Title

The Social Reintegration of Women: Reconstructing Womanhood and Moving Past Post-Conflict in Sierra Leone

Permalink

Journal

Author

Holt-Rusmore, Evarosa Thalia

Publication Date

2009

DOI

Copyright Information

Peer reviewed|Undergraduate

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Introduction

My research focuses on the reality of womanhood in Sierra Leone within the social dynamics of post-conflict and the transition to a developing society. I investigate negotiations of shifting gendered urban relations and the ways in which barriers at the sociopolitical and cultural levels have changed due to the civil war and its aftermath. Through an analysis of patterns of reintegration, I argue that the processes of women's identity creation have been greatly influenced by the discourse of international geo-politics in development. In some ways this influence has facilitated women's independence from traditional systems of control and contributed to a renegotiation of social position in Sierra Leone.

The reconfigurations and negotiation patterns I explore are not concrete, but rather complex processes laden with ambiguities contradictorily influenced by past, present and future resources to which women may have access. I analyze how young women negotiate and appropriate globalized ideas of the modern in relation to new rights-based discourses. I then balance this with an understanding of changing forms of kinship and patronage bonds by maneuvering new configurations supported in social, political and economic systems. Because the "historical record confirms that societies neither defend the spaces women create during struggle nor acknowledge the ingenious ways in which women bear new and additional responsibilities"(Meintjes 2001, 4), the narrative presented must be contextualized in its continuous state of change, as well as with the premise that women are constantly creating their subjectivities depending upon spatiality, agency and practice. In fact, it is in part due to the strategic use of these dynamics that women were able to reintegrate "successfully" after the conflict and continue to redefine womanhood in urban Sierra Leone. Through this constant renegotiation the options women have for an acquisition of rights and an enhanced social position have increased.

The first section of this paper is a minimal history of the conflict, given in order to contextualize the results on its female population and their ability to reintegrate after the war. I go on to detail past and present realities of womanhood for Sierra Leonean women, focusing on traditional trajectories and social values and the way in which urbanization, transnational development agendas, legal reform and other post-conflict dynamics have in some ways created a platform for disjunctured identity formation in women. Throughout this analysis, women's ability to manipulate both traditional and non-traditional trajectories is emphasized. In conclusion, this social maneuvering is presented as a starting point for further inquiry into women's identity creation in Sierra Leone.

Historical Context

Sierra Leone is a small West African nation of about six million inhabitants. After independence in 1961, the country faced a variety of challenges including the breakdown of democratic governance structures due to the rise of a one-party state of the All People's Congress and the implementation of structural adjustment programs in the '70s and '80s. These factors directly decreased transparency and the power of civil society as the state continuously withdrew support for health, education and other social services.

In 1991 a small insurgent group, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), attacked the country with stated aims to return the country to a multi-party democracy. This initial incursion became a civil war lasting over a decade marked by coups and counter-coups, the breakdown of multiple peace accords, and a collapse of the state into what is referred to as a "shadow state" (Reno 2001).[i] Mainly fought with guerrilla tactics, combatants from all sides strategically targeted the civilian population, specifically women and children, subjecting a large portion of the civilians to physical and sexual abuse, abduction and forced conscription. By the end of the war, approximately half the population had been displaced and 75,000 had been killed (Physicians for Human Rights 2002). Countless more were physically injured and psychologically traumatized.

An estimated one-third of the RUF forces were made up of women and girls who were used as porters, messengers, cooks, sexual companions and a small number as fighters (Bennett 2002). The women and girls abducted into the fighting forces were many times subjected to various forms of abuse described by the Women's Commission as "sexual and domestic slavery" (Women's Refugee Commission 2001). It has been estimated that 250,000 girls and women were victims of sexual violence (Physicians for Human Rights 2002).[ii]

Since women and girls were subject to sexual abuse throughout the conflict, it has been argued that the burdens they bear post-conflict are larger than those borne by boys and men (World Vision 1996). This is due, in part, to the greater economic burden faced by the many women who became pregnant as abductees[iii] and now have children to look after, in addition to complications related to continued health problems experienced by victims of sexual abuse.

In 2006, Sierra Leone was ranked as the lowest nation on the Human Development Index, was in the lowest third on the Gender Development Index, and had the highest infant mortality rate in the world (United Nations 2006). Therefore, the argument of economically based challenges is emphasized in both aid and development agendas. While statistics are inherently distorted due to the politics of collection and distribution, these numbers have relevance as they illustrate the ways in which social realities are measured, explored and addressed by public, private, local and transnational actors (Caldeira 2000; Davis 2006). For the purposes of this discussion, these statistics show that women have been significantly more impacted by the strife of the last decades.

Justification and Methodology

In the six years since the end of the war, though the experiences and roles of young women have not been thoroughly examined yet, it has been argued that as these women and their children tried to return to their communities after the end of the conflict they have faced stigmatization and marginalization from "families and communities (who) often had difficulty accepting them because their experiences are so antithetical to traditional cultural norms" (McKay, Robinson, Gonsalves, and Worthen 2006, 8). This dynamic specifically refers to experiences of females who were perpetrators of violence and formed illegitimate marriages with males of the fighting forces. Until recently, large-scale reintegration programs and sensitization campaigns have aimed to decrease stigma and facilitate reintegration. These efforts have largely been the main focus for local, national and international aid communities whose goals are long-term stabilization and development.

The initial intent of this research was to test the hypothesis that the stigmatization these young mothers continue to face acts as a barrier to children's access to community and social networking resources, creating a new class of "outcasts" whose marginalization might increase chances of renewed conflict (Bennett 2002). To understand these dynamics I conducted a short-term research project in Freetown, Sierra Leone over the summer of 2008. The two-month stay in Sierra Leone gave me access to direct information about the situation of these women and children, and helped to construct an informed perspective on the post-conflict context of their lives. The research also aimed to identify gaps in a development agenda that may not be addressing the specific needs of this portion of the population. This latter motive was constructed in light of limitations faced by women and girls who have been "significantly underrepresented in the (*sic*) programs of Sierra Leone which is considered a highly patriarchical society" (Lorschiedter 2005, 2).

Research was conducted in the capital of Sierra Leone, Freetown. Most organizations interviewed were based in the Western Urban area, though many also worked in various areas spread about the western area and in the provinces (especially in the main provincial towns of Makeni, Bo and Kenema).

The research design involved interviews with agencies that assisted children and young women, some of whom had been victims of war violence. To accomplish this research I interned at a vocational institute for young women and carried out interviews with eighteen additional relevant educators, women's organizations and academics. At the institute my main duties included assisting in the literacy program and facilitating workshops on three newly passed laws called the "Gender Act," which give greater rights to women. Additionally, a few times a week I interned with a women's rights organization that promoted the Act and offered a safe haven for victims of domestic violence.

My fieldwork quickly disproved the initial premise of my research as many agencies and individuals claimed that reintegration, at least in Freetown, had been successful. The focus then shifted to the reasons for successful reintegration and in this process it became apparent that women were using a number of different social constructions and discourses to help make lives for themselves.

Foremost, as a qualitative anthropological perspective informs this paper, it is necessary to present from the start the limitations of the study. Two-months is a limited time frame within which to integrate into an unknown culture, understand cultural nuances, be able to recognize patterns of stigmatization, and interpret the ways in which women may mitigate stigma and acquire new social positions. Observations must be understood with these limits in mind.

Additionally, the inherent heterogeneity of experiences and points of view present in an urban center, such as Freetown, may not necessarily be representative of dynamics in rural areas of the country. This is not to say that urban dynamics are only applicable to the city, but rather, to emphasize that there are particular ways in which urban features have both continuity and a disjuncture with their rural counterparts.[iv]

Efforts to understand local dynamics meant that the majority of the interviews were conducted with individuals who worked in local organizations. Informal interviews ranged from

thirty minutes to one and a half hours. These organizations were usually small, with an average full-time staff of three to seven people, and many were supported through international aid. These aspects undoubtedly affected the study. Specifically, many individuals were well versed in humanitarian and aid discourse, and therefore were conscious of the connections between outside researchers, critique and funding. Furthermore, most organizations interviewed assisted only a small portion of people who were in need of their services. This is significant because it may have meant that a fully comprehensive understanding may have been a limiting factor in their analysis. It must be recognized that the majority of those interviewed were nationals, all of whom had direct or indirect personal experiences with the conflict/post-conflict social reality and are sure to have represented this when interviewed, consciously or otherwise.

Language posed another challenge throughout the research process. While English is the official language of Sierra Leone, in actuality it is spoken fluently only by a small portion of the highly educated class (official interviewees spoke English). Krio, the *lingua franca*, is a mix of West African languages, Portuguese, French and English and unites the country through a common communication system (Richards 1996). However, for an outsider without prior knowledge of the language, it posed a formidable challenge, specifically in participant observation.

In presenting these limitations, I make efforts not to devalue this research, especially since many of the trends observed correspond substantially with previous work, but rather, to contextualize the ways in which methodology is embedded in the research process and produces certain kinds of understanding.

Women, the State and Culture: Pre-Conflict Dynamics

Women and the State

Relatively unknown until the mid-nineties, Robert Kaplan introduced the war in Sierra Leone to the international arena in 1994. A renowned American journalist, Kaplan published a sensationalized article claiming that ethnic fault lines, overpopulation and environmental degradation had been the main causes of the conflict. He forewarned the western world that "the coming anarchy," as his article was titled, represented a "new barbarism" that would seep out of Africa and infiltrate the West (Kaplan 1994). His article reached U.S. Embassies across the globe (Richards 1996) and while it increased awareness of the conflict, it also de-contextualized relevant social dynamics including the large-scale repression of the majority of the civilian population which struggled under rampant state corruption, the collapse of the economy, and heavy cuts in social programs (Besteman 2005, 83-100). Though politically marginalized, anthropologist Paul Richards contends that most "Sierra Leoneans displayed a straightforward commitment to political modernity…[and] desired transparent and accountable institutions of state and civil society" (Richards 1996, xxvii).[v] However, the limited power of the citizenry to change government and control corruption coincided with domination from elites through systems of patronage and cronyism, and aspirations of transparent and accountable institutions were never fulfilled, a dynamic which was cited as a key cause of the war (Abdullah and Mauna 1998; Richards 1996; Zack-Williams 1999). While most Sierra Leoneans distrust the current government's ability to address challenges facing the country, citizens young and old continue to insist upon its responsibility to its people, especially in providing education and development.

This insistence fuels the government ideal of accountability to its populace, regardless of past transgressions and evidence contradictory of its efficacy.[vi]

Women have faced additional challenges as they are greatly affected by the structural and social cultural system of patriarchy that legitimates a variety of laws, customs, and norms which have kept women and girls as second-class citizens. Though anthropologist Chris Coulter's work with women in north-eastern Sierra Leone shows that patriarchy is still an ingrained reality in which "most relationships are, by definition, unequal" (2006, 323), a nuanced understanding of patriarchy illustrates ways in which women have "the most extraordinary—if ambivalently valued—powers" (Ferme 2001,178). This is especially true in terms of non-public roles, such as midwifery and Sande secret society leaders.

Relations are influenced by factors other than gender, perhaps the most salient of which is hierarchies (Shepler 2005). In the past, age and the influence of elders were powerful forces that defined social standing, prestige, and rights of control. These rights constricted women's control over the products of their labor and reproduction rights of their children. This highly constrictive dynamic is supported by West Africa's system of value creation, labeled by anthropologist Caroline Bledsoe as a "wealth in people" system in which value is dependent on bonds of duty and obligation, rather than land or material possession (1980, 47-80).

Legal Status

Bledsoe's work with the Kpelle women of Liberia illustrates how the control of West African women has been "considered relatively unproblematic because of their inferior legal status" (Bledsoe 1980, 54). Prior to the conflict, the inferior legal status of women referenced in Bledsoe's work held true in Sierra Leone, where women as second class citizens was socially sanctioned and structurally prevalent. The Sierra Leonean legal system sanctioned and regulated discriminatory laws based on gender, which limited women's access to a variety of rights.[vii] Women's limited access to rights included citizenship, property and inheritance, reproductive health services and rights, divorce, child support, employment opportunities and protection against gender based violence.[viii]

This is not to say that women held no legal power in society. The authorization of legal marginalization has a legacy in previously imposed colonial western discourses which framed women as less powerful than they were historically in many African societies. In certain contexts, this has become a challenge to the discourse of subjugated women, such as the ability of Mende women to become Paramount Chiefs, though access to this status was extremely limited (Day 1988).[ix] In her investigation of women and representation, anthropologist Mary Moran shows how these Western impositions re-created parallel systems of power already present in West Africa in new ways (Moran 1988, 1989, 1995). In Sierra Leone it has been commonplace for women to hold similar (i.e. "parallel") high-ranking positions to men and form certain kinds of powerful collective action carried out in women's groups and associations (Moran 1989, 443-458). This "dual–sex political system," especially prevalent in rural areas, is represented through the institutions of Mammy Queens and Princesses stemming from a core ideology of the inability of men to adequately represent the interests of women.

Cultural, Economic and Political Value of Women

Women's labor in the past was not only highly controlled but also intensive and time consuming. In the past and presently, women serve as the primary caretakers, perform the majority of domestic duties, care for livestock and crops, and contribute to household income through a variety of entrepreneurial activities including producing items for market. It is important to note that West African women have traditionally been the primary breadwinners in their households, an ideal which varies significantly from traditional Western ideologies (Moran 1988, 496). This significant dynamic of social norms of labor is not necessarily represented in current generalized discussions of modern global southern development.[x]

Raising children continues to be of special value, as children provide "additional labor, alliances with other families, social security in old age, and ritual and political continuity for the family" (Bledsoe 1984, 456). For these reasons, the role women play in childrearing is noted as being "the most important female function in the eyes of most Africans" (Bledsoe 1980, 59). In the past, this "function" of women has not been an isolated event, but rather a long process involving a variety of phases of development into womanhood and strategic maneuvering of family's rights in their children. A critical part of this process included becoming an eligible marriage partner, which for women meant becoming a member of the Sande through an initiation ritual.

The Sande, a strongly endorsed women's secret society in West Africa, in the past provided a variety of functions for and by women beginning with an initiation ritual. Initiation entailed a period of seclusion for girls during which they learn skills from Sande elders, *sawei*, and undergo female circumcision. Initiation marks girls as having gone through puberty, attained fertility and gained the skills to be an able wife and mother (Bledsoe 1984). This individual transformation is carried out through practices controlled by *sawei* elders who many times are subsequently petitioned for marriage arrangements for certain initiates. Historically, fertility was understood as acquired through the process of initiation and in the past the majority of men insisted their future partners be initiated (64). The Sande processes continue today, though women's trajectories through these processes and after have greatly shifted, an aspect that I will address later.

The position of *sawei* elders over initiates has been critiqued by Bledsoe (1980, 1984) due to the lack of skills actually imparted on initiates and the powerful control wielded by elders who often used their high social position for their own gains. However, investigations into the secret society also reveal that Sande society can be used as a base from which to get protective rights, call for reprimands of men and create powerful solidarity groups between women (Bledsoe 1984; Ferme 2001; Moran 1989).

As in the past, Sierra Leonean women continue to strive to become desirable marriage partners and bear children. Other ambitions involve acquiring skills and tools for economic stability, and lastly, the acquisition of education and literacy (Shepler 2005). Previously, traditional practices of the Sande secret society, strategic and arranged marriages and alliances, were crucial to women's capacities in achieving social and political prominence. These practices provided economic and social support and had the power to open or close the doors for advancement in the society (Bledsoe 1980). In the following discussion of the conflict's

dynamics I detail broken trajectories of these practices and illustrate how this affected the way women are able to access advantageous social and economic standing and resources.

Women and the Civil War

During the conflict, attacks directly targeted women and children. Many were abducted and taken into the jungle where the rebels had their strongholds. The abductions were often brutal, with fighters invading villages, burning homes, and killing the leaders and chiefs. Individuals deemed worthy of conscription—the majority of which were boys between the ages of eight to fifteen—were often forced to commit atrocities against their communities, sometimes killing and raping their own family members or other villagers. Women and girl abductees taken during these raids were many times subjected to repeated sexual and violent physical abuse. If they survived these abuses, they became the battalion's cooks, porters, messengers and many times were forced into "bush marriages" with combatants. As "bush wives," women faced forced labor and sexual relations but were spared from some forms of sexual abuse, such as gang rapes, due to protection from their bush husbands. While Susan McKay and Dyan Mazurana contend that these forced sexual roles were still a daily reality for many women (2004),[xi] anthropologist Mats Utas' investigation of women's roles in rebel battalions in Liberia show that many times young women strategically manipulated these partnerships in order to survive the unstable economic and violent environment inherent in civil guerrilla conflicts (2005).

Terrorist tactics against civilian populations follow a pattern that has been seen in other civil conflicts in the post-colonial era. Richards argues that in light of their limited access to territory, guns, fighters and other resources, the rebels and other fighting forces obtained resources from their raids and retained their most important spoils: conscripts and camp labor support. It has been noted that in armed conflicts throughout the world the sexual abuse of women is a political and strategic move constituted as "rape politics" and is not haphazard (Sideris 2001, 142-157). These politics have various effects in different contexts. For example, the consequences of war rapes in Bosnia differ significantly from those in Sierra Leone. In Bosnian 'honor culture' daughters would be rejected and stigmatized for breaking the family honor, whereas in Sierra Leone daughters would be rejected because of the way in which attacks on themselves in fact violated their parent's social standing (Coulter 2006, 369). During the war, the result of this violation in social standing meant that women would often avoid returning to their communities and see the fighting forces as their only possibility.

Due to the prevalence of violence as the major way of conscription and the breaking from traditional age hierarchy norms involved in this process, both male and female conscripts often felt too ashamed of the acts they were forced to perform or, in the case of women, the acts that were forced upon them, to return to their homes (Richards 1996; Shepler 2005). Women were especially vulnerable to these strategic tactics because communities saw these women as part of the fighting forces and many times feared them. The children of these women were also feared, and it was expected that these "rebel babies" would grow into brutal individuals due to parents' lineage.[xii]

Though concrete figures are vague, it is widely accepted that most of the women involved in the fighting forces suffered some sort of sexual abuse like rape, mutilation and, less common, disembowelment (Bennett 2002). Most rapes have gone unreported, a phenomenon

common even in the U.S.,[xiii] though verbal concealment of a rape is not always effective. Reproductive health problems including infertility and high prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases, both highly stigmatized conditions, give away many women's pasts. Women suffering from these long-term physical effects of sexual abuse were more likely to remain separate from their communities after the conflict (Coulter 2008; McKay and Mazurana 2004).

This is not to say that women only had roles as passive victims throughout the conflict. Active not only in their varied positions in the fighting forces, women played key roles in the formation of a strong anti-war movement as "rural and urban women from all classes and ethnic groups mobilized to form active organizations, conduct marches, and lead rallies for peace and justice…and ultimately played a catalytic role in bringing an end to the conflict" (McKay and Mazurana 2004, 16).[xiv] After the breaking of the Lome Peace Accord in 1999, women increased their participation and called "for an end to male domination and male-biased decisions" (17).

Investigating previous gendered aspects of West African political actions shows that this type of collective action has historically been a powerful tool for mobilization in terms of women-centered issues. In the context of peace movements and political action, Mary Moran's insightful descriptions illustrate the way in which women's associations, both spontaneous and strategically planned, have incited social action and built political platforms utilized by West African women to voice and demand change (1989, 449-450).

Women and Girls Post-Conflict

The RUF invaded Freetown in 1999. The three-week attack on the capital brought international spotlight to the conflict and the United Nations sent their first peacekeeping troops, which would eventually swell to 17,500, the largest ever sent (UNAMSIL 2005). President Kabbah regained his post, declared peace in January 2002, and set up a disarmament committee in conjunction with the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and Nigerian peacekeeping forces (ECOMOG) through which they proceeded to demobilize ex-combatants until 2004. In addition to demobilization, the committee also provided programs of reintegration. These included short-term vocational training and limited monetary assistance to approximately 45,000 ex-combatants, as well as reintegration assistance such as family tracing, community sensitization campaigns and family mediation (McKay and Mazurana 2004). These joint processes are implemented in many post-conflict transitions and are called Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, or DDR. In Sierra Leone, at the end of this process it is estimated that 98 percent of children demobilized were reunited with at least one family member (UNICEF 2004). However,

> Despite this high rate of reunification, some of those who returned home migrated to other areas subsequently rather than reintegrate locally. This drift to other areas was likely influenced by the desire to find livelihood opportunities as well as avoiding the hostility, stigma, and discrimination faced in their home communities by those who had been with one of the rebel groups. (Williamson 2006, 198)

At the completion of DDR, a total of 4,751 women and 506 girls had passed through this formal process, totaling approximately only seven percent of all combatants demobilized. Yet it has been estimated that over one third of fighting forces consisted of women. The Sierra Leone

DDR process is often cited as a model of success yet these figures illustrate how the majority of women and girls did not demobilize formally (McKay and Mazurana 2004). The ability for such a large-scale stabilization process to completely bypass half of the population and still be considered successful is alarming. While this dynamic cannot be fully explored in the scope of this research, it certainly calls into question the complex economic entanglements and repercussions of global security and stability forces that are imposed in conflict situations.[1xv] Lastly, it illustrates the way in which this process is inherently gendered.

Varied experiences in reintegration were also influenced by the way in which the war "severed women from the conventional trajectories of Sierra Leonean womanhood, from their social and cultural ties and from local flows of reciprocity" (Coulter 2008). Familial rejection due to their "antithetical experiences" and differing trajectories is not a complete argument. This is particularly true in terms of women's experiences as warriors, which has a certain continuation with understandings of midwifery and war rituals in West African tradition (Ferme 2001, 178-179; Moran 1995, 73-88). Development anthropologist Anita Schroven critiques the dichotomization discourse offered by reintegration and sensitization campaigns. In order to access benefits from the DDR process and reintegration programs this discourse often forces women to choose between the identity of ex-combatant, often synonymous with perpetrator, or the identity of victim, equated with a kind of lack of agency and childlike innocence (Schroven 2006, 71-120).

While others have investigated the hypocritical dynamics of the international aid and peacekeeping community, specifically criticizing interventions and illustrating the gendered processes of interventions (see McKay and Mazurana 2004), this research explores the other side of what made reintegration success possible and deconstructs the idea of "antithetical" experiences of women. I illustrate that in spite of the difficulties faced by women in accessing Western interventions and formal processing, they have facilitated their reintegration and contributed to stabilization in the country through a variety of conscious and unconscious factors. These factors include new social and political constructs which I argue have played a role in the transformation of gender identity and consequently, the resources which women can appropriate to reintegrate and to challenge marginalization in order to acquire different social positions which were previously unavailable.

Mitigating Stigma, "Successful Reintegration" and Reconfigurations of Gender

Formal Processes: Sensitization Campaigns and DDR

The majority of my informants in the aid and policy sector validated the accomplishments of DDR and transnational interventions. Most stated that reintegration had been highly successful, with women and children no longer facing stigmatization and high rates of community acceptance of female ex-combatants/participants in rebel forces. Income-generating activities made possible through DDR processing was highlighted as a crucial component of successful reintegration. However, informants often cited the limited time frame, inconsistency and minimal economic support, or start-up capital limitations of these activities as drawbacks to the long-term success of vocational training programs. Naturally, the ability to introduce much needed income into war-torn communities and households constitutes a significant factor affecting reintegration. Coulter's work reinforces these statements in her work

with ex-combatant women in northern Sierra Leone, in which she noted the "dialectical relationship between material wealth and the quality of social relations" (2006, 310).

The second most often cited contributor to successful reintegration was wide-scale sensitization campaigns. Sensitization was conducted through a variety of mediums including music, radio broadcasts, public announcements, presidential speeches, posters, leaflets, and workshops. Sensitization aimed primarily to convince communities that persons in the fighting forces, including women, should not be penalized for actions perpetrated during the war, as well as to create an atmosphere conducive to the return of ex-combatants, fighters, bush wives and child soldiers to their communities of origin. However, the ability to raise awareness and mediate issues of stigma is directly linked to an understanding of kinship, generation and morality (Coulter 2006, 25). These factors were not fully addressed in these campaigns, which were funded mostly by Western transnational actors unfamiliar with West African social understandings of the conflict. The limitations of sensitization rhetoric is exemplified in much of the public's quick rejection of the Western ideology which aims to deconstruct the "blaming the victim" dynamic—the insistence on releasing persons in the fighting forces from any blame of their actions. While this concept seems relatively comprehensible in Western discourse of the "innocence" of childhood and the supposed pacifity of women, these ideas do not necessarily resonate with local understandings of women and children's agency during war.[xvi] In actuality, many communities saw these women as actors in the conflict rather than victims (Shepler 2005; Coulter 2006).

In spite of the above-mentioned limitations in both the scope and efficacy of formal or institutionalized processes of reintegration, the general sentiment of "letting bygones be bygones" is consistent in everyday life.[xvii] Therefore, it is important to investigate the ways in which young women have been able to navigate the structures of social belonging and exclusion outside of formal processes; a discussion of "informal processes" which have mitigated stigma is necessary. This research illustrates how these informal processes have historical continuities in the region. Continuities are present within a framework of gendered value, societal constraints and opportunities, and complexities of urban dynamics and access to a globalized discourse currently valorizing certain social relations capitalized on by Sierra Leonean women, especially those who reside in Freetown.

No Longer a Burden: Economic and Social Value of Women and Children

As previously stated, initially after the war many young mothers faced stigmatization that was strongly linked to both a moral discourse and economic constraints. While many informants stated that one of the reasons women were accepted back into their families was because of the endearing qualities of their children (as grandchildren or other kin-relations), there may be another aspect to the willingness of families to downplay, or decrease their resistance to past transgressions.

In a region as poverty stricken as Sierra Leone, any asset that has the potential to contribute to economic stability is highly valued. As young mothers returned to their communities, they may have burdened their families with the economic strain of having additional mouths to feed. However, as their children grew, they have become increasingly able to contribute to the family structure as labor power and to add other resources to the family unit.

In the past six years of peace, even the youngest child born as a result of a bush marriage now has the ability to enhance the family's economic situation, historical analysis of the wealth-in-people system support these observations.

Daughters themselves may offer increased economic stability to their families, contributing not just in the form of domestic, farm and gardening labor, or market and trade, but also through relationships with men. This "girlfriending"[xviii] is a "culturally approved, although conveniently less talked about arena" (Coulter 2006, 316).

Many of the young women at the institute engaged in these kinds of relationships. An exemplary case was Issata, who had a boyfriend in Kono, one in Freetown and one abroad. She was an attractive young woman and due to this and her remarkable social maneuvering skills, Issata always paid her school fees on time and had materials for her projects. In a humorous conversation she defended herself by saying, "as ugly as I am, someone will love me! My mother is not working, my father is not working; who is to pay for my clothes?" This statement shows her limited economic opportunities and concurrent familial obligations. Yet, it also illustrates a consciousness of independence in which she is able to control her own assets through a clear manipulation of her actions.

Recall that in pre-war society women's main identities were constructed in conjunction with gendered divisions of labor in domestic and farm spheres, marriage and motherhood. During the war, roles continued to be highly gendered, albeit through dramatically "transformed organization of social relationships (and) exaggeration of regular life" (Coulter 2006, 175). Many women mitigated stigma through a continued performance of gendered roles that correlated with local community values. This illustrates one of the ways in which labor power is distinctly tied with gender, not just in the domestic realm but in the social, and that these powers are open for the strategic maneuvering of young women. Perhaps it can be argued that access to maneuvering these has increased, as young women are increasingly allowed to choose their own patrons and past patron reciprocities of kinship, and familial loyalties have dramatically shifted since the war. Of course, this cannot be construed as freedom per se, as the choices available are still determined by outside social forces, such as available patronage and other resources.[xix]

Further investigation of women's collective and individual contributions to stability and social reconfigurations can still be analyzed within the reintegration framework. Specifically, women's participation has been essential in facilitating and supporting solidarity networks and social programs offered to individuals (McKay and Mazurana 2004). The women's peace movements to end the war took on the task of addressing the gaps of DDR processing by providing additional vocational training programs and rehabilitation. McKay surveyed reintegrating women and found that 55 percent stated that women in the community had played a significant role in their reintegration. At a much lower rate, these women also identified the supportive traditional leaders (20%) or international aid workers (32%) (23). This shows the willingness of women to organize for change and illustrates that the visibility of these actions is no longer as taboo as it perhaps was previous to the war.

Normalizations, Desires for Peace and Spatial Reconfigurations

In my description of the effects of the war, I briefly mention the extensive displacement experienced by Sierra Leoneans during the conflict. None of my informants were able to identify someone who had not been affected directly or indirectly by the violence of the war. Furthermore, the complexity and duration of the war made "the very distinctions between foe and civilian, outsider and insider, adult and child …blurred" (Ferme and Hoffman 2004,79). Violence and cultural norms broken on such a massive scale produced conditions that have facilitated reintegration; a child welfare worker commented on this phenomenon, stating that it was senseless to call anyone out on their involvement in the fighting forces, as everyone had been in some way involved. West African anthropologist Rosalind Shaw emphasizes that memories are recalled only when they have a purpose in the present. Therefore, in a society where social position is traditionally more valued than individual gains, recalling memories that single out others for stigmatization, when one can themselves lose their social position by doing so, is counterproductive (Shaw 2000, 28). The disheartening dynamic observed by Coulter that, "continuities of sexual abuse in both war and peace have a normalizing effect even on the most brutal of abuses" certainly has contributed to reintegration by constructing sexual abuse as a category of violence which is seen with ambivalence (Coulter 2008, 214, 362, and 369).

Though sometimes disorienting, normalization processes have played a role not just in ameliorating stigmatization of sexual abuse, but also in creating an atmosphere of pro-development and pro-peace. The far-reaching effects of the war and the large-scale international peace-keeping presence have created strong desire for development and peaceful relations throughout the country. Most of the young people I met were disappointed with many government programs and the limited assistance offered by the international humanitarian community, and empathetically stated that they did not want a return to conflict. Like those in other war-torn African regions, one informant, a young musician stated, "we de tire of dis, na African youth want fo peace." This statement shows the desire for peace in the region, as well as a need in international media for the recognition of youth as a positive force in Africa. In an extremely popular song, the celebrated local artist DJ Lulu emphasizes a need for a positive attitude to move forward when she sings "*you do me I do you/ man no go vex/ step on the dance floor*." This song was familiar to all generations and most people made choices to act in ways that reiterated the peaceful relations proposed in its lyrics. Sierra Leoneans made conscious decisions, fully aware that stigmatizing people for their war involvement would not produce the peaceful and stable situation that they desired.

This desire for peace was further impacted by the spatial reconfigurations of large populations of refugees and internally displaced persons. It is often stated that displacement is one of the most harmful processes of conflict, "as it results in the trauma of a complete disruption of normal family and community life" (World Vision 1996, 6). In the Sierra Leone context, where it is estimated that two-thirds of the population was displaced, the reorganization of labor and break with community networks has impacted the society as a whole (Baksh-Sooden and Etchart 2001). More recent estimates of displacement show that 82 percent of respondents in a nationwide poll reported that they were forced to leave their homes at some point during the war (Reno 2004). While it is true that the result of this has been the break with traditional trajectories of familial life for women, it is important to note that social values embedded in

these trajectories rigidly tied women and children to social networks that were highly hierarchical and in which they were inherently subordinate (Coulter 2006; B. Mansaray 2000). Coulter found that in terms of "gender and generational *relations*, rural men and women, and parents and children, no longer really know what to expect from each other" (2006, 391). This new dynamic, caused from shifts during the war and the abuse of age-hierarchies, also helped to alleviate stigmatization, thereby forcing a change in past obligations and the renegotiation of reciprocity in post-conflict relations.

A Changing Status?

While hierarchy and exceedingly gendered inequality perpetuated by past social relations had obvious marginalizing effects on women, traditional networks nonetheless contained within them certain protections for women and ways to hold others accountable for maltreatment. These traditional relations of accountability, sometimes facilitated through secret society associations, have become increasingly ambiguous and difficult to access in light of women's displacement, the break with initiation and with secret societies in general. Because of this, it is important to highlight ways in which young women use other resources to mitigate marginalization and subjugation and make claims to accountability.

The trends illustrated in the previous sections show that the reintegration of ex-combatant young mothers and their children has been facilitated by a variety of formal and socio-cultural historical processes. Among these, I have hinted that the value of women in Sierra Leonean society has not only positively influenced reintegration, but also has potentially opened up new possibilities for women as they redefine their identities. These factors inform an understanding of subjectivity as an "immersion (*sic)* into 'multiple identities and social relationships which are constantly changing and being redefined" (Schroven 2006, 8). The changing status of women has been influenced by a few key sites of redefinition, including displacement and subsequent urbanization, international mandates and perhaps less concretely, new legal reforms.

Displacement and Urbanization: New Forms of Reciprocity and "Bright Lights"

A critical site of definition is the geographical space that a person inhabits. Urbanization increased during the war since Freetown was seen as being safe from attack and many rural residents relocated in and around the city. [xx] While increased urbanization has a number of negative effects such as increasingly limited access to public services and public health concerns, more important to this discussion are the social relations that increasing urbanization has produced. Anthropologist Kenneth Little's work on the interrelations between African urbanization and women's social interactions states that "urbanization amounts to more than the acquisition of a certain type of outlook and behavior. It means that social relationships are formed in conjunction with the taking on of cultural practices" in such a way that "urbanization is to be regarded as a social process" (Little1973, 15). The social relationships and cultural practices women are able to appropriate in Freetown vary greatly compared to their rural counterparts and are influenced by the making and releasing of social ties and networks. The social process of "becoming urban" cannot be de-contextualized from the reason for migration to the city: the war. In discussing the increased population of Freetown, many of my informants complained that these new immigrants who had settled in the most marginal spaces of the city,

such as the periphery and precarious hillsides in the center, showed no signs of leaving. When asked why it was that young women continued to live in Freetown after the conflict, many stated that rural migrants "stay because of the magic of the bright lights." This statement illustrates one of the ways in which the social fabric of urban centers can offer new and different opportunities for its populace, especially one in which increased technology and services are complicated with traditional trajectories of womanhood. This may create a conflicting combination in which "independent" women, such as Issata, choose with whom to partner but are still forced to support their siblings through this partnership.

These conflicting processes are also seen in changes in social standing, value accumulation and material culture. Bledsoe's work with women in Liberia looked at the way in which the shift in economic accumulation towards a cash economy had the effect of releasing women from certain social obligations such as arranged marriages (1984). Sierra Leone faced a similar situation as the wealth-in-people system of social prestige coincided with one of material possession, more commonly associated with Western ideologies of material wealth. Material items such as iPods or new shoes were coveted by youth, shown off with great pride and many times took precedence as tools of definition and identification, rather than social links to certain persons or land-labor affiliations.

Furthermore, in terms of young women's reintegration, urban social dynamics in which "a large proportion of urban populations are both culturally and personally strangers to each other" offer an ambiguity manipulated by many young women (Little 1973, 9). Being a stranger can silence past transgressions of young women's involvement in the conflict, in addition to letting women claim identities and advantageous social positions through the accumulation of material goods or by seeking new avenues for patronage (Coulter 2006; Utas 2005).

Urban centers have consistently offered different and expanded life choices available for women in West Africa, including increased educational and job opportunities (Bledsoe 1980 and 1984). Furthermore, the new social relations and customs available in Freetown have greatly contributed to the city's retention of migrants and displaced persons. Job opportunities for women have been mainly in the informal sector, which accounts for over 70 percent of urban labor (Rogers 2001). Through this urban network, young women's "domestic, commercial and social relations are intertwined, each becoming a resource for the other" (Simone 2004, 90).

In the institute it was not unusual to see women going to class in the morning, attending women's rights conference midday, and returning to the institute to work in the evening, many times accompanied by their children. Women negotiated with the director for the fruits of their labor, sometimes regarding the payment of their school fees and other times using the opportunity to take their work home to sell at their own discretion. The maneuverability of these connected resources is in part due to the proximity of opportunities offered by urban centers. However, this proximity of resources can be problematic as "what is connected, to whom is one connected, to what degree, with what flexibility, and to what extent connections are visible and knowable, all become important points of contestation" (Simone 2004, 137). Many women at the institute needed a patron in order to pay their school fees and get materials for projects. A great number of these partnerships resulted in pregnancies and angry sighs from the director who commented on more than one occasion, "Dem all get belly!" meaning, they are all pregnant.

However, the director was only able to wield certain power over their patron relations; sometimes she subsidized school fees and other times she publicly chastised students in efforts to reveal the identity of their patrons and discourage other students from engaging in these partnerships. She was not always successful and at the end of the day, school fees still needed to be paid; the way in which students got that money was mostly seen as a private affair, chosen by individuals on their own time and through their own labors.[xxi]

Because many of Freetown's residents are there due to their displacement during the war, strangers shared a sense of experience. Sometimes this translated to strangers assisting each other and other times to overt rejections of traditional social hierarchies.[xxii] In his study of African cities, Abdouliq Simone sees this conviviality as a "means of implicating others in one's own project of survival" (2004, 216). Furthermore, he suggests that "new forms of linkages have to occur…especially in the case of cities that have been hard hit by various forms of disintegration and collapsed modernism'' (2004, 216). The change of emphasis on social standing in relation to hierarchy and patriarchy towards one of individual survival was certainly one of the main discourses of the war that has continued today. This supports Simone's analysis that in states of collapse persons must create new linkages in order to survive.

International and Feminized Discourse

The government of Sierra Leone is party to a variety of international mandates that aim to decrease gender disparities and increase democracy. These mandates, usually based on the premise of inherent rights or a rights based approach, include the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development (1995), the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2004), and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)(1988) (Schroven 2006, 9). However, the government has been unable to meet the requirements of most of these mandates. A consequence of this is the state's permission, even throughout the conflict, of citizen rights of association. Walking the streets of Freetown, one is likely to encounter a variety of civic organizations ranging from religious, educational, child and human rights. In William Reno's country analysis, he states,

> Sierra Leone possesses a vigorous civic culture, with many nongovernmental organizations (NGO's) advocating for popular causes. Women, minorities and people with disabilities are particularly prominent in this sector, partly due to the failure of government practice to meet legal requirements that it take account of their interests in formulating policy… (2004, 22)

This quote illustrates not only the possibilities, but also the limitations in formal processes of working towards gender equity in Sierra Leone. Keeping in mind the variety of limitations in accessibility and effectiveness, engagement with civic culture is one of the new productive linkages that young women may access in Freetown. Connections to political and human rights campaigns and the organizations that plan these campaigns are common practice in Freetown.

As the country continues to reassess development strategies, women's organizations have begun to shift from charity actions to activities that have long-term effects.[xxiii] Part of this shift has also been from stabilization efforts of reintegration to development. This has required a change in discourses of legitimate recipients of aid and, while the perpetrator-victim dichotomy

is still representative of many organizations' markers for receivers of benefits, rights-based approaches to addressing gender based violence and participation in political arenas have also emerged (Schroven 2006).

In Sierra Leone "women in urban areas have found greater opportunities for political involvement…since 1996" with the election of civilian government (Reno 2004, 22). This involvement has been seen mostly in the NGO sector, but has influenced government as well. In Freetown in particular, the Westernized discourses most often purported in these organizations have a certain resonance as valuable working partnerships, not only because they offer greater economic security than national organizations, but because they have traditionally been linked to higher levels of social prestige (Little 1973, 59). In the general election of 2004, gender discourse of women's rights to participation, including the well-known "50/50 Campaign," which aimed to change the gender ratio in government posts to half-women half-men, continued to impact the way in which women's positions were perceived in a rights-based approach. The gendered discourse of mainstreaming and equal rights increasingly continues to be integrated into development agendas; the Millennium Development Goals is a clear hegemonic example of this discourse. Some contend that truly accepting and integrating this agenda does not take into account the inherent "upsetting of (*sic*) power relationships, potentially leading to social insecurity and destabilization" that could occur if these ideologies were to truly become part of the socio-political fabric of Sierra Leone (Meintjes 2001, 69).

In looking at possibilities for long-term shifts it is important to note that some concrete steps have been taken in government ministries, educational reforms and in health policy.[xxiv] The government's ability to put into place "gender mainstreaming" requested by international mandates remains limited, though without these mandates steps may not have ever been taken. This assumption is made due to the fact that Sierra Leone's government is funded in a large part by aid and international agencies, a dynamic that while problematic in a variety of ways,[xxv] has created "translocal opportunities" in Sierra Leone (Simone 2004). In his examination of new forms of governing in urban centers, Borja states that the "viability of cities largely rests on their…capacity to enter networks of various dimensions and complexities" (Borja, 237). Therefore, while the accountability of government structure to support measures of gender equity is questionable these efforts are perpetuated through the state's ability to access desperately needed international funding.

Legal and Governmental Reform: Attempts at Accountability

Mikell shows that many African women believe "that now may be the time to utilize the expanding political space to correct legal inequities" (1995, 417). This has certainly been the case in Sierra Leone, as I learned while in the field doing "gender outreach" for the women's rights organization with which I was working. This meant attending and coordinating workshops on three laws recently passed known collectively as "The Gender Act." Passed in June of 2007, the Gender Act consists of three key changes, which apply to all forms of law in the country (Common, Customary and Muslim).

These laws changed previous structures pertaining to domestic violence, devolution of estates and registration of customary marriage and divorce. Previous to these laws, domestic violence was not considered an offense. Under customary law domestic violence was legal, as

long as husbands kept in mind that "she was not given to you to beat her like a drum"[xxvi](Zureick 2008, 3). This new law addressed domestic abuses that were economic, verbal and psychological, as well as intimidation, physical and sexual abuse and marital rape.

Previously, laws on the devolution of estates varied. Formal law stated that widows were entitled to 30 percent of their husband's property while husbands received 100 percent of their deceased wife's property. There is a large Islamic population and in the past, Muslim law did not grant entitlement to women to administer estates and there was limited legal guidance of property distribution. Customary law varies, but normally property reverted back to the husband's family. The new law aims to treat spouses equally: either gender is entitled to remain in the family home until death and, if there is no will, inheritance is equally divided. While under Customary law certain property inheritance is still limited, it is now illegal to eject widows from the marital home, which was previously a common practice.

The Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act has not yet become a law due to some legal issues. However, it aims to set the legal age for marriage at eighteen, make consent obligatory, require that husbands provide reasonable maintenance for their spouse and child, and require marriage registration. Additionally, the act will state that dowry does not have to be returned upon divorce.

In 2001 the Family Support Unit (FSU) was established in the Sierra Leone police force to address domestic concerns of abuse and maltreatment (Kamara 2001). The FSU was often cited in workshops as the first point of entry for claims to the new Gender Act. Unfortunately, the FSU is presently highly under-trained and uninformed of the Act, and therefore is not adequately addressing women's claims.

The multiple governance structure—Muslim, Customary and Common Law—is complex and women's everyday experiences with judiciary practices often contradict the new laws, regardless of enforcement efforts by some police (Schroven 2006). Structural constraints of legal enforcement and judiciary appeals are not the only reasons the act is inaccessible to most women; socio-cultural dynamics continue to play a large part in legitimating or delegitimizing new practices. In the case of domestic violence, it has been shown that 85 percent of women between the ages of 15 and 49 believe that violence serves as an acceptable means to solve inter-marital disputes (UNICEF 2005).

In my own observations I found these contradictions ever-present and often hidden in the public sphere. For example, at the conclusion of a workshop at the Vocational Institute, I recall my frustration that many of the women did not seem to have engaged with the material presented. However, when I spoke of these concerns with the facilitator of the workshop a few days later she informed me that she had since been contacted by eight women from the workshop who asked for assistance and further help. While many women vocalized and deplored the way in which men kept them in a subordinate position, it remained, for the most part, a position of silence. This resonates with Sideris' investigation of post-conflict gender, power and identity in which she notes that although changes in "laws may provide women with increased protection against abuse and greater access to justice, they are not sufficient to change the attitudes and beliefs that affect (their) implementation" (2001, 154).

Conclusion

> In the case of Africa, long-term developments, more or less rapid deviations, and long-term temporalities are not necessarily either separate or merely juxtaposed. Fitted within one another, they relay each other; sometimes they cancel each other out, and sometimes their effects are multiplied. (Mbembe 2000, 260)

My research shows that as young women returned to their communities and began to reconstruct their lives after the war, they faced a variety of challenges. Using the reintegration experiences of young women in Freetown, I aimed to illustrate the various ways in which these challenges were mitigated. From formal DDR programs and sensitization campaigns, to economic strategic value, and rights-based and legal reforms approach women have created new spaces in which to explore their identity construction and supplement their social assets.

Some of these spaces are relatively new and not easily correlated with historically valued roles, gendered norms and practices. Schroven's critiques of international discourse's role in essentializing and objectifying women, and reducing gender equity to a simplified inclusion of women in government are certainly an example of these contradictions (2006). In exploring gender constructions, contradictions must be critically analyzed as they are all "interdependent and embedded into wider frameworks of power relations taking place in the broader context of society" (Oyewumi 2002, 4). This is especially the case in Sierra Leone where gender relations "are taking place in an atmosphere influenced by …traditional expectations and simultaneously hopes for changes" (Schroven 2006, 116). Western ideologies of justice, freedom and gender equity many times fall short in their implementation. Omissions and relevant complexities are ignored, many processes remain unaccountable or ineffective, and others continue to be neglected in common discourse. The new legal reforms in Sierra Leone, in their persistent unaccountability, articulate these contradictions, yet also inform the ways women manage and create "political spaces in which…varying perceptions of their socio-legal realities could be aired" (Mikell 1995, 409).

If this is truly the space that is being created in Sierra Leone, it is a significant step, as the "process of internal transformation is not just about conditions or structures, but also about internal processes of consciousness, of creating words and language that will provide women with a sense of their own agency" (Mladjenovic 2001, 172). If we understand that this articulation is part of a "continuous collective project," then we must also legitimize the effects of the war and post-war dynamics as embedded in current identity formation mechanisms (Schroven 2006, 36-37). Ex-combatants, bushwives, women's rights activists and all those in-between must contend with broken trajectories, categorizations of state and social powers, and manage their claims of multiple and shifting identities. In presenting the "growing tensions between peoples ideals of masculinity and femininity and the practical reality available to them" (El-Bushra 2003, 164), this research has presented continuities and discontinuities in identity formation practices.

I have shown that there are a variety of very real structural, cultural and economic constraints which Sierra Leonean women face. I have also problematized these dynamics through an analysis of the various ways in which women currently are able to access, even in limited amounts, local, national and international discourses and resources, in order to positively influence their social positions. These patterns of participation at times follow Foucault's concept of "international citizenship" which promotes social change through active responsibility and pressure against governments, the international arena, and individuals (1984, 437-438), while at other times it reverts to more private and historically accepted ways of gendered political participation. Whether or not they are explicit in imagining and acting upon new forms of political and social engagement, Sierra Leonean women certainly have more opportunities for engagement with public participation. This engagement ranges from international citizenship to aid recipients to recipients of patronage.

The reconfigurations of social, political, and economic resources explored in this research exemplify the challenges in understanding subjectivity "through both discursive spaces and identity practices…and investigate (*sic)* the ways these…constitute, inform, and transform one another" (J.M. Rodriguez 2003, 5). Furthermore, they affirm that while contradictory at times, "identity transformation is a continuous process framed in praxis" (Sideris 2001, 191).

Notes:

[i] The "shadow state" is defined, by Reno, by a few core elements and is (for him) prevalent in African states especially. The core elements of a shadow state include personal rule, a manipulation of formal and clandestine markets which often leads to a de-legitimation of state sovereignty and its institutions, the result of which is the concentration of control, power, resources and authority in the individual ruler. Shadow states create "informal commercially orientated networks" beside the delegitimated government (Reno 2000, 434-35). For further discussion and expansion on the Shadow States see Funke and Solomon (2003).

[ii] These estimates, however, are not considered accurate as high social stigma related to being a victim of sexual abuse compounds with the stigma of being a member of fighting forces to produce vague and fictitious responses (Bennett 2002).

[iii] Although exact figures of women who became pregnant during their time as abductees is unknown, according to Medecins sans Frontieres (MSF) 55% of 1,862 assisted female survivors of the invasion of Freetown (1999) reported having been gang raped and 200 had become pregnant (see Human Rights Watch 2003). While these figures could indicate that at least 9.3% of abducted women became pregnant, this assumption would lead to a gross underestimate due to the fact that the invasion was short-lived, in contrast to the 11 years of invasion, abductions and abuses felt by the rest of the country. McKay and Mazurana (2005) estimate that at least 20% of women involved in the fighting forces became mothers due to the sexual abuse they faced during this time.

[iv] For further discussion of these continuities in the African context see Kenneth Little (1973) or Michael Banton (1957) for West Africa, and historians Bill Freund (2007) and Frederick Cooper (2002) for continent perspectives.

[v] Richard's argument about the political agency of the RUF has been critiqued by other scholars (see Abdullah 1999 in *The Bushpath Towards Destruction*) as well as in the more popular media (see Kaplan 1994 in *The Atlantic Monthly*). In contrast to Richards, their analyses make the claim that most young men involved in the fighting forces are part of a youth culture (termed "lumpen" by Kaplan) which, though it made claims to higher ideals of pan-Africanism never critically examined the teaching of Gaddafi's Green Book and actually admitted that their

involvement was due to personal desires not aligned with any movement (greed, jealousies, adventure) (Abdullah 1999).

vi Occasionally this sentiment was not the case; it differed perhaps most noticeably with informants who were affiliated with the current reigning party (Koroma's All People's Congress). However, even these supporters limited their praise and were quick to insist that greater government (and international aid) support was required to assist its people.

vii The Lawyers Centre for Legal Assistance (LAWCLA) identified fifteen laws that discriminate against women and female children (LAWCLA 2005).

viii It is important to note that the legal discrimination of women is prevalent in the four forms of law in Sierra Leone; constitutional law, common law, statutory law and unwritten customary law. LAWCLA's report was drafted as a tool to support and develop a reform agenda to address these discriminations (reform was sought in 2005). While there are some changes to these laws (the most visible of which has been the implementation of the Gender Act) information on less visible reform is limited and is currently being sought by the researcher from LAWCLA and other government agencies.

ix Only 13 out of 146 Paramount Chiefs had been females by the late eighties (Day 1988).

x For further discussion see Oyewumi's analysis of recent transnational aid's focus on feminization in development (Oyewumi 2002).

xi Unfortunately, assuming that violent sexual relations were a product of the war is erroneous. Rather, it has been shown that what is tolerated during conflicts reflects preexisting sociocultural dynamics (Olujic 1998,31). In times of post-conflict and its transition, sexual violence tends to increase (Goldblatt and Meintjes 1998). Coulter found that in Sierra Leone rape is prevalent enough to have achieved a certain kind of normalization that differentiates rape of a virgin and rape of an already sexually active female, where the latter is many times seen as inconsequential (Coulter 2008, 219-229 and specifically 369).

xii People's perceptions of possible social behaviors of individuals previously affiliated with the fighting forces is drawn from interviews with informants who stated these perceptions as "things that happened before" that is, that they were no longer believed. However, others have noted this construction of negative social perceptions in the recent past (see McKay, Robinson, Gonsalves and Worthen 2006; Coulter 2008).

xiii In a refugee camp in northern Liberia Utas observed that "every single woman we interviewed immediately and without hesitation declared that she had been raped during the Sierra Leonean Civil war" (2005, 409). His observation sharply contrasts the "underreporting" dynamic of which I insist upon. However, in Utas' context, this representation constructs an identity of "legitimate recipients" of aid, whereas local contexts do not normally hold rewards associated with this legitimating of victimhood but rather a stigmatization.

xiv Some of the most visible organizations included the Mano River Women's Peace Network, Women's Movement for Peace, Forum of African Women Educationalists (FAWE), Sierra Leone Women's Forum, Network of Women Ministers and Parliamentarians.

xv For an eloquent discussion on this see Alex DeWaal's "Politics and the Disaster Relief Industry in Africa" (1997) or Richard Fanthorpe's "Humanitarian aid in post-war Sierra Leone: the politics of moral economy" (2004).

xvi The pacificity of women and their role as victims during armed conflict has a long history (see Aretxaga 1997). However, it is not at all representative of women's true roles during times of social upheaval; numerous cases (see the Algerian and Mozambique revolutions or Northern Ireland as key examples), show that women, sometimes even more so than men (a sentiment reiterated by many Sierra Leoneans) were more brutal and fearless in combat. In Sierra Leone in particular, the idea of women as "warriors" and perpetrators of violence has continuities with past female functions of midwifery and ritual. Ferme states that these roles presented "situations in which life-giving and

life-taking practices could overlap instead of occupying distinct spaces. Women with the power to control these processes called themselves warriors, bringing potent symbols of warfare and death right in to the midst of fertility and reproduction" (Ferme 2001,178).

[xvii] This sentiment was repeatedly cited by most Sierra Leoneans (both victims and non-victims of the violence of fighting forces) when asked about their emotions regarding those who were involved in committing acts of violence during the war. Whether this sentiment was true or whether it was the only way to cope with the unaccountability of past perpetrators of actions (or a combination of both) is an interesting question.

[xviii] "Girlfriending" is a pattern of dating which is prevalent in West African countries and has been especially documented among ex-combatant young women (see Utas and Coulter). It entails a dating pattern in which young women expect to receive monetary gifts and support from multiple (usually regular) partners.

[xix] Moran's work illustrates an interesting dynamic which specifically pertains to status and dependence of urban West African women and the limitations of patronage placed upon them by their social position (see Moran 1988 for further discussion). I do not emphasize this dynamic, as most of the women I came into contact with were not of the higher classes and even those that were continued to be termed as "uncivilized;" i.e. working or illiterate women. Furthermore, the social restrictions on working women and the type of work in which they are engaged have changed dramatically in the past decades.

[xx] Exact figures of this pattern of migration are not known, but it was common knowledge that many of the new urban residents had come from the provinces during the war.

[xxi] I do not want to give the impression that all of the students were involved in girlfriending; many spent their time outside of school selling goods at the market and doing other odd jobs. However, the vast majority had either a husband or one or more partners (many times years older than them) helping support them through school.

[xxii] A couple of key instances that come to mind in terms of conviviality were at a clinic when a sick woman who was unable to pay for her medicine was helped by another woman (who was also obviously struggling economically). Also, in my experience, hitchhiking was a common and relatively successful negotiation of transportation dependent on the conviviality of strangers.

[xxiii] A common trajectory of this shift was seen in the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) Sierra Leone Chapter (one of the organizations which was extremely informative and accommodating to my inquiries): after the invasion of Freetown FAWE helped young women with food, shelter and health services and since then has offered adult literacy education for young mothers in addition to vocational training skills.

[xxiv] Changes in the Ministry of Social Welfare in the addition of Gender and Children's Affairs section headed by women, the passing of the "Education Act" which mandates a scholarship and entry program for disadvantaged girls and development of health policy which gives pregnant women, lactating mothers, children and seniors access to basic drugs free of cost are most visible.

[xxv] Mbembe's analysis of states and boundaries in Africa describes the ways in which humanitarian and aid agencies undermine sovereignty (2000). In her analysis of African feminism and representation Gwendolyn Mikell notes that "there is a link (implicit or explicit) between structural adjustment and stalemated democratization and the recent verbalization of gender-equity goals might be another tool for internal control" (1995, 417) In fact, in the workshops I attended of the Gender Act it was always emphasized that the Act had come as initiative from Sierra Leonean women in order to legitimize its implementation, when in reality it has been passed in partnership with international organizations.

[xxvi] This is apparently a common phrase in Sierra Leone and was used to legitimize the "local" nature of the new law as having already had value. While I never heard this phrase used, there was one popular song that reiterated the value of women and stated "da woman dem is fo care fo dem/ it not for beat them." Whether this song was drawn up

in order to sensitize the community or was actually reflecting an organic value I am unsure, though the answer is surely complicated and a mixture of multiple discourses.

References

Abdullah, Ibrahim, ed. 2004. *Between democracy and terror; The Sierra Leone Civil War*. Dakar, Senegal: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA).

Abdullah, Ibrahim and Patrick Mauna. 1998. The Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone In *African guerrillas*, ed. C. Clapham, 170-93. London: James Currey.

African Center for Gender and Development. 2002. *Gender Net* 1 (2).

African Development Bank. 2002. Africa development report. ADB, Abidjan.

Alghali, Zinurine A. 2007. Post-conflict reintegration challenges in Sierra Leone. *Conflict Trends* 4, Retrieved from ACCORD. http://www.accord.org.za/ct/2007-4/CT4_2007.pdf (accessed April 16, 2008).

Aretxaga, Begona. 1997. *Shattering silence: Women, nationalism and political subjectivity in Northern Ireland.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Ayissi, Anatole and Robin Poulton, eds. 2002. Bound to cooperate: Conflict, peace and people in Sierra Leone. Report for the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), United Nations. Geneva, Switzerland: United Nations Publication.

Baksh-Soodeen, Rawwida, and Linda Etchart, eds. 2002. Women and men in partnership for post-conflict reconstruction: Report of the Sierra Leone national consultation. Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, Government of Sierra Leone. London, UK: Commonwealth Secretariat.

Bangura, Y. 2004. The political and cultural dynamics of the Sierra Leone War: A critique of Paul Richards. In *Between democracy and terror; the Sierra Leone Civil War,* ed. Abdullah, Ibrahim. Dakar, Senegal: CODESRIA.

Banton, Michael. 1957. West African city: A study of tribal life in Freetown. London: Oxford University Press.

Bellows, J. and E. Miguel. 2006. War and institutions: New evidence from Sierra Leone. *Economic Association Papers and Proceedings* 96 (2): 394-399.

Bennett, Allison. 2002. The reintegration of child ex-combatants in Sierra Leone with particular focus on the needs of females. Masters Thesis, Refugee Studies, University of East London.

Besteman, Catherine. 2005. Why I disagree with Robert Kaplan. In *Why America's top pundits are wrong: Anthropologists talk back*, 83-101. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Bledsoe, Caroline. 1980. Women and marriage in Kpelle society. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

———.1984. The political use of Sande ideology and symbolism. *American Ethnologist* 11 (3): 455-472. .

———, ed. 1993. Social dynamics of adolescent fertility in sub-Saharan Africa. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

———.1995. Marginal members: Children of previous unions in Mende households in Sierra Leone. In *Situating fertility: Anthropology and demographic inquiry*, ed. Susan Greenhalgh, 130-153. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Borja, Jordi. 1996. Cities: New roles and forms of governing. In *Preparing for the urban future: Global pressures and local forces*, eds. M. Clone, B. Ruble, J. Tulchin and A. Garland. Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press.

Brett, Rachel. 2002. Girl soldiers: Challenging the assumptions. *Friends World Committee for Consultation (Quakers).*

Central Intelligence Agency. 2008. World Fact Book: Sierra Leone. https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sl.html (accessed March 31, 2008).

Caldeira, Teresa. 2000. *City of walls: Crime, segregation, and citizenship in Sao Paulo.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Coulter, Chris. 2006. Being a bush wife: Women's lives through war and peace in Northern Sierra Leone. PhD diss., Uppsala University.

———. 2008. Female fighters in the Sierra Leone War: Challenging the assumptions? *Feminist Review* 88 (1)*: 54-73.*

Christiansen, Catrine, Mats Utas, and Henrik Vigh, eds. 2006*. Navigating youth, generating adulthood: Social becoming in an African context.* Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.

Conciliation Resources. 1997. Gender and conflict in Sierra Leone. CARE UK, CONCERN Universal, Tear Fund, ACTIONAID, MERLIN and Christian Aid (September/October). http://www.c-r.org/resources/occasional-papers/gender-conflict-sierra-leone.php (accessed April 16, 2008).

Cooper, Frederick. 2002. Africa since 1940: The past of the present. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Davies, Clarice, Amy Davies, Anna Gyorgy, and Christiane Kayser, eds. 1992. *Women of Sierra Leone: Traditional Voices.* Freetown: Partners in Adult Education, Women's Commission.

Davis, Mike. 2006. *Planet of slums.* London: Verso Publishing.

Day, Lynda Rose. 1988. *The female chiefs of the Mende, 1885-1977: Tracing the evolution of an indigenous political institution.* PhD. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Denov, Maryam. Girls in fighting forces: Moving beyond victimhood. Research findings on girls and armed conflict for CIDA's Child Protection Research Fund. http://www.peacewomen.org/resources/DDR/Girls_fightingforces.pdf (accessed June 23, 2008).

De Waal, Alex. 1997. Famine crimes: politics and the disaster relief industry in Africa. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press.

El-Bushra, Judy. 2003. Fused in combat: Gender relations and armed conflict. In *Development, women and war—Feminist perspectives*, eds. H. Afshar and D. Eade Oxford: Oxfam.

Fanthorpe, Richard. 2004. Humanitarian aid in post-war Sierra Leone: the politics of moral economy. *HPG Report: Power, Livelihoods and conflict*, 53-65.

Ferme, Mariane C. 2001. *The underneath of things: Violence, history, and the everyday in Sierra Leone.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ferme, Mariane C. and Danny Hoffman. 2004. Hunter militias and the international human rights discourse in Sierra Leone and beyond. *Africa Today* 50 (4): 73-95.

Freund, Bill. 2007. *The African city: New approaches to African history*. Cambridge University Press: London.

Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE). 1998. General overview of girls education in Africa. Supporting girls and women to acquire education and for development: Working Papers No. 10.

Foucault, Michell. 1984. *Language, counter-memory and practice.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Funke, Nikki and Hussein Solomon. 2003. The shadow state in Africa: A discussion. http://www.dpmf.org/images/occasionalpaper5.pdf (accessed December 9, 2008).

Ginsberg, Faye, and Rayna Rapp. 1991. The politics of reproduction. *Annual Review Anthropology* 20: 311-43.

Goldblatt, Beth and Sheila Meintjes. 1998. Dealing with the aftermath: Sexual violence and the truth and reconcilation commission. Agenda 36: 7-17.

Hanneman, Ulrike. 2005. Literacy in Conflict Situations. UNESCO Institute for Education, March, in Hamburg, Germany. www.portal.unesco.org/education (accessed April 16, 2008).

Horner, Rachel. 2008. "UNDP to expend US$80M on government capacity." *The Concord Times.* allAfrica.com, 14 April. http://allafrica.com/stories/200804141332.html (accessed April 14, 2008).

Human Rights Watch. 2003. World Report. http://www.hrw.org/legacy/wr2k3/

International Monetary Fund. 2005. IMF Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper: Sierra Leone, June. http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Sierra%20Leone/PRSP/Sierra%20Leone%20PRSP.pdf (accessed June 22, 2008).

Kamara, Fatmata. 2001. The role of the police in the prevention of violence against women and children. In Women and men in partnership for post-conflict reconstruction: Report of the Sierra Leone National Consultation, eds. Rawwida Baksh-Soodeen and Linda Etchart. 2002. Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, Government of Sierra Leone. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.

Kaplan, Robert. 1994. The coming anarchy: How scarcity, crime, overpopulation, tribalism and disease are rapidly destroying the social fabric of our planet. *The Atlantic Monthly*, February.

Khanu, Moses. 2007. The situation of girl mothers in the Bombali District and its impact on the education of the girl child. Thesis proposal, Fourah Bay College, Sierra Leone.

Lawyers for Legal Assistance (LAWCLA) Sierra Leone. 2005. Unequal Rights: Discriminatory Laws Against Women in Sierra Leone. Published with support from the UNDP Sierra Leone.

Little, Kenneth L. 1973. *African women in towns: an aspect of Africa's social revolution.* Cambridge University Press: New York.

Lorschiedter, Ann. 2005. The page has been turned. Working paper No.1, Peace and Conflict Department, University of Munich.

Maguire, Patricia. 1987. *Doing participatory research: A feminist approach.* New York: University of Massachusetts, Center for International Education.

Mansaray, Binta. 2000. Women against weapons: a leading role for women in disarmament. In *Bound to Cooperate: Conflict, Peace and People in Sierra Leone*, eds. Anatole Ayissi, and Robin Poulton, Robin, 139-62. Geneva: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

Mansaray, Khadijatu. 1988. Female circumcision, fertility control, women's roles, and the patrilineage in modern Sierra Leone: a functional analysis. *International Journal of Sierra Leone Studies, O.S. Journals Centre for Research and Publishing*: 114-21.

Mikell, Gwendolyn. 1995. African feminism: Toward a new politics of representation. In *Feminist Studies* 21, (2): 405-424 (Summer), http://www.jstor.org/stable/3178274 (accessed September 30, 2008).

Mbembe, Achille. 1992. Provisional notes on the postcolony. *Africa* 62 (1): 3–37.

———. 2000. At the edge of the world: boundaries, territoriality, and sovereignty in Africa. *Public Culture* 12, (1): 259-284.

———. 2003. Necropolitics. *Public Culture* 15, (1): 12-40.

McKay, Susan, and Dyan Mazurana. 2004. *Where are the girls? Girls in fighting forces in Northern Uganda, Sierra Leone, and Mozambique: Their lives during and after war*. Montreal: Rights and Democracy.

McKay, Susan and Malia Robinson. 2005. Girl mothers in fighting forces and their post-war reintegration in Southern and Western Africa, 14 April. Conference Report. Rockefeller Foundation, Bellagio Center.

McKay, Susan, Malia Robinson, Maria Gonsalves, and Miranda Worthen. 2006. Girls formerly associated with fighting forces and their children: returned and neglected. London: Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers. http://uwacadweb.uwyo.edu/MCKAY/Documents/2006%20%20McKay%20et%20al%20-%20girl%20mothers.pdf (accessed May 4, 2008).

Meintjes, Sheilla, Anu Pillay and Meredeth Turshen, eds. 2001. *The Aftermath: Women in post-conflict transformation*. London: Zed Publishing.

Mladjeovic, Leba. 2001. Caring at the same time: On feminist politics during the NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the ethnic cleansing of Albanians in Kosovo, 1999. In *The Aftermath: Women in post-conflict transformation*, eds. Sheilla Meintjes, Anu Pillay and Meredeth Turshen, 172-183. London: Zed Publishing.

Moran, Mary H. 1988. Woman and 'civilization:' the intersection of gender and prestige in Southeastern Liberia. *Canadian Journal of African Studies, Special Issue: Current Issues on African Women* 22 (3). www.jstor.org/stable/485951 (accessed November 12, 2008).

———. 1989. Collection action and the 'representation' of African women: A Liberia case study. *Feminist Studies: Female Reinterpretations of Feminist* 15, no. 3 (Autumn). www.jstor.org/stable/3177939 (accessed November 21, 2008).

———. 1995. Warriors or soldiers? Masculinity and ritual transvestism in the Liberian civil war. In *Feminism, Nationalism, and Militarism*, ed. C.R. Sutton. Arlington: American Anthropological Association.

National Policy on Gender Mainstreaming. 1999. *Sierra Leone Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs*.

Nkuuhe, Jessica, comp. 2005. *Nurturers of peace, sustainers of Africa: African women's unique peace initiatives.* Kampala,Uganda: Isis-Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE).

Okojie, C. 2003. Employment creation for youth in Africa: The gender dimension. Paper prepared for Expert Group Meeting: Jobs for Youth: National Strategies for Employment Promotion, January 15-16), in Geneva, Switzerland.

Olujic, Maria B. 1998. Embodiment of terror: Gendered violence in peacetime and wartime in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 12, (1): 31-50.

Oyewumi, Oyeronke. 2002. Conceptualising gender: the Euro-centric foundations of feminists conceptions and the challenge of African epistemologies. *Jenda: A Journal of Culture and African Women Studies* 2, (1): 1-9. www.jendajournal.com/vol2.1/oyewumi.html (accessed November 13, 2008).

Partner Women's Commission, comp. 2006-2007. Women in partnership with men. *Women's Link*. 8.

Peters, Krijn. 2004. *Re-examining voluntarism: Youth combatants in Sierra Leone*. Annapolis: Institute for Security Studies, ISS.

Physicians for Human Rights. 2002. War-related exual violence in Sierra Leone: A population-based assessment. Executive Summary.

Pouligny, Beatrice. 2004. Civil society and post-conflict peace building: ambiguities of international programs aimed at building 'new societies'. Paper presented to the conference "Post-Conflict Peace Building: How to gain sustainable peace? Lessons learnt and future challenges" at the Graduate Institute of International Studies, October 11-14, in Geneva, Switzerland.

Radcliff-Brown, A.R. ed. 1950. *African systems of kinship and marriage.* London: Routeledge Press.

Refugees International. 2001a. HIV/AIDS: Sierra Leone's newest crisis. http://www.refugeesinternational.org/content/article/detail/775/ (accessed March 31, 2008).

———. March 2001b. Total estimated IDPs in Sierra Leone is calculated at one million. Sierra Leone: Returning Refugees Need Help.

Reno, William. 2000. Clandestine economies, violence and states in Africa. *Journal of International Affairs* 53 (2): 435-459.

———. 2001. How sovereignty matters: International markets and the political economy of local politics in weak states. In *Intervention and Transnationalism in Africa: Global-Local Networks of Power*, eds. T. Callaghy, R. Kassimir and R. Latham, 197-215. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 2004. Countries at the Crossroads: Country Profile of Sierra Leone. UNPAN Executive Summary, http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/nispacee/unpan016206.pdf (accessed October 25, 2008).

Richards, Paul. 1996. *Fighting for the rainforest: War, youth and resources in Sierra Leone* London: James Currey.

Rodriguez, Claudia. 2007. Sexual violence in South Kivu. *Forced Migration Review* 27: 45-46.

Rodriguez, Juana Maria. 2003. *Queer Latinidad; Identity practices and discursive spaces.* New York and London: New York University Press.

Rogers, J.D. 2001. The government's commitment to poverty alleviation. In *Women and men in partnership for post-conflict reconstruction: Report of the Sierra Leone National Consultation,* eds. Rawwida Baksh-Soodeen and Linda Etchart. 2002. Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, Government of Sierra Leone. London, UK: Commonwealth Secretariat.

Schroven, Anita. 2006. *Women after war: Gender mainstreaming and social construction of identity in contemporary Sierra Leone*. Vol. 94 of *Spektrum Berlin Series on Society, Economy and Politics in Developing Countries*. New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers Rutgers University.

Sesay, Amadu. 2007. Does one size fit all? : The Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission revisited. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.

Shaw, Rosalind. 2000. Tok af, lef af: A political economy of Temne techniques of secrecy and self. In African philosophy as cultural inquiry, eds. Ivan Karp and D.A. Masolo, 25-49. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Shepler, Susan. 2004a. The social and cultural context of child soldiering in Sierra Leone. Paper for the PRIO-sponsored workshop on Techniques of Violence in Civil War, August 20-21, in Oslo, Norway. http://www.prio.no/cscw/pdf/micro/techniqes/ shepler%20child%20soldiers.pdf (accessed on March 31, 2008).

———. 2004b. Globalizing child soldiers in Sierra Leone. In *Youthscapes: The Popular, the National and the Global*, eds S. Maira and E. Soep. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

———. 2005. Conflicted childhoods: Fighting over child soldiers in Sierra Leone. Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley.

Sideris, Tina. 2001. Problems of identity, solidarity and reconciliation. In *The Aftermath: Women in post-conflict transformation*, eds. Sheilla Meintjes, Anu Pillay and Meredeth Turshen, 46-60 and 142-157. London: Zed Publishing.

Sierra Leone Women's Manifesto/Declaration. 2007. *The Sierra Leone Women's Manifesto* 1.

Simone, AbdouMaliq. 2004. *For the city yet to come: Changing African life in four cities.* Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Thomas, Armand. 1999. Situation analysis of women and children in Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, The Government of Sierra Leone in collaboration with UNICEF, UNIFEM, CCF and Plan International.

Thorpe, Christina. 2003. The rebel war years were catalytic to development in the social advancement of women in post-war Sierra Leone. Ph.D. diss., Fourah Bay College, Sierra Leone.

United Nations. 2006. World Population Prospects: Executive Summary. *UN Economic and Social Affairs.* http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/wpp2006/English.pdf (accessed March 31, 2008).

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). 2003. Making a difference in girls' education: Selected examples from UNICEF's field experiences. Compiled as an input to the *2003 EFA Global Monitoring Report*. www.unesco.org (accessed April 15, 2008).

———. 2004. From conflict to hope: Children in Sierra Leone's sisarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programme. www.un.org (accessed August 15, 2008).

———. 2005. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey Final Report. *UNICEF ChildInfo: Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women*. http://www.childinfo.org/mics3_surveys.html (accessed September 4, 2008).

United Nations Development Program. 2002. Human development report. UNDP, New York.

———. 2008. Human Development Reports. Sierra Leone-The Human Development Index. http://hdrstats.undp.org/2008/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_SLE.html (accessed March 31, 2008).

United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). 2005. Sierra Leone UNAMSIL Background. Peace and Security Section, Department of Public Information, United Nations. http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unamsil/background.html (accessed June 8, 2008).

United Nations Special Reporter to the Commission on Human Rights. 1996. Report on the situation of human rights in Rwanda. (E/CN.4/1996/68): 16.

Utas, Mats. 2005. Victimcy, girlfriending, soldiering: Tactic agency in a young woman's social navigation of the Liberian war zone. *Anthropological Quarterly* 78 (2): 403-430.

Ward, Jeanne. 2002. Bosnia and Herzegovina. In If not now, when?: Addressing gender-based violence in refugee, internally displaced, and post-conflict settings. The Reproductive Health for Refugees Consortium. www.rhrc.org.

Williamson, John. 2006. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers: social and psychological transformation in Sierra Leone. *Intervention: The International Journal of Mental Health, Psychosocial Work and Counselling in Areas of Armed Conflict* 4: 185-205.

Women's Refugee Commission. 2001. Country profiles from Africa: Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Sierra Leone. http://www.womenscommission.org/pdf/ifnotaf.pdf (accessed May 5, 2008).

———. 2008. Country at a crossroads: Challenges facing young people in Sierra Leone six years after the war. http://www.womenscommission.org/pdf/sl_youth.pdf (accessed May 5, 2008).

World Vision. 1996. The effects of armed conflict on girls: A discussion paper. UN Study on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children, World Vision. Monrovia, CA: World Vision International.

Yasmin Jusu-Sheriff. 2000. Sierra Leonean women and the peace process. Conciliation Resources. http://www.c-r.org/ourwork/accord/sierra-leone/women-peace.php (accessed June 22, 2008).

YWCA Vocational Institute. 2008. Mission/History. http://ywca.freeservers.com/history.htm (accessed April 1, 2008).

Zack-Williams, Alfred B. 1988. Sierra Leone 1968-1985: The decline of politics and the politics of decline. *International Journal of Sierra Leone Studies, O.S. Journals Centre for Research and Publishing* 1:122-29.

———. 1999. Sierra Leone: The political economy of civil war. *Third World Quarterly.* 20 (1): 143-162.

Zureick, Alyson. 2008. Implementing the gender acts in Sierra Leone. *Social Edge*, *by social entrepreneurs for social entrepreneurs.* The Skoll Foundation. Blog: interview with Lotta Teale (British barrister). www.socialedge.org/blogs/alyson-in-africa/archive/2008/01/29/ implementing-the-gender-acts-in-sierra-leone (accessed June 30, 2008).