with the concerns raised by most of my respondents. Some of the main concerns I share with other Sierra Leoneans in agribusiness is the lack of

government incentives like machinery, favorable loans and the lack of protection from cheap export foodstuffs into the country. Sierra Leone relies heavily on imported rice, the staple food. Poor road network, lack of proper storage facilities, land distribution are among the reasons for such a low rank for the agricultural development in Sierra Leone.

Food insecurity, characterized by high prices for food, low production and access to food are prevalent in Sierra Leone. These are despite the rich arable land. Many of the people I interviewed are casting the blame on the government and bad policies and problems with land distribution for the problem of food scarcity. Again, the failure to prioritize food products and the recent huge land investment deals by international corporations to produce ethanol for export to Western markets have started up debates among diasporas and has also been accused of driving thousands of farmers from their ancestral land and worsened the food security crisis.

Progress on Party Politics & Foreign Relations

One thing I have learned of the people of Sierra Leone is their love and respect for foreigners. The love to be at peace with others may have translated to their relationship with other nations. Added to that, Sierra Leone has enjoyed a very good relationship with its Western counterparts for generations. As was indicated earlier, Sierra Leone's bilateral relationship with The United States supports its policies and interest in the international stage. No problem on diplomacy exists between the two countries, hence the cordial high endorsement. Similarly, the high score on national and local party politics is likely due to there being a smooth transition of power since the war ended in 2002. There is also a growing response to the adherence of human rights and freedoms in the country.

CONCLUSION

By including the diasporas' role alongside the roles of international and domestic actors and institutions, the survey results helps to situate the diasporas at the center of transitional and transformative justice work, complementing my story and the stories of other members of the diasporas (Chapters 2 and 4). Importantly, I situate my experiences and interview participants' experiences in my explanations of the survey responses. The survey reaffirms what I have argued throughout that thesis: the Sierra Leone diasporas are important stakeholders in the country's processes towards peace and development.

CONCLUSION

I was raised in a society that values storytelling, parables and oral folklore, designed for entertainment to deliver advice or teach moral lessons and to transfer knowledge from one generation to the next. Contrary to my earlier understanding, this thesis seeks to illustrate how a story of one's personal experience has relevance in scholarly work. Indeed, through my academic journey in social justice and human rights at Arizona State University, and having incredible mentorship from Dr. Colbern, Dr. Redeker-Hepner, and Dr. Anokye, I have learned to center lived experiences and community in methodology and production of research for this thesis.

Despite their tremendous importance, no literature features the Sierra Leone diasporas as key actors in transitional or transformative justice. Much has been written about the Sierra Leone conflict and about peace and other stakeholders like the soldiers, the international community, civil societies, civil defense forces and rebels. Yet, little research recognizes the substantially important roles of the Sierra Leone diasporas. Filling this critical gap in the scholarship, this thesis reveals the role of the Sierra Leone diasporas in transitional, transnational justice, peace, and development in their homeland. It shifts the simplistic and dominant narrative of conflict-related diasporic interventions by revealing complex socio-political and economic ties of the Sierra Leone diasporas community that link them transnationally to the homeland.

I argue that both history and critical events like the civil war are crucial to explaining the role of the diasporas, which contributes to the works of Huma Haider, Tricia Redeker-Hepner, and other scholars, who similarly explore diasporic mobilization

and engagement. I show how the decade-long civil war helped shape diasporas' experiences but is not the only factor shaping their activism. Socioeconomic and political diasporic-driven histories and issues before the war, as well as post-war recent history, I argue, are crucial to fully understand diasporas advocacy.

Ultimately, the thesis builds on the growing strengths of the scholarships in this field and showcases why the Sierra Leone diasporas should be considered essential stakeholders in homeland peace and development. I develop and help make sense of a new conceptual framework – what I call the “Diasporas Advocacy” Framework – that captures Sierra Leone diasporas' short- and long-term roles in transitional justice, transformative justice, peace and development, as both a researcher and a participant in the study.

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APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

1) Can you spend a few minutes introducing yourself, how you came to the U.S., and your family and migration history?

Follow-up question about their status and migration history (if not addressed in their answer already):

- a) Refugee status
- b) Asylum status
- c) Diversity Visa program
- d) Others please specify.
- e) For how long have you lived in the United States under the status applicable to you?

2) How would you describe your relationship to your home country, Sierra Leone?

3) How would you describe your relationship to the Sierra Leone diasporas community?

4) Do you send money (remittances) to your family in Sierra Leone? If yes, how often, how much, and for what purposes?

PEACE & DEVELOPMENT SECTION:

1) Sierra Leone has faced many challenges since its civil war, from 1991 to 2002. With this in mind, how would you describe the most important problems that Sierra Leone and its citizens face today?

Follow-up questions:

a) How would you describe the “peace” process that is taking place or needs to take place in Sierra Leone today? How important is this to you and your family? (ask the interviewee to share specific stories or facts)

b) How would you describe the “development” process that is taking place or needs to take place in Sierra Leone today? How important is this to you and your family? (ask the interviewee to share specific stories or facts)

2) How would you describe your role in addressing the problems facing Sierra Leone, including efforts to build peace and development there? (ask the interviewee to share specific stories, facts, roles, histories, relationship, actions, etc)

3) Beyond yourself, what role do you think the Sierra Leone diasporas community plays in Sierra Leone? Do they play an important role in the homeland? What specific roles or actions by the diasporas do you think matter the most?

4) Are you a member of any organizations or networks that represent the Sierra Leone diasporas? If yes, can you describe these and your role and history?

Follow-up questions:

a) Can you describe the relationship between your organization/network to Sierra Leone, including efforts to build peace or development there?

5) Now I am going to transition into more specific questions about the diasporas's relationship to Sierra Leone's peace and development process:

6) In your opinion, does the diasporas currently contribute to any of the following:

i) Educational development in Sierra Leone?

ii) Health sector development in Sierra Leone?

iii) Agricultural sector development of Sierra Leone?

iv) Infrastructural development of Sierra Leone?

v) Foreign and international relationship development of Sierra Leone?

vi) Access to natural resources, gold mining, and government services?

vii) Are there any other areas that you consider important that I did not ask about?

6) What impact do you think that money in the form of remittances or Foreign Direct Investment have on Sierra Leone's economy?

POLITICS SECTION:

I am now going to transition to politics. Do you participate or play any political role in Sierra Leone

1) How would you describe the broader diasporas's role in Sierra Leone's politics, either nationally or locally?

Follow up question:

a) How would you describe the relationship between Sierra Leone's political parties, especially the APC and SLPP, with the Sierra Leone diasporas community? Does the diasporas play an important role in party politics in the homeland?

2) In 2012, Sierra Leone enacted a new law preventing dual citizens from voting or running for office. Has this law impacted you or your family in any important ways?

Follow up question:

a) How would you describe the impact of this law on the diasporas community and its relationship to Sierra Leone?

TRANSNATIONAL POWER BUILDING SECTION:

1) Would you say that the Sierra Leone diasporas is powerful in terms of being able to influence or impact Sierra Leone's politics, peace process, or development process? Please explain.

2) What are the major barriers or challenges that the Sierra Leone diasporas faces in being able to influence or impact Sierra Leone's politics, peace process, or development process? Please explain.

3) How has living in the United States empowered or strengthened the Sierra Leone diasporas's ability to influence or impact Sierra Leone's politics, peace process, or development process? Please explain.

Follow up:

a) What factors mobilize Sierra Leone diasporas in the United States together?

b) How have social movements like Black Lives Matter or immigrant rights in the United States or globally, empowered or strengthened the Sierra Leone diasporas's ability to influence or impact Sierra Leone's politics, peace process, or development process? Please explain.

c) Are you connected to or aware of the diasporas living in other countries, like the United Kingdom or Canada? If yes, do they play a similarly important role in influencing or impacting Sierra Leone's politics, peace process, or development process? Please explain.

4) Have your experiences living in the United States changed your view of Sierra Leone in any of the following areas?

- a) Religious perspectives and action in SL? (Please State)
- b) Educational perspectives and action in SL? (Please State)
- c) Cultural perspectives and action in SL? (Please State)
- d) Communication/social media perspectives and action in SL? (Please State)
- e) Health perspectives and action in SL? (Please State)
- f) Foreign relationship and international perspectives and action in SL? (Please State)
- g) State security perspectives and action in SL? (Please State)

My hope is for this project to lead to better understanding how the diasporas can shape Sierra Leone's future and to design a blueprint for how to do so. What do you consider to be the most important single problem that needs to be the focus, and what is the best way that the diasporas can become active in the future?

Besides the diasporas community, who do you think play the biggest role or hold the most power in shaping Sierra Leone politics, peace and development?

Follow up:

List key actors, communities, or organizations here...

United Nations?

The Transnational Role of the US Sierra Leone Diaspora in Peace and Development

APPENDIX B
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

1)Section A: Personal Data of Respondents

First can you please tell me about yourself ?

a)Gender: Male

b) Female

c)Religious affiliation:

- Christianity

-Islam

- African traditional religion

- Others please (Specify)

2 Can you please tell me under what age brackets you belong?

3.Age Group: 18- 22years 23-27years 28-32 years 33-37years 38-42 years
44-48 years 49-50years 51-55years 56-60years 61 and above years.

2) Under what migration status do you fall ?

a) Refugee status

b) Asylum status

c) Diversity Visa program

d) Others please specify.

e) For how long have you lived in the United States under the status applicable to you?

2)I am at this point going to ask you about your own definition of some terms

I am now going to ask you about development in Sierra Leone

First can you please tell me what development means to you, how do you define development?

b) How can SL diasporas contribute to development in SL?

C) In what ways does the diasporas community contribute to development in Sierra Leone? For example in the following areas:

18). In your opinion how can diasporas contribute to :

- A) Educational development in Sierra Leone ? (Please State)
- B) Health sector development of Sierra Leone? (Please state)
- C) Agricultural sector development of Sierra Leone? (Please state)
- D) Infrastructural development of Sierra Leone? (Please state)
- E) Foreign and international relationship development of Sierra Leone ? (Please state)
- F) Other : Please specify.
- G) In your opinion what are factors that militate against diasporas contributing to development in Sierra Leone? (Please state)

2) Again, I am going to ask you about defining another term

- a) How would you define peace?
- b) How can you assess the state of peace in Sierra Leone?
- c) What is/are the contribution of diasporas in the Sierra Leone peace process?

3) I am now going to ask you questions relating to who the Sierra Leone diasporas are, how they build transnational power, and how they mobilize.

- a) How would you define the Sierra Leone diasporas?
- b) Can you please tell me how Sierra Leone diasporas build transnational power?
- c) What do you think a model of diasporas / transnational power-building looks like?
- d) What would an effective Sierra Leone diasporas look like? How would that be useful to Sierra Leone?
- e) Where particularly can you find Sierra Leone diasporas in the United States? Which states in the US can you find them the most?
- f) What are the factors that often mobilize Sierra Leone diasporas in the United States together ?

4) I am going to ask you questions relating to Sierra Leone US diasporas' participation in the politics of Sierra Leone?

How strongly do you believe that Sierra Leone Diasporas play an important role in Sierra Leone politics?

- a) very strongly
- b) strongly
- c) fairly strongly
- d) not very strong
- e) not at all strong
- f) not applicable

What do you think, if any, are the factors preventing Sierra Leonean Diasporans in participating meaningfully in Sierra Leone political development?

- a) What political role do you think Sierra Leone diasporas play in Sierra Leone?
- b) Can you tell me the extent to which Sierra Leonean diasporas influence politics back home?
- c) How do the influence of Sierra Leone political parties, especially the (APC and SLPP) influence Sierra Leone diasporas ?
- d) Can you tell me your opinion on the dual citizen ‘Two sim’ saga? The law that prevents diasporas from participating in politics?
- e)What do you think will happen if diasporas are constantly denied to participate in Sierra Leone politics?
- f)What are the challenges that prevent diasporas from playing key political roles in Sierra Leone? (please State)
- g) Please suggest possible solutions to the challenges you have identified above.

5)My next set of questions will be directed at what the role of diasporas in Sierra Leone economy Starting with you:

Excluding birthdays or other gifts, how often, if at all, in the last year have you sent money to friends and/ or families in Sierra Leone?

- a) every week
- b) Every month
- c) less often
- d) Never
- e) Don't know

How much money in total have you sent in the last year – since January(or since you have been in The United States) ? Please select a letter from the options that apply

- a) less than \$ 5,00
- b) \$ 501- \$ 1000
- c) 1,001-\$3,000
- d) \$ 3,001- \$ 5,000
- e) \$ 5,001-\$ 10,000
- f) \$ 10,000 above
- g) Can't say

How often do you send money to your family in Sierra Leone?

b) How often do you send money back to Sierra Leone for example for business, housing, etc.

c) In a lump sum, can you quantify how much money you send bi-weekly, monthly or yearly?

d) How helpful do you think the money you send home is to your family?

e) What impact do you think money (remittances or Foreign Direct Investment) that Sierra Leoneans send home has on the country's economy as a whole?

Would you say that you know Sierra Leone diasporas who send money home to invest in Sierra Leone on (Eg, infrastructures, agriculture, tourism, small scale business etc?)

- a) Very many
- b) Many
- c) Not very many
- d) Few
- e) Very few
- f) Not at all
- g) Don't know

What policies, roles or modalities do you think the Sierra Leone Government should implement to improve diasporas contributions to Sierra Leone development ?

6) How do people's experiences in the US, specifically, shape perspectives and action vis-à-vis SL?

How does Sierra Leonean / people's experiences in the US specifically help to shape:

Political perspectives and action in SL? (Please State)

- a) Religious perspectives and action in SL? (Please State)
- b) Educational perspectives and action in SL? (Please State)
- c) Cultural perspectives and action in SL? (Please State)
- d) Communication/social media perspectives and action in SL? (Please State)
- e) Health perspectives and action in SL? (Please State)
- f) Foreign relationship and international perspectives and action in SL? (Please State)
- g) State security perspectives and action in SL? (Please State)

7) Now am going to ask you about access to resources; development of political identity (Black Voice)

1) Do Sierra Leone diasporas have access to natural resources Yes.... No.....

- a) What access to state resources does Sierra Leoneans in the diasporas have to :
- b) Land

c) Job opportunities

d) Natural resources, gold diamond, etc

e) Others please explain

f) If no, how can they access state resources? (Please state)

g) If no, above, why do you think S L in the diasporas do not have access to resources ?
(please state)

h) What are the challenges that you think militate against access to resources or political participation in

8) Sierra Leone Diasporic Networking: My next set of questions will be focused on what Sierra Leone organization you belong to or Know, and how that organization/ organizations network or build coalition with other like minded organizations.

a). Can you please explain what which coalition if at all your organization belongs to:

b) Can you please explain in what areas your organization's focus are, for example, refugee rights, immigration rights, advocacy etc.

c) What is the role of your organization in the Black Lives Matter Movement? Does it play a leading role or is it a beneficiary to the gains made by the coalition?

APPENDIX C
IRB APPROVAL

EXEMPTION
GRANTED

[Allan Colbern](#)
[NCIAS: Social and Behavioral Sciences, School of \(SSBS\)](#)

Allan.Colbern@asu.edu

Dear [Allan Colbern](#):

On 2/20/2021 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Diasporas Advocacy in Sierra Leone
Investigator:	Allan Colbern
IRB ID:	STUDY00013251
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview Consent Form-Final.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • Interview Instrument.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • IRB Protocol-Final.pdf, Category: IRB Protocol; • Recruitment Script, Interviews.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Recruitment Script, Interview Survey Request .pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Recruitment Script, Survey Participants, Sent by ND.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Recruitment Script, Survey Participants, Sent by Organization.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Survey Consent Form-Final.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • Survey.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/ Interview questions /interview guides/focus

	group questions); • Letter on IRB changes made, Category: Other;
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The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 2/20/2021.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

If any changes are made to the study, the IRB must be notified at research.integrity@asu.edu to determine if additional reviews/approvals are required. Changes may include but not limited to revisions to data collection, survey and/or interview questions, and vulnerable populations, etc.

Sincerely,

IRB

Administrator

cc:

Kallie Turay