Education and the Risk of Violent Conflict in Low-Income and Weak States, with Special Reference to Schooling:

The case of Sierra Leone

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Thesis submitted to the University of Oxford for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

St. Cross College

Trinity Term, 2012

Abstract

Broadly, the study examines the argument that education potentially contributes to violent conflict or, on the contrary, acts as a mediating factor in the reconstruction of divided or fragmented societies; indeed, as a driver for peace and unity. It looks at the case of Sierra Leone, a country emerging from a decade-long civil war (1991–2002).

There are four aims to the study:

(1) To examine, by drawing on a number of disciplines, the theoretical explanations of what puts societies at risk of violent conflict;
(2) Using these interdisciplinary perspectives, to identify the features of educational systems that are considered to be associated with or give rise to violent conflict;
(3) To examine which of these characteristics are present in post-conflict Sierra Leone; and
(4) Based on the findings, to formulate a number of general theoretical propositions about the characteristics of educational systems that might put society at risk of conflict.

The research question for the study is

> ***Which features of the educational system in Sierra Leone might put the country at risk of further conflict?***

Importantly, the research question is approached theoretically; a study attempting to demonstrate this solely empirically would not be feasible.

The study adopts a robust interdisciplinary approach. It seeks explanations across the social sciences for the causes of violent conflict and identifies three theories that bear upon the key features that characterise many contemporary conflicts, i.e. ethnicity or cultural identities, status as a low-income country, and 'fragile' or failing states. The explanations revolve around the theories of: 1) 'horizontal inequalities' by Frances Stewart; 2) the 'opportunity cost of rebellion' by Paul Collier et al.; and 3) the role of state and ruling elites by Robert Bates. The study, then, together with an analysis of education and its relationship to conflict, creates an interdisciplinary theoretical and conceptual framework on the characteristics of educational systems associated with a risk of violent conflict.

Methodologically, the study examines the educational system of post-conflict Sierra Leone as a case study, focusing on young people's experiences, perceptions, and expectations of education. Three groups of young people with different educational experiences in Makeni city are selected as principal cases: (1) 15 students in a secondary school; (2) 15 students in technical and vocational training; and (3) 10 out-of-school informants. Additionally, 49 adult key informants were interviewed (among which 34 were ultimately analysed) and documentary analyses were conducted.

The findings from the study reveal a number of features in the educational system in Sierra Leone (in areas such as access, curriculum, and governance) that the theoretical lens adopted in the study suggests as being associated with a risk of violent conflict. The analysis that follows seeks to further elucidate these features and recognise their complexity. The analysis is enriched by the perspectives and experiences of the beneficiaries of education who participated in the study. This sets it apart from other studies.

The limitation of the study lies in the fact that it cannot demonstrate a causal relationship between the features of education and possible further violent conflict in Sierra Leone (a challenge most studies of this kind would face). The study does, however, offer a rich theoretical and conceptual framework and a robust set of theoretical propositions in relation to the question it poses. In contribution to the field and the growing literature on this topic, the study offers a theoretical and conceptual base for future research tackling the role of education in violent conflict and for building (and modifying) knowledge on the topic.

Acknowledgements

Completing this study would not have been possible without the support of so many people. I would like to acknowledge some of them here.

First of all, this study owes much to the participants and the institutes that hosted the study in Sierra Leone. I particularly thank the young people who gave so generously of their time not just once but regularly over three months (although I cannot mention them by name here for ethical reasons). I am also very grateful to Dr Buck and his wife Josephine, who – without knowing me in person – helped me arrange my first visit and even sheltered me at their house when I first arrived. My thanks also go to those who facilitated my research processes, especially Ms Afro at the University of Sierra Leone, Mr Jalloh at UNICEF, Mr Jalloh in Makeni, and the staff at Children's Learning Services, particularly Sym-che, Kadi, Mr Gaskin, and Mr Kamara. My friends there and the Makeni family made my stay so enjoyable and homely, particularly Josephine, Auntie Gladys, the late Auntie Martha, Mummy, Buba, Dauda, James, Alhagi, Cassangha, Chris, Precious, Gracious, Jojo, Christina, and Dr Korsu. Thanks to them and countless other hospitable Sierra Leoneans I encountered, my fieldwork became not only productive but a joyful experience.

In Oxford, I am particularly indebted to my supervisor, David Johnson. He has spent hours and hours of tutorial time with me, even a few times at his house with his puppy Woody around, challenging my idealistic and naïve views in order to help produce a solid piece of work. I am also grateful to support from Jason Hart in the earlier stage of the study, particularly in building the methodological approach to research involving children and young people in conflict-affected areas. He also connected me to some key researchers on conflict-affected contexts. I benefited greatly from comments and advice from David Mills, Colin Brock, Ann Childs, Jo Boyden, and Alex Duncan, all at the University of Oxford. My colleagues in the Conflict and Education Research Group also deserve special thanks for sharing ideas and building knowledge together in this emerging field. My thanks particularly go to Julia Paulson with whom (and also with my supervisor, David Johnson) I have had the opportunity to chair a seminar series involving eminent researchers from across the social sciences. There are other researchers in and beyond Oxford who helped my research about Sierra Leone that I would like to acknowledge here: Mats Utas, Takehiko Ochiai, Nagayo Sawa, Chris Coulter, Erlend Krogstad, Henry Mbawa, and Johanna Boersch-Supan. In addition, I wish to express my appreciation to James Disley who edited my thesis, although I am responsible for all errors that may remain.

I would further like to acknowledge friends in Oxford and beyond. I appreciate the deep friendship forged by the shared hardship of being a doctoral student (!), particularly with Clementina Amankwaah, Caroline Schmidt, Machi Sato, Wan Ying Tay, Yuen Yi Lo, and Evdokia Pittas. My thanks also go to my Buddhist friends from Soka who encouraged me not to give up and took me out to Buddhist activities when I needed to put aside the doctoral work, particularly Pippa Keane, Isabelle May, and Jenny Ohrstrom. My warmest gratitude goes to my best friend and my partner in life, Pablo Juarez, for being there for me all the time.

Finally, I would like to dedicate my work to three people without whom I would not have been able to come this far. My parents, Tamio and Kyoko Matsumoto, have always believed in me and supported my goals. Last but not least, my mentor, Daisaku Ikeda, has helped me find direction in life and has further helped me believe that I can pursue the path I have set out for myself.

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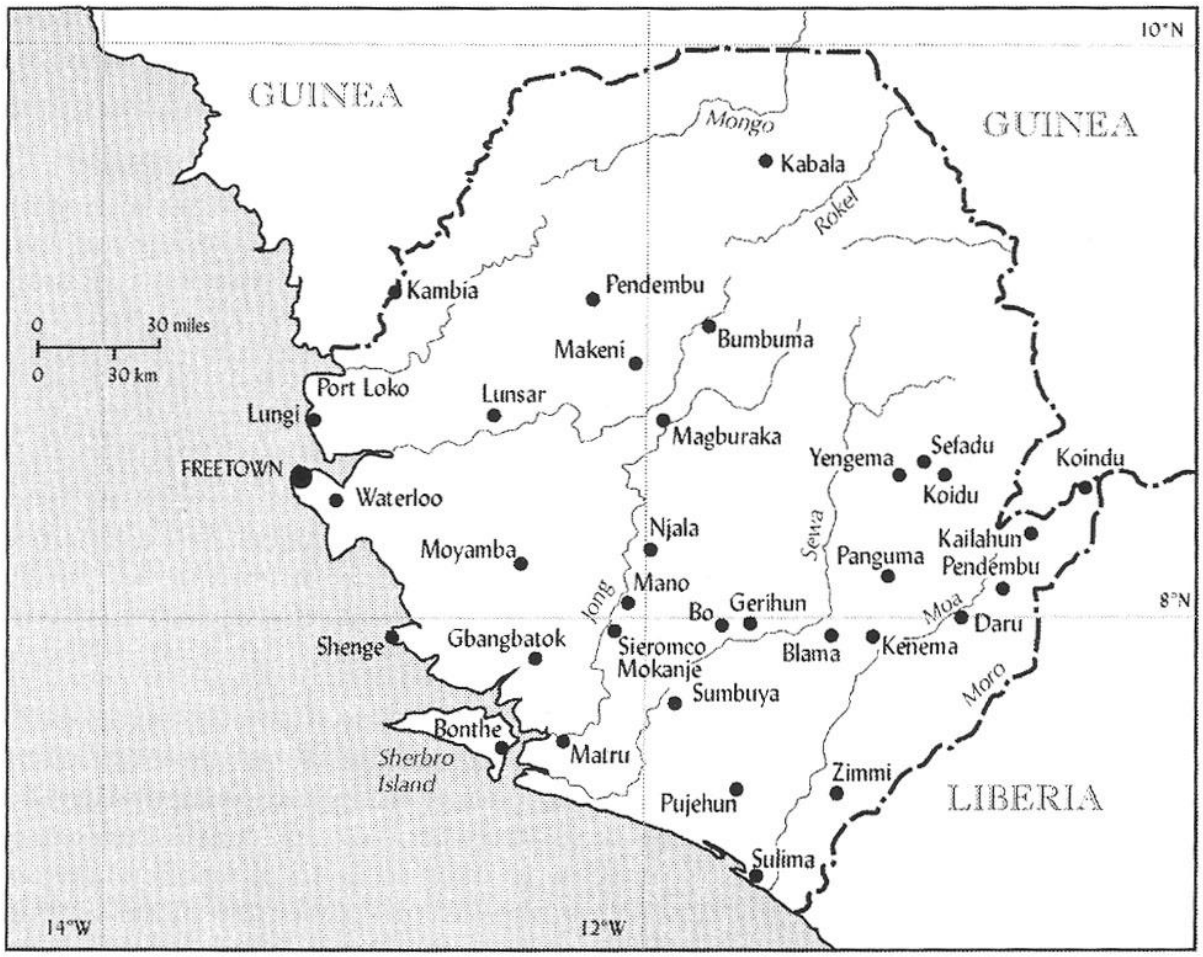
Acronyms

ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
APC	All People's Congress
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
CRISE	Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity
CUREC	Central University Research Ethics Committee
DBOCs	District Budget Oversight Committees
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DEO	District Education Office
DFID	Department for International Development
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
EFA	Education for All
ESSF	Education Sector Support Fund
FBC	Fourah Bay College
FECYP	Forum for Empowerment of Children and Young People
FGD	Focus group discussion
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
GNI	Gross National Income
HIs	Horizontal inequalities
HTC	Higher Teaching Certificate
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JSS	Junior Secondary School
LGA	Local Government Act
MCSS	Makeni Christian Secondary School
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport
MoFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NCRDC	National Curriculum Research and Development Centre
NCTVA	National Council for Technical, Vocational, and other Academic Awards
NPSE	National Primary School Examination
NRS	National Recovery Strategy
NVC	National Vocational Certificate
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PETS	Public Expenditure Tracking Survey
PHE	Physical and health education
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RUF	Revolutionary United Front

SLA	Sierra Leone Army
SLAJ	Sierra Leone Association of Journalists
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
SLTRC	Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission
SMC	School Management Committee
SSS	Senior Secondary School
TEC	Tertiary Education Commission
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TVIM	Technical and Vocational Institute of Makeni
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USOE	United States Office of Education
WAEC	West African Examination Council
WASCCE	West African Senior School Certificate Examination

Map of Sierra Leone



(Keen, 2004)

Chapter One:
Introduction to the Study

1.1 Introduction to the chapter

This study seeks to deepen understanding of how formal schooling might contribute to violent conflict. It looks particularly at the case of Sierra Leone. History shows that the educational system can be manipulated for political reasons and is often used to instigate interracial or interethnic hate and distrust; this often results in bloody conflict. Well-known historical cases include Nazi Germany and Japan prior to and during the Second World War. In Nazi Germany, schools are considered to have promoted people's support for war and for anti-Semitism. For instance, propaganda in support of racist nationalism and militarism can be seen throughout the curriculum, and it is most explicit in a course called 'Racial Instruction' where the doctrine of the superiority of 'Aryan' Germans and the inferiority of other races, particularly Jews, was taught (e.g. Giles, 1992). In a more contemporary case, in Rwanda, for example, prior to and during the course of the genocide in 1994, schooling is considered to have played a role in exacerbating 'ethnic' tensions, through, for instance, providing unequal access to education for different ethnic groups (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000) and manipulating the national history taught in school (Obura, 2003). Similar examples can be seen in Kosovo where history teaching was manipulated (Sommers and Buckland, 2004) and in Sri Lanka where the right of minority ethnic groups to be taught in their own languages in schools were oppressed (Johnson and Stewart, 2007). These cases demonstrate that education is not always a force for good (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000) and can be manipulated in explicit ways to contribute to violent conflict.

But more difficult to understand is the relationship between education and violent conflict where the educational system is not explicitly manipulated. For example, the general deterioration of an educational system, such as weak governance, poor policies for equity and equality in access to provision along class, religious or ethnic lines in more implicit ways lend themselves to general dissatisfaction and possibly violent conflict. The present study focuses on understanding how formal schooling including governance, structure, curriculum, quality, and beneficiaries' satisfaction, contribute to contemporary violent conflict in low-income and weak states. The enquiry will involve both theoretical and empirical research of Sierra Leone, a country emerging from a decade-long civil war (1991–2002).

Whether or not and how education plays a role in violent conflict is a subject of this thesis and will be explored throughout. But what is clear and usefully rehearsed here is that (1) violent conflict has an impact on education service delivery, and (2) education is harnessed positively to build peace aftermath of violent conflict and generally to strengthen conflict affected countries.

1.2 Rationale for the study

1.2.1 Violent conflict and education in the contemporary world

Violent conflict is one of the major humanitarian and development issues of the world today. The number of violent conflicts increased after the end of the Second World War, mostly in the form of internal (or intrastate) conflict (see Figure 1 below). Education has a complex and intricate relationship with contemporary violent conflict, as I will show below.

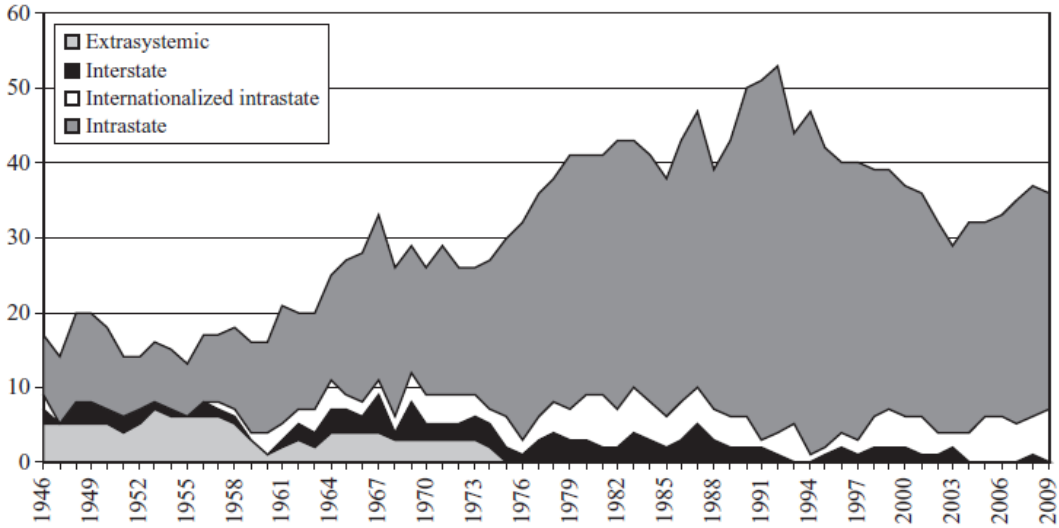


Figure 1: Number of armed conflicts by type, 1946–2009 (Harbom and Wallensteen, 2010)

Contemporary internal conflict – most of which takes the form of a civil war where the government of a state is one of the warring parties – is increasingly concentrated in the most vulnerable countries in the world. These 'vulnerable' countries are characterised by three interrelated features. One feature is being a low-income country. Collier et al. (2003) argue that low-income countries (defined by their having a *per capita* annual income below US$745), in which more than a billion people live, face a risk of civil war 15 times as high as the countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which face only a negligible risk of it. In contrast, the majority of developing countries where four billion people live have either reached middle-income status already or have policy and institutional environments that are anticipated to enable them to achieve such a status. These countries face a risk of civil war only four times as high as OECD countries, and this risk is less than it was 30 years ago, when the risk was five times as high as OECD countries (Collier et al., 2003). Another feature of countries that are often associated with violent conflict and other kinds of political instability, i.e. terrorism, is being 'fragile.' 'Fragile states' – the widely quoted definition of them being unwilling or weak states (c.f. DFID, 2005b) – have emerged in the policy field discourse in the last decade and often a link is made between the 'fragile state' and the risk of violent conflict

and political instability (e.g. DFID, 2005a; 2005b; USAID, 2005). The third feature is being a country that has already experienced a conflict. The World Development Report 2011 states that 90% of the civil wars in the last decade took place in countries that had already experienced a civil war in the last 30 years (World Bank, 2011).

The consequences of civil war in such vulnerable countries are enormous. In economic terms, the average costs of civil war in a low-income 'fragile' state is said to be around US$ 54 billion (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004).[1] This includes the cost of 'development in reverse' (Collier et al., 2003; Stewart, 2010); a typical civil war brings 15% lower economic growth to the country than had the war not occurred (Collier et al., 2003). More fundamentally, contemporary civil wars have devastating impacts on the lives of ordinary people, particularly children. On average, the majority of refugees are displaced for 17 years (Winthrop, 2009). This is not only because, as mentioned above, the contemporary conflict is often a repeat in countries already affected by one, but because the duration itself tends to be long; an average civil war is seven years long (Collier et al., 2003), while international wars in recent years have tended to last less than six months (Bennet and Stam 1996, cited in Collier et al. 2003). Furthermore, the majority of victims from internal conflicts are civilians, particularly children. At the beginning of the twentieth century, soldiers made up 90% of the casualties. By the 1990s, however, civilians –mainly children and women– had reached the 90% level (Cairns, 1997, cited in Collier et al., 2003). Not only are children victims, but also many of them participate actively in conflict as combatants, either 'willingly' or by coercion. The figure of child combatants around the world is unknown but it is considered likely to run into the hundreds of thousands (UNICEF, 2004).

[1] This includes direct costs (e.g. military expenditure and lost lives) and indirect costs (e.g. foregone economic growth), but excludes global effects.

Conflict also has an impact on educational systems. Indeed, violent conflict is considered to be the major obstacle to achieve Education for All (EFA) goals or education targets in Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), i.e. universal primary education and gender equality in primary and secondary education. The EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) 2011 (UNESCO, 2011) has taken on the issue and reports that 28 million – 42% of the total number – of out-of-school children of primary school age are in conflict-affected countries.

Insufficient provision of education to children in conflict-affected countries has by now gained recognition in the international community as an urgent issue to be tackled. This is epitomised by the passing of a resolution 'The right to education in emergency situations' by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in July 2010 (UN General Assembly, A/64/L.85). The resolution confirms the right of children to basic education in conflict-affected countries as well as in areas affected by natural disasters. In addition, bilateral donors are demonstrating growing support to education in 'fragile' states and conflict-affected countries; for example, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) has recently committed to increase the volume and proportion of aid to the educational sector in 'fragile' and conflict-affected states by around 50% (DFID, 2010b).

However, the recognition that conflict affects education greatly and is the major obstacle to achieving EFA or MDGs is not the only rationale behind the international community's increased attention and support for education in conflict-affected countries; education is also seen as a key tool for promoting long-term stability, peace and development in such

countries (DFID, 2010b; UNESCO, 2000). For example, DFID's recent education strategy states that:

> Education can play an important part in the emergency response to conflict or fragility, in the long term process of reconstruction and building stability and in promoting civil engagement and democracy. Empirical evidence links levels and distribution of education achievement to indicators of democracy, stability and security (DFID, 2010b, p.11).

Such an expectation, of education promoting stability and peacebuilding in conflict-affected countries and 'fragile states', is further enhanced by international and national security agendas. There is a growing concern, evident in the way in which international donor assistance is increasingly tied to security agendas (Novelli, 2010b), that youth are often the largest population cohort in conflict-affected countries and that leaving youth 'idle' by failing to provide them with education or training if not employment may increase the risks of widespread disillusionment, social tensions, and, potentially, violent conflict or terrorism. Therefore, education or training is seen as a way to meaningfully engage youth and to reduce such risks (World Bank, 2009; 2006).

In sum, violent conflict threatens human development, undermines provision of social services, including education, and poses threats to international and national security. Moreover, contemporary conflict is increasingly occurring in the most vulnerable countries in the world today: low-income and weak states that have experienced conflict. In this, education is seen as a key tool to mediate the threat of a (second) cycle of violent conflict and the threat to international and national security, as well as to promote development.

On the contrary to the international community's expectations regarding the 'positive' potential of education to promote stability and development in conflict-affected countries and 'fragile' states, however, education can also fuel violent conflict. I briefly referred to

the 'negative' potential of education earlier in relation to the cases of Germany and Rwanda. In the context of 'fragile' states and conflict-affected countries, I argue that deepening our understanding of how and what type of education might fuel contemporary violent conflict is imperative. On the one hand, it is shown that education has been greatly promoted in conflict-affected and 'fragile' states in recent years. On the other hand, it is also shown that the low-income and weak (or 'fragile') states (that have been affected by conflict) are considered to have a high risk of (re)lapsing into a cycle of conflict. With the risk, although education is seen as a key tool to promote peace, stability and development, the first priority is that the education provided in those states is at least conflict-sensitive, so that it does not fuel a (second) cycle of conflict. Yet, as I will argue below, the existing understanding of how education might do this is limited. This implies that the provision of education, with good intention, *might* be fuelling a (second) cycle of conflict there without people realising this. I concur with the statement below by Lynn Davies, one of the pioneering researchers in the field of education and conflict where this present study is located:

> 'Education for All' discourses seem to accept that education is generally benign and therefore that providing more education and greater access to schooling will be even more benign. I am less sure. It seems imperative that we analyse what type and ethos of education we are promoting before we become complacent if full attendance at school is being achieved and the problem of equity within or across countries seem to have been solved. If, as I and others hypothesise… ,formal education systems can contribute more to world disorder than to world peace, then it is urgent to find ways at least to investigate this systematically (2005, p.44).

1.2.2 The 'knowledge gap' in the field of education and conflict

The role of education in contemporary violent conflict in low-income and weak states remains one of the most under-researched areas in the education and conflict field, despite the pressing need for that knowledge, as argued above. Contemporary violent conflict is considered to be a 'new' kind of conflict because it cannot be understood by an 'old' or a

conventional model of warfare (see, for example, Duffield, 2001). For one, it cannot be understood simply as a contest between 'two sides,' i.e. rebels versus government forces or between two rival ethnic groups. In Sierra Leone, a case that the study takes up, rebels and the government army had increasingly recruited a fluid but essentially the same group of marginalised youth, who switched sides at their convenience (see Keen, 2005; SLTRC, 2004c). Many of the contemporary wars have ethnic or religious aspects but it has come to be understood that ethnicity itself or ethnic tensions are not the cause but merely a 'label' or a force on the surface. In the cases of Rwanda and Burundi, which I elaborate on in Chapter Three, there are claims that different factors from ethnic tensions and hatred, such as personal motives and fear of intimidation from the same ethnic group that one belongs to, are more important in understanding the causes and dynamics of conflicts and genocide there (see, for instance, Straus, 2006; Fujii, 2009; Patricia, 2006). Secondly, on a related note, contemporary conflict, particularly in Africa, is considered to not be explainable by political 'grievances' or ideologies – the conventional explanation of violent conflict – as the driving cause. In essence, it has come to be recognised that economic dimensions of conflict as well as political ones are essential to fully understanding it (see Duffield, 2001; Keen, 1998; Reno, 1998; Collier and Hoeffler, 1998). Indeed, while von Clausewitz, the military historian who established the conventional explanation of war, stated that war is 'a continuation of politics by other means,' Keen (2000) states that contemporary internal conflict may in fact be 'a continuation of *economics* by other means' (p. 27, emphasis in original).

Because contemporary conflict is not explainable by a conventional model of war as such, there have been lively debates about the 'new' conflict, involving the 'root causes' or initial factors and circumstances that fuel conflict, the risk factors, or its very nature,

among scholars across the social sciences. And, as a result, understanding of the 'new' conflict's root causes, risk factors, and nature has been rapidly advanced in the last two decades (see Chapter Four for more details). In the discussion, education is often argued to be part of the root causes of or risk factors in contemporary conflict (e.g. Collier and Hoeffler, 2004; 2000; Thyne, 2006; Barakat and Urdal, 2009; Stewart, 2002b).

Yet my contention here is that studies in the field of education and conflict – within which the present study is located – have been largely disconnected from the debates in social sciences on contemporary violent conflict. This is in spite of the field's main interest in unravelling the relationships between education and violent conflict. The field of education and conflict, albeit under various names, is claimed to have 'emerged' in the mid-1990s as a sub-field of international and comparative education (this does not mean there had not been studies on the relationship before then: see, for instance, Monchar, 1981). Since its 'emergence,' many studies have been conducted about the relationships between education and violent conflict, including on the argument that education may potentially fuel violent conflict. However, studies in the field about the role of education in violent conflict are skewed in scope and limited in depth. The great majority – both theoretically and empirically – is about the role of education in (contemporary) ethnic conflict (see sections 3.3 and 3.5.2). In addition, there are some materials about the role of education in the Second World War in the field of educational history (see Section 3.4) and some other theoretical works which suggest that 'violence' in school promotes violence and violent conflict in society (Harber, 2004; Davies, 2004). Furthermore, not only is the role of education in non-ethnic contemporary conflict cases little discussed in the field, but the existing studies do not take into account the distinct characteristics or root causes of contemporary conflict, which are different from the conventional war as discussed above

(see more details in Section 3.6). Most of the studies on the role of education in (contemporary) ethnic conflict are limited to asking how education fuels the 'label' of ethnic conflict, i.e. ethnic tensions and hatred, not discussing the underlying root causes and their links with education. There are some, however, that attempt to understand the role of education in the root causes of (contemporary) violent conflict (see Section 3.3.3), and some of them do engage with social science literature on the root causes of contemporary conflict and attempt to understand the role of education in them (e.g. Smith, 2005; Novelli and Cardozo, 2008; Ostby and Urdal, 2010; Hilker, 2010; Brown, 2010). Nevertheless, the approach is at an incipient stage. They are just beginning to expound concretely what elements of education can fuel the root causes of contemporary conflict (e.g. Ostby and Urdal, 2011), and I have only found one study that applies the approach in its empirical investigation (i.e. Hilker, 2010).

Although it is at an incipient stage, the interdisciplinary approach appears to be a promising one. It is promising, of course, to understand the role of education in non-ethnic contemporary conflict that has been little discussed in the field. It also appears to be promising in order to develop a more robust understanding of how education might fuel violent conflict more generally; indeed, it may enable the advancement of knowledge of the role of education in contemporary ethnic conflict and the Second World War beyond what we know already. There might be great differences in the ways in which education fuels the root causes of them among the ethno-nationalistic cases in the War (e.g. Germany and Japan), non-ethno-nationalistic cases in the War (e.g. the US and Australia), the contemporary ethnic conflict cases in the *developed* world (e.g. Northern Ireland), and contemporary ethnic conflict cases in low-income and weak states (e.g. Burundi).

Therefore, the study follows and attempts to further develop the interdisciplinary approach in the field. I will show below how the study does that by giving an overview.

1.3 The study

Aims and the research question

Against this backdrop, there are four aims to the study:

(1) To examine, by drawing on a number of disciplines, the theoretical explanations of what puts societies at risk of violent conflict;
(2) Using these interdisciplinary perspectives, to identify the features of educational systems that are considered to be associated with or give rise to violent conflict;
(3) To examine which of these characteristics are present in post-conflict Sierra Leone; and
(4) Based on the findings, to formulate a number of general theoretical propositions about the characteristics of educational systems that might put society at risk of conflict.

To approach the first aim, the study draws on a number of theoretical perspectives and analyses of the root causes of contemporary conflict from across the social sciences. For the second aim, the study creates an interdisciplinary theoretical and conceptual lens or framework on characteristics of educational systems together with an analysis of education and its relationship to conflict. To approach the third, the study investigates and analyses, as a case, educational realities in Sierra Leone, which recently experienced a decade-long civil war (1991–2002). The last aim is approached as a part of discussion synthesising the theoretical and empirical explorations in the thesis.

The research question for the study is formulated as:

Which features of the educational system in Sierra Leone might put the country at risk of further conflict?

Approach to the study

In seeking to approach the aims and the research question, the study does not make claims of causality (between the features and violent conflict), but rather leaves the question, because of its complexity, open about the extent to which these features might play out. The research question would be difficult, if not impossible, to answer without the benefit of an interdisciplinary theoretical and conceptual lens through which the educational realities of Sierra Leone are examined. In order to advance the interdisciplinary approach in the field to the role of education in violent conflict, which is at an incipient stage, the study creates a theoretical and conceptual framework or lens in which the characteristics of educational systems that are considered to be associated with violent conflict are identified. The creation of the framework consists of two steps. First, the study reviews the social science literature and draws on three strands of theories on contemporary conflict that depict the role of education as part of the explanations (see Chapter Four). The first strand is the traditional 'grievance' theories (see Stewart, 2000, and Gurr, 1970) and the other two strands are alternative explanations: an economic explanation by Collier et al. complemented by the 'youth bulge' theory and a political explanation focusing on the role of ruling elites and state by Bates (2008) and Reno (e.g. 2000; 2002; 2006). Because these theories only marginally touch on the role of education in the explanations, as a second step the study sets out the framework centring on education synthesising the insights about the role of education from the social science literature, educational literature, and literature on Sierra Leone (see Chapter Five). All of the literature is to be reviewed in the earlier chapters of the thesis.

Having created the interdisciplinary framework and using it in examining the case of Sierra Leone, there are three key theoretical and conceptual contributions the study aims to

make to the field. One is that the study examines *relationships around education*, i.e. the relationship of education to social and cultural, economic and political dimensions – as well as elements *within* education – as factors or features that might fuel violent conflict. This is considered to make a contribution because the existing knowledge in the field of education and conflict has predominantly only depicted factors *within* the educational system that can potentially fuel violent conflict (see Chapter Three for details). Secondly, the present study examines the beneficiaries' experiences and perceptions – as well as examinations of policies –in considering the question of how education might fuel violent conflict. This is considered to add to knowledge in the field because the majority of studies in the field of education and conflict, including those that attempt to disentangle the role of education in violent conflict, have only focused on the policy level (see Section 3.6).

Thirdly, the study attempts to make a theoretical contribution to the field by setting out a series of propositions, as mentioned above, on how education might fuel violent conflict in low-income and weak states as the culmination of the empirical and theoretical explorations in the study (see Section 10.4). This is an attempt to respond to a contention by Rappleye and Paulson (2007). They state that the field is 'stuck in its emergence' because it has not yet developed a common theoretical, conceptual or analytical ground on which knowledge from various studies can be compared, contrasted and accumulated. They state:

> The field of education and conflict is, in many ways, 'stuck in its emergence' because it has yet to develop common theoretical understandings, useful analytical tools, and shared conceptual frameworks to unify and sustain a mutual endeavour by scholars working on a diverse range of topics and cases (p. 252).

It is hoped that the propositions will serve as an *initial* focal point in this regard, through which knowledge on the role of education in conflict can be accumulated, analysed, and advanced.

Like many others in the field of education and conflict, the study has taken a qualitative case study as the overall methodology and selects Sierra Leone as the case. The reasons explaining why Sierra Leone is a fitting case will be outlined in Chapter Two. Simply put, Sierra Leone is a key example of a low-income and weak state that had experienced a conflict (in the form of a 'new' war) where the relationship between education and the conflict itself and its root causes is strongly pronounced. On the one hand, Sierra Leone is arguably a 'poster child' or representation of the 'new' civil wars that are concentrated in low-income and weak states and are, as mentioned above, not explainable using the conventional model of war. However, unlike other 'new' wars, education has been much debated as part of the root causes of the Sierra Leonean war (see Richards, 1996; Peters and Richards, 1998; Abdullah, 1998; Rashid, 2004) and it is one of the rare non-ethnic conflict cases on which there have been studies on the role of education in the war in the field of education and beyond (see Wright, 1997; Skelt, 1997; Krech and Maclure, 2003; Paulson, 2006; Matsumoto, 2011). Further, a substantial number of studies are available on the pre-war education in Sierra Leone as it had a long tradition of education, having been renowned as 'Athens of West Africa' (e.g. Sumner, 1963; Corby, 1990; Banya, 1993; 1991; Bledsoe, 1992; Paracka, 2003). What this means is that there are rich materials on the case that suggest how education may have contributed to the war there and which provide a solid basis for the study's theoretical and empirical exploration: the factors or features in education that could fuel the 'new' kind of war and whether education in post-conflict Sierra Leone may contain features that could potentially threaten the stability there.

My study of Sierra Leone aims to bring new knowledge to the case by offering different perspectives to the existing studies and being vigorous in the empirical examination. The case study is rigorous, first of all, by being informed by the established theories and guided by the framework that is drawn from the theories mentioned above. Secondly, it has taken a deeply contextualised and multifaceted approach to the study of the case. It has collected data from policies at the national level to the perspectives and experiences of educational beneficiaries – who are in secondary school, a technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institute, and who are out of school – in Makeni, a city in the Northern Region. More concretely, it looks into four components of education (structure, curriculum and quality, governance, and conception) and their relationships to society. In contrast, other studies that touch on the role of education in the civil war in Sierra Leone (and subsequently in the post-conflict phase) have either not engaged with broader theoretical literature on the root causes of contemporary conflict (Wright, 1997; Skelt, 1997; Paulson, 2007; Matsumoto, 2011) or have not conducted an empirical investigation on the case (Wright, 1997; Krech and Maclure, 2003). There have been some studies on post-conflict education in Sierra Leone from different angles (e.g. Krech and Maclure, 2003; Paulson, 2006; Maclure and Denov, 2009; Sharkey, 2008; Betancourt et al., 2008) in addition to the studies on pre-war Sierra Leone mentioned above, but none of studies about education in Sierra Leone – both before and after the war – was based in Makeni or in the Northern Region, like the present study. Further, the study builds on knowledge regarding the perspectives and experiences of learners in Sierra Leone offered by a few studies (e.g. Sharkey, 2008; Betancourt et al., 2008) by adding the perspectives and experiences of young people in Makeni to it.

Whilst highlighting the contribution that the study hopes to make, I should also like to make it clear what the study is not about. The opposite to the part education plays in inviting or fuelling violent conflict that the study explores is its role in preventing or mediating it. However, the study does not set itself the task of examining the opposite – rather, it acknowledges that the study of education and its role in reconciliation and the building of peace in conflict-affected societies is a study in its own right (e.g. Paulson, 2011; Novelli and Smith, 2011; Wessells, 2005; Bretherton, Weston and Zbar, 2005). Moreover, it is the contention of the study that the recognition of factors or features in education that might put a society at risk of conflict is the first step for education to fundamentally unfold the 'positive' potential of education towards peacebuilding and stability; if features that put society at risk of conflict are present in education, then we cannot deny the possibility that they might become salient and, together with other factors in society, might fuel a cycle of conflict.

1.3.1 Definition of terms

In order to analyse the relationship between education and conflict, I need to clarify what I mean by these terms. In this study, 'education' refers only to formal schooling provided by the state. In the findings, I include young people's and adults' perceptions of 'educated people' and young people's experiences of TVET institutions in Makeni, but they all relate back to deepening understanding of the role of formal schooling (and TVET as part of it) in the lives of young people and Sierra Leonean society. This does not imply that non-formal (or informal) education or more broadly 'educative processes' – any means by which people 'learn' (c.f. Bird, 2007) – are not relevant to a risk of violent conflict. They can be; indeed, there are studies in the field that consider the relationship between other forms of education and violent conflict (either fuelling or resisting conflict) (e.g. Brock,

2011a; Pagen, 2011; Hammond, 1998). It is simply that there is no scope for the study to deal with other forms of education.

Defining 'conflict' is more complex. By 'conflict,' the study refers to a form of violent conflict (or armed conflict). What is 'violent conflict' then? There are different forms of violent conflict, as Figure 1 above by Harbom and Wallensteen (2010) indicates: extra-systemic (essentially about colonial or imperialist wars), inter-state, intra-state (or internal), and internationalised intrastate conflicts. Some studies distinguish 'war' and 'conflict' by the number of deaths; when an armed conflict inflicts more than 1,000 battle-related deaths per year it is called 'war' and it is called 'conflict' when it inflicts between 25 and 1,000 battle-related deaths per year (e.g. Dupuy and Peters, 2010). Some studies or datasets further specify – in order to distinguish conflict or war from genocides, massacres, or pogroms – that there has to be effective resistance for conflict or war to be called so; at least 5 % of deaths are inflicted by both parties involved in it (e.g. Small and Singer, 1982; 1994, cited in Collier and Hoeffler, 2002; 2004).

For this study, however, these quantitative measures do not matter much as this is a qualitative study. I believe it is sufficient to state that the study focuses on (unravelling education's link with) internal conflicts, in particular ones that are called civil wars. This is the type that is most common in low-income and weak states as discussed (see Section 1.2.1 above). Internal conflict refers to violent conflict inside a territory of a nation state that involves two or more warring parties (therefore, this excludes genocides, massacres or pogroms). Civil war refers to an internal conflict in which the government of a state is one of the warring parties. It should be noted that although most of the conflicts in weak states today are called 'internal' conflicts they are not 'internal' in a strict sense (see Berdal and

Malone, 2000; Duffield, 2001). As in the case of Sierra Leone, the initiation or persistence of conflict can only be understood fully when actors and contexts outside the country are taken into account (see Chapter Two). However, the concept of 'internal' conflict or 'civil war' is useful when it is seen in contrast to a conventional form of conflict that is inter-state in nature (Berdal and Malone, 2000).

In addition, the terms 'low-income' and 'weak' states are used more rhetorically (or figuratively) in the study to refer to the features of countries where conflict is concentrated in the world today. Nevertheless, as stated earlier, low-income countries can usefully be defined as those with a per capita annual income below US$ 745 (Collier et al., 2003) and weak states as states with weak state institutions and governance (World Bank, 2011).

1.4 Structure of the thesis

Now it only remains to introduce the outline of the thesis before it begins to unfold. The study is divided into ten chapters (see Figure 2 below).

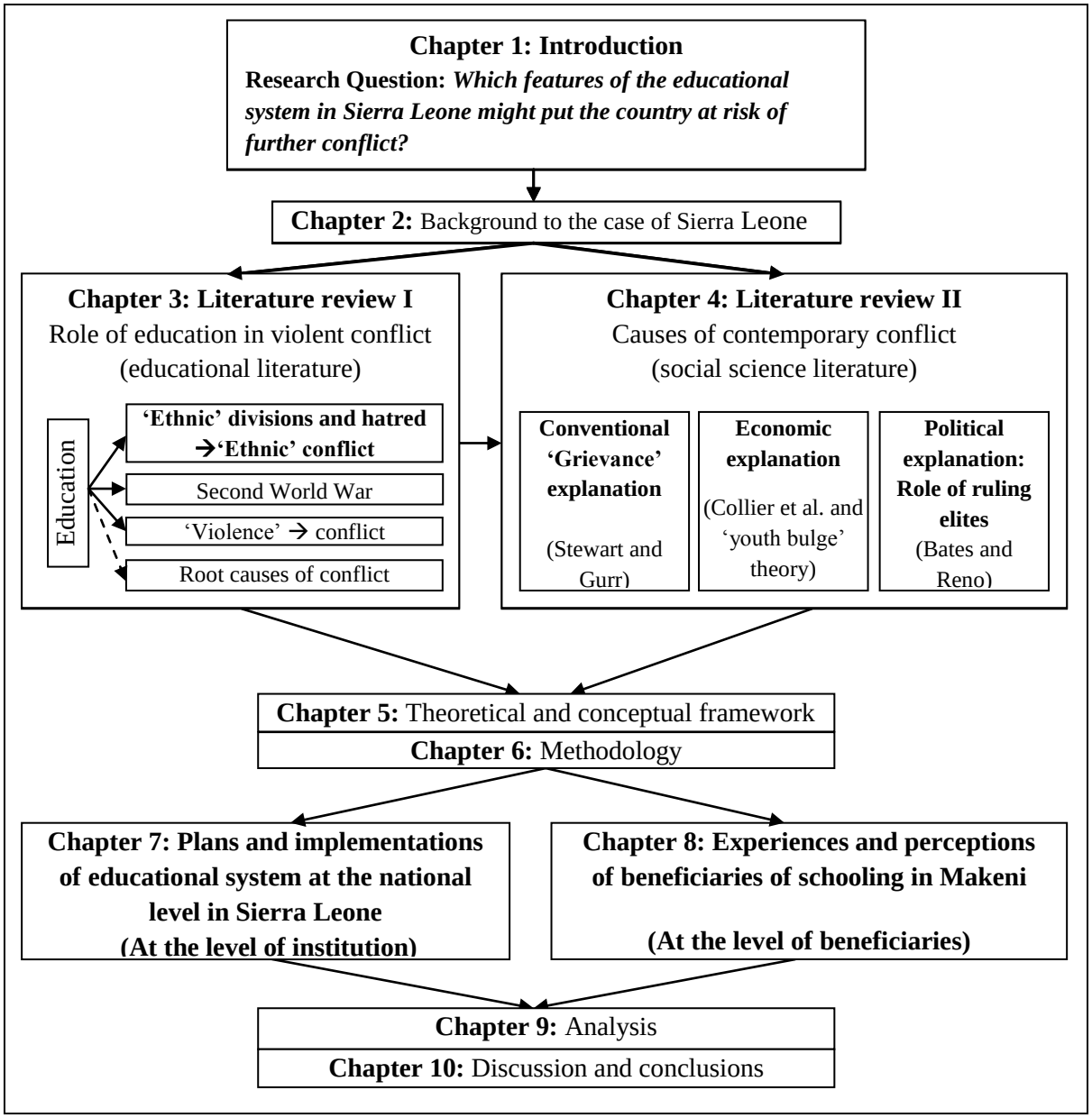


Figure 2: Outline of the study

This introductory chapter is followed by **Chapter Two**, which provides the background to the case of Sierra Leone. It elaborates the features and the root causes of the civil war, the role of education in the war, and the historical background. By doing so, I will also show why the case of Sierra Leone is a fitting case to be examined in the study.

Chapters three and four are literature reviews. Educational literature on the role of education in violent conflict particularly in the field of education and conflict is reviewed

in **Chapter Three**. There, I will show that the studies have been conducted and the arguments have been made mainly in relation to the role of education in ethnic conflicts and in the Second World War, as well as the role of school 'violence' in violent conflict. However, I will show that the literature has not satisfactorily addressed the role of education in relation to *the root causes* of (non-ethnic) *contemporary* conflict, the knowledge of which social science literature has advanced greatly. The limitations of the educational literature highlighted in Chapter Three will lead to the review of social science literature on the root causes of contemporary conflict in **Chapter Four**. As discussed above and illustrated in the figure, the approach of the review is to focus on the three strands of theories on the root causes of contemporary violent conflict that depict education as part of them. This approach is taken so that it best helps the study advance knowledge about the role of education in contemporary conflict, the core interest of the study.

Chapters five and six set out the approach of the study. **Chapter Five** presents the theoretical and conceptual framework that is created by synthesising the constituents and elements in and around education suggested by the literature reviewed in the thesis so far (from Chapter Two to Chapter Four). This guides the further empirical and theoretical exploration of the role of education in violent conflict in the study. In particular, two levels of analysis of education are identified: the level of institution and the level of beneficiaries. In **Chapter Six,** I describe the methodological approach of the study. It describes the qualitative case study as the overall strategy and the case study is designed at two levels following the two levels of analysis of education depicted by the framework (institution and beneficiaries). I will further describe the methods used, focusing on those employed in

studying the perceptions and experiences of education by the young people in Makeni as the investigation at the level of beneficiaries was the empirical focus of the study.

In **Chapter Seven** and **Chapter Eight**, I will then turn to presenting outcomes from the case study. Following the framework and the methodological approach, the outcomes are divided by the two levels and are presented in two separate chapters (Chapter Seven at the level of institution and Chapter Eight at the level of beneficiaries). Both chapters are organised by the four components of education depicted in the theoretical and conceptual framework: structure, curriculum and quality, governance, and conception. In chapters Seven and Eight, it is important to note that only *descriptive claims* are made. This means I will only present the conditions and realities of education in post-conflict Sierra Leone *without* judging whether they contain features that might fuel a cycle of conflict there. The implications of the findings with regard to the (in)stability of Sierra Leone are not something that I can 'find' empirically but which can only be suggested when the findings are linked to the theories in the literature reviewed.

Consequently, it is **Chapter Nine** where I analyse the findings and approach the research question in light of the literature reviewed in the study (Chapters two to four). There I elucidate some features in and around education in Sierra Leone that, in view of literature, *might* fuel a risk of conflict although it is *not* the study's intention to predict whether these factors or features will lead to another conflict in Sierra Leone. The analysis further shows the complexity of the 'face' of the factors elucidated.

Chapter Ten, discussion and conclusions, is the final chapter in the thesis. Based on the findings and analysis of them, it reflects on education in Sierra Leone from the pre-war to

the post-war phase. It further brings the discussion beyond the case, primarily discussing the efficacy of the theoretical and conceptual framework created and employed in the study. The theoretical discussion culminates in a series of theoretical propositions about risk features in education that might fuel a risk of violent conflict in low-income and weak states. It concludes by highlighting the contributions of the study as well as making suggestions for future studies in view of the study's limitations.

* * * * *

It is hoped that the combination of the theoretical aspiration and the deeply contextualised investigation of the case of Sierra Leone will enable the study to deepen understanding of the role of education in violent conflict, particularly in low-income and weak states. It is also hoped that the study will further open a path for more such studies to follow; the interdisciplinary approach that the study has taken is expected to allow a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of how education might fuel a particular kind of violent conflict.

The next chapter, Chapter Two, comprises the background to the case of Sierra Leone.

Chapter Two:
Background to the Case of Sierra Leone

2.1 Introduction to the chapter

The chapter provides the background to the study: the setting of the case of Sierra Leone. The Republic of Sierra Leone is a small country on the coast of West Africa with an estimated population of close to six million (e.g. World Bank, 2010a). The civil war between 1991 and 2002 had a catastrophic effect on the country from which it is struggling to recover and to redevelop. Sierra Leone is classified as a low-income country by development agencies and ranks as the 180th country out of 187 countries in Human Development Index (2011), with 340 Gross National Income (GNI) per capita (Atlas method, current US$) in 2010 (World Bank, 2011; 2010a). It is often referred to as a 'fragile' or weak state by bilateral and multilateral donors (e.g. DFID, 2005b; USAID, 2005; OECD, 2011; IMF, 2011; World Bank, 2010b).

The education sector seems to be no exception; the literature suggests that it is deeply affected by the effects of conflict and the weak capacity of the state. Studies commonly describe the condition of education in post-conflict Sierra Leone as grim; short supply or poor conditions of buildings, benches and chairs, lack of essential school materials, and inadequate number and poor quality of teachers are all factors (Krech and Maclure, 2003; Paulson, 2006; Maclure and Denov, 2009; Sharkey, 2008; Betancourt et al., 2008). On the whole, the literature suggests this is due to the institutional weaknesses and administrative inefficiencies of the education system and, more largely, of the state (Krech and Maclure, 2003; Maclure and Denov, 2009). And yet there are also suggestions that expectations are high for education; the beneficiaries expects education to be a tool for socioeconomic

mobility (Betancourt et al. 2008, Sharkey, 2008; Maclure and Denov, 2009) and the policymakers and external agencies who support the educational system in Sierra Leone see education as a key tool for stabilisation and development (Krech and Maclure, 2003; Paulson, 2006; Maclure and Denov, 2009). Some are further concerned that the gap between expectations on education and the actual conditions of it may be threatening to the country's stability by generating frustrations and grievances among young people (Maclure and Denove, 2009; Krech and Maclure, 2003; Skelt, 1997).

In order to more fully understand the educational realities and challenges facing Sierra Leone after the war and to approach the research question that drives the study, it is first necessary to understand the historical background of the country, particularly the circumstances and factors that gave rise to the civil war. In this chapter, therefore, I wish to familiarise the reader with the root causes and the features of Sierra Leonean civil war, discussing education as a part of it. By doing so, I also attempt to demonstrate why Sierra Leone is a suitable case to study.

The chapter will show that the country developed unevenly in various ways, widening the gaps between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots.' In particular, it was young people who came to be disadvantaged politically, economically and socially. Education, rather than countering this, played a large part in the uneven development. However, the war cannot be simply understood as a rebellion by the 'have-nots' against the state; the rebel group the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) lacked a coherent political ideology and exhibited contradictory behaviours to what a 'rebel' group is supposed to be, for instance by committing indiscriminate atrocities against the civilians they should have been fighting for. In understanding the root causes of the war, it becomes clear that education has deep

links to them. Indeed, the chapter suggests that the elitist and unequal educational system, the relationship between education and the political and economic context of the country, particularly the gap between expectations regarding the power of education and the actual capability of it, may have fuelled the root causes of the war.

I will first describe the history of Sierra Leone in order to help the reader understand the dynamics of the war and its root causes. In so doing, education will receive particular attention. I will then describe the features of the civil war that puzzled the international observers and academics, which led some to see it as one of the 'new' (civil) wars. The various explanations that academics came up with about the root causes of the war are described in the third section. There, I will also discuss how education is seen to relate to the war and its causes. The chapter concludes by outlining how Sierra Leone is a key case to approach the theoretical aim of the study.

2.2 Historical background of Sierra Leone

Freetown, the capital of present Sierra Leone, and the peninsula were first established as a settlement for freed slaves in 1787 and became a Crown Colony of Britain in 1808. On the other hand, the hinterland of the colony (the rest of the present Sierra Leone), populated by indigenous people, became a British protectorate much later in 1896. The development of Sierra Leone during the colonial days was characterised by disparities. The disparities were between Freetown and the hinterland, urban and rural areas, the south and the north, and ultimately between the colonised, Sierra Leone, and the colonial master, Britain. A pattern of economic development that the British envisioned was to extract unprocessed raw materials, such as agricultural products and natural resources, from Sierra Leone to Britain. To do that they made the urban areas centres for trade and administration, where raw materials went out and manufactured goods came in. In particular, things were

centralised in Freetown, due to the different territorial categories between Freetown, the colony, and the hinterland, the protectorate (Riddell, 1970). A railway was established from Freetown penetrating through to the south-eastern corner of the country (the present Eastern Region) to transport the rich agricultural products from that area. Riddell (1970) contends that the rail network directed and promoted the modernisation of Sierra Leone, through the provision of social services, including education, and development of banking and cooperate organisations. On the other hand, the north – where the railway only reached up to Makeni because of the less productive lands beyond – came to be neglected in the development vision of the British (Riddell, 1970) and the government did not have much incentive to develop industries or the rural economy in the country (Keen, 2005).

Politically, the British restructured the chieftaincy system by increasing the powers of the highest-level chiefs, the Paramount Chiefs. The British applied 'indirect rule,' a common strategy of their colonial administrations, in Sierra Leone, which meant that much of the day-to-day administrative tasks were delegated to traditional local leaders. Part of the rationale behind the system was to reduce the possibility of a protectorate-wide opposition by ensuring political activity was contained within local sub-divisions (Keen, 2005). However, the system also contributed to sharpening the divisions between those with power – the chiefs – and those without it. It encouraged abuses by chiefs, such as forced labour and excessive cash levies, particularly against 'young' men, who are defined more by lack of power and status than by age as elsewhere in Africa. The abuses were exacerbated when the salaries for the chiefs – which had been provided by the government since 1937 – broke down as the state's revenue diminished. As a result, throughout the twentieth century, there were many acts of 'rebellion' against the chiefs (Keen, 2005).

The economic emphasis shifted in the 1930s, from agricultural products to minerals. Mineral exports, including diamonds, exceeded agricultural exports by 1935 and from the early 1950s on diamonds became the main source of export revenue. However, the shift did not yield profits to the majority of Sierra Leoneans but further widened the disparities between the 'haves' and 'have-nots.' In terms of diamonds, Sierra Leoneans even did not have the right to mine them legally (Keen, 2005; Hirsch, 2001). This was because a monopoly on diamond mining was granted to the Sierra Leone Selection Trust (SLST), part of the leading British company the De Beers cartel. However, as a result, illicit mining prospered among Sierra Leoneans. The fact that alluvial diamonds were not only easy to hide but required very little technology facilitated this. The number of illegal diamond miners rose sharply in the 1940s and 1950s, spurring major migrations to the diamond areas in the south and the east of the country (Keen, 2005). In 1956, diamond mining was legalised for Sierra Leoneans, but those who benefited from the changes were largely the wealthy and the well-connected politically, i.e. the chiefs, politicians, and Lebanese traders (Keen, 2005).

Thus, Sierra Leone developed unevenly during the colonial days partially due to the development and control strategy its colonial master envisioned. In particular, the accumulation of discontent and anger felt by 'young' men in rural areas and by illicit miners – more specifically, the young bands among them known as 'sansan boys' – are important in understanding the civil war dynamics (see Keen, 2005; Richards, 1996; Abdullah and Muana, 1998; Mokuwa et al., 2011). After independence, the disparities that had persisted since colonial days did not improve but rather came to be exacerbated.

Party politics started to be characterised by ethnic and regional divisions after independence. Before independence, an important distinction was between the Creoles – or Krios, the descendants of repatriated Africans from the Caribbean, North America and England – of Freetown and the indigenous people in the hinterland. However, post-independence politics came to revolve around regional/ethnic competitions between the All People's Congress (APC), backed by Temne speakers – or, more generally, Northerners – and the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), supported largely by Mende speakers (Keen, 2005). The SLPP ruled until 1967 and produced the first and second prime ministers of Sierra Leone, Milton Margai (from 1958 to 1964) and Albert Margai (from 1964 to 1967). Since 1967, when Siaka Stevens of the APC won in an election, however, the APC came to rule the country until the 1992 coup.

Under the APC governments, particularly under those headed by Stevens, the political culture came to be increasingly based on patronage and corruption. Soon after Stevens made himself president (a position he held from 1971 to 1985), Sierra Leone in effect became a one-party state under the APC and he soon centralised the state under him. Moreover, in order to keep the state under his control, he extended patronage to 'insiders' and intimidated opponents, often with violence (Keen, 2005). He nationalised the main industries, starting with the diamond industry in 1971. This was to ensure the profits accrued to himself and his 'insiders,' *not* to boost government revenues to improve the state institutions or public services (Keen, 2005). As such, Stevens constructed a patronage system through the informal economy – which Reno (1995) refers to as a 'Shadow State' – and distributed the 'revenues' from this economy to his clients. He also treated the army and the police well, providing them subsidised rice and accommodation besides regular salaries, so that they would not plan a coup against him (Keen, 2005).

In terms of the violent intimidations against opponents by Stevens and the APC, what is to be particularly relevant in understanding the civil war later is the involvement of the 'lumpen youth.' Since the early 1970s,[2] the APC hired 'thugs' to terrorise and silence its opponents, particularly during the elections (Keen, 2005; Rashid, 2004). These thugs were largely from the 'lumpen youth,' a term used to describe young people, mostly male, who are unemployed but work in the underground economy in the city (see Abdullah, 1998; 2002; Rashid, 2004). The hiring of 'lumpen youth' for violent intimidations by APC is considered to have contributed to the creation of a violent youth culture and it is seen to be associated with present-day party politics (e.g. Christensen and Utas, 2008) and also with the civil war. In this period, violence became a form of labour to be rewarded, including in a situation of war (see Hoffman, 2011; Alie, 2006).

In the 1970s and 80s, the economy of Sierra Leone experienced a major decline. By the 1985–86 fiscal year, domestic revenue had fallen to just above 18% of what it had been in the 1977–78 fiscal year (Reno, 1995). One reason for this was the global oil-shocks in the 1970s. The prices of exports from Sierra Leone – still mainly based on primary commodity-exports – fell whereas the prices of imported products rose. This included oil-related products and other essential commodities such as rice. Another notable reason for the fiscal deficit was the increase in smuggling. The 'official' figures of production of natural resources, including diamonds, declined, but 95% of diamond production is considered to have been smuggled out by the late 1980s (Keen, 2005). Furthermore, the economic situation is considered to have been worsened by the structural adjustment encouraged by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank in the 1980s. Largely prompted by the IMF, the value of the Sierra Leonean currency dropped from one

[2] Rashid (2004) claims that the APC had been hiring thugs since the 1960s.

leone being worth 50 British pence in 1978 to just over one penny in 1987 (Keen, 2005). The devaluation fuelled rapid inflation, which left salaries behind and eventually led to the many months of delay payment. The situation was further exacerbated when President Momoh, in power from 1985 to 1992, took austerity measures to attract IMF support, including drastic reductions in petrol and food subsidies.

The combination of the economic crisis and the corrupt patronage-based politics had various effects. Most evidently, it pushed the majority of people into poverty. Disparities existing since colonial days widened. It was no longer only the peripheral populations and regions that were neglected, but also the state's own officials, including eventually the security sector (Keen, 2005). The neglect by the state encouraged further corruption by civil servants, just for them to make ends meet. As a result, the state was losing the ability to suppress the corruption and discontent as well as to maintain the loyalty of the people. Nevertheless, prominent politicians and businessmen continued to benefit from the 'Shadow State' (Keen, 2005).

2.3 Education in pre-war Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone has an eminent and long history of education. Through that, education came to be seen as a key means for socioeconomic mobility of its people. However, on the whole, it was characterised by disparities in its provision and was fundamentally elitist in nature. Although the provision was expanded after independence, the uneven provision did not improve and, as happened to other state institutions, the system had become centralised and dysfunctional by the 1990s.

The history of education in Sierra Leone began as soon as the freed slaves began to arrive there (Sumner, 1963) and, as early as 1827, Fourah Bay College (FBC) was established in

Freetown. Being the first university in West Africa, Freetown came to be known as the 'Athens of West Africa', with students and scholars coming from all over sub-Saharan Africa to study at FBC (Paracka, 2003). However, the eminent tradition of education was at the same time characterised by inequality in provision and, indeed, had been elitist in nature since the early days. On the one hand, the level of educational enrolment was high in Freetown, the colony; by 1900, 7,000 students were enrolled in primary school out of an estimated 14,000 children of primary school age (Sumner, 1963). On the other hand, less than 900 children were enrolled out of estimated population of 1,500,000 in the hinterland, the protectorate (Corby, 1990). Moreover, within the hinterland, too, there was a great discrepancy between regions. According to the 1931 Census, the percentage of children attending school was 0.97% in the north while it was 4.75 % in the south (Sumner, 1963). In part, these disparities relate to the overall pattern of development: the difference in the territorial category between Freetown and the hinterland and the disparity in development in relation to the rail network between the south and the north. However, the disparities in education are also associated with the fact that education was largely developed by the Church Missionary Society in Sierra Leone (as in other West African colonies) from the early colonial days (Sumner, 1963). Compared to the north, which had strong Muslim influences, in the south the missionary endeavours were more successful and took hold in the area of education (Corby, 1990). Following a British grammar school style, the schooling was a literary education; for instance, Greek, Latin, and Bible history were taught. It was also British centred, with teaching of the history and geography of England (Sumner, 1963). This kind of curriculum was not clearly relevant or useful to the lives of the majority of Sierra Leonean students who were in rural areas (Banya, 1991; 1993).

The British had also envisioned education as a tool to facilitate 'indirect rule,' a system which sought to befriend Africans, but in a subordinating role (see Corby, 1990; Shepler, 1998). This thinking was embodied in the founding of Bo Government Secondary School in 1906. It was founded as a boarding school to educate the sons of paramount chiefs in the provinces by the then Governor Probyn. He wanted to educate future chiefs so that they would 'effectively mesh themselves into the British administration's policies at the local (chiefdom) level' (Corby, 1990, p. 319).

In the course of educational history in Sierra Leone, it became apparent that educational advantage was essential in achieving higher social, political and economic status. The Creoles received education to the highest level in Sierra Leonean society. It was these Creoles and the secondary-schooled hinterland Africans who gained success in the form of government employment during the colonial period and also after independence by taking over the roles previously held by expatriate Europeans (Banya, 1993; Corby, 1990). Furthermore, alumni networks began to play a pivotal role in young people's future careers. For example, Bo Government Boys School has a strong association, the Old Bo Boys' Association, and graduates ask for favours from older graduates with successful careers (Corby, 1990). In the political arena as well, Bo graduates have played prominent roles at national level; for instance, 40% of the 42 SLPP members of parliament in 1962 were Bo graduates (Corby, 1990). In this way, 'success' came to be strongly defined by academic qualifications (Wright, 1997). As a result, the importance of education was not much to do with what was learned in the classroom, but with the available opportunities in the economy and social structure that were only accessible to those with particular qualifications and connections (Shepler, 1998). In other words, education created a powerful identity in Sierra Leonean society and became a source of 'symbolic capital'

(Bourdieu, 1986) – a resource that has symbolic value on the basis of honour, prestige, or recognition – in the economy of Sierra Leone (Shepler, 1998).

After independence, one thing that had changed was the expansion of access to schooling, particularly at primary level. 40% of primary-school-age children were enrolled in 1970 compared to 14% in 1957. In terms of secondary school, 25,000 pupils were enrolled in 1970, compared to 5,924 in 1957 (Government of Sierra Leone, 1970). The White Paper on Educational Policy in 1970 also committed to expand access to schooling further, and 98,016 pupils registered at the secondary level according to the 1985 census, although the enrolment rate at the primary level had dropped to 33 % (Kromah, 1985). It should be noted that the census conducted in 1985 may not have been reliable given that it was the height of Stevens' regime. The numbers may have been exaggerated to 'please' the donors so that they would continue to provide support to Sierra Leone.

Despite the expansion, the elitist and British-centred nature of the educational system and its unequal provision did not change much. The structure continued to follow the British model. It was 7-5-2-4 (seven years in primary, five years in secondary, two years in the sixth form (optional), and four years in tertiary), and the upgrade to the next level was determined by public examinations: the Selective Entrance Examination after primary education (Class 7), the General Certificate of Education (GCE) O level after secondary education (Form 5), and GCE A level after the sixth form (Government of Sierra Leone, 1970). In the system, about half of the education budget was allocated to the higher education in 1989 (Government of Sierra Leone, 1989, cited in Banya, 1993, p. 161). Most schools were found in urban centres and were almost non-existent in rural areas, despite the fact that approximately 85% of population lived in rural areas (Banya, 1993). There

continued to be great discrepancies between regions as well. The primary enrolment for the Southern Region was more than double that of the Northern Region in 1989 and, for the secondary level, enrolment in the south was more than triple that in the north (Government of Sierra Leone, 1989, cited in Banya, 1993).

Under Siaka Stevens, the educational system as well as other state institutions became centralised. Although regional offices of education existed, all decisions were made in Freetown (Banya, 1993). Furthermore, the fiscal crisis of the 1980s directly affected the education sector. Expenditure on education reduced to only 8.5% of government expenditure in the 1988–89 fiscal year from 15.6% in the 1974–75 fiscal year (Abdullah, 1998). As with other civil servants, teachers' salaries were delayed for many months. As a result, many became 'ghost' teachers, on the payroll but not actually teaching (Keen, 2005). They were instead busy trying to make ends meet, for instance by engaging in farming (Banya, 1991). Dilapidated buildings, lack of essential school supplies, and closure of boarding schools were also commonly observed (Banya, 1991). The quality of education also declined; this was apparent in the fall in the performances in GCE examinations (Banya, 1991). From parents' perspectives, they could not even afford to send their children to school, where fees were still charged, due to the devaluation of the currency (Keen, 2005). Thus, by the beginning of 1990s, the educational system was highly dysfunctional.

The decline of the economy on the one hand and the expansion of enrolment on the other had two negative implications for young people. One is that there were many more dropouts, who were unable to continue schooling and who did not have much prospect for jobs in the stagnant economy. For the period 1961–62 to 1985–86, only 19 out of every

100 pupils who started primary level reached Class 7, according to figures provided by the Ministry of Education (Banya, 1993). Indeed, the attrition rate of Sierra Leone was the second highest in the world after Haiti in the 1980s (World Bank, 1987, cited in Banya, 1993). Secondly, even many of those who completed secondary school or university did not have job prospects. There were 98,016 pupils registered at the secondary level (Kromah, 1985) in 1985 but there were only about 60,000 in paid employment at that time (Abdullah, 1998). As a result, a huge swathe of graduates could not get the public sector jobs they desired (Abdullah, 1998). Indeed, as political corruption increased and economic deterioration was exacerbated, only those who had a politically influential patron were able to secure prestigious jobs (Wright, 1997).

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Therefore, by the beginning of 1990s, the disparities had widened, corruption was rampant, and the majority of people were experiencing poverty. These problems were mirrored in the education sector. The provision of education continued to be unequal and elitist in nature. People could not afford to send their children to school anymore and even those who remained in the system could not gain the jobs they wanted after completing their education. As a result, the needs of young males – from urban to rural areas, including mining areas – were not met. They were stuck in the status of 'youth' with few opportunities or tools to promote socioeconomic mobility, i.e. education or employment (Keen, 2005).

2.4 The characteristics of the Sierra Leonean Civil war (1991–2002)

The civil war was, crudely put, a war raged by a rebel group, the RUF, against the then one-party government under President Momoh of the APC. The origin of the RUF can be traced to a group of university students who envisioned a 'revolution' to create an

egalitarian society. However, as the war progressed, it became increasingly clear that the war did not fit the conventional model of a (civil) war. In this section, rather than describing the complex timeline of the war, I will highlight the features of the war that distinguished it from the conventional model, but that have also been observed among other contemporary conflicts in low-income and weak states, such as Liberia, Uganda and Ivory Coast, to name but a few (see Keen, 2005 and Gberie, 2005 for detailed accounts of the war). The features I highlight are the indiscriminate atrocities against civilians, fluidity among the fighting factions, and the lack of a strong ideological basis but evident economic interests of the RUF. These, in turn, will aid understanding of the debates on the root causes of the war to be discussed in the following section.

It was civilians who bore the cost of the Sierra Leonean civil war (see, for example, Hoffman, 2004). The RUF who had set out to liberate the country and its people from the corrupt APC regime and to create an egalitarian society killed and terrorised the same civilians, looting their properties and forcing them to labour on farms and in diamond-mining areas (e.g. SLTRC, 2004c). Indeed, it was not only the RUF, but also other groups such as the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) and the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) that supposedly came to help end the war which also committed violence against civilians and looted their properties, albeit to a lesser extent (SLTRC, 2004c; Human Rights Watch, 1998). As a result, although estimates vary greatly among sources, probably close to 75,000 were killed, 20,000 were mutilated (Hoffman, 2004), two million were displaced, and tens of thousands of women and girls were raped or forced into sex slavery (Dougherty, 2004).

While civilians were being attacked, there were not actually many direct battles between the warring factions during the war. The distinction between the armed factions itself became blurred. This was especially so after the RUF changed to the guerrilla strategy in November 1993 (SLTRC, 2004c). Both the SLA soldiers (and ex-soldiers) and the RUF sometimes disguised themselves as members of the other side (e.g. Keen, 2005; SLTRC, 2004c). As a result, a term, 'sobels,' or 'soldiers by day, rebels by night' came to be used to refer to them (e.g. Keen, 2005). Furthermore, the collusion between the supposedly archenemies of the RUF and SLA came to the fore in May 1997, when Johnny Paul Koroma, then an SLA officer, succeeded in a coup d'etat against the government – under democratically elected President Kabbah – and invited the RUF into the formation of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC).

The features above are fundamentally related to the ambiguous political goals of the RUF in contrast to their evident economic interests. Although the RUF initially set out with the goal of overthrowing the APC and creating an egalitarian society, it committed more atrocities against the civilians they were ostensibly defending than the SLA did. They further colluded with SLA soldiers and overturned a democratically elected president. In addition, they did not seem to be interested in ending the conflict. In the Lome Peace Accord in 1999, the RUF were given politically preferable conditions: full amnesty to Sankoh and all the combatants who committed war crimes; the position of Chairman in charge of managing natural resources, which is also equal to the position of Vice-Presidency; and power-sharing with the government. And yet all this time Sankoh was giving underground instructions to the RUF fighters not to disarm (SLTRC, 2004c). While the political goals of the RUF were not clear, however, what were apparent were their economic motivations (as well as those of other fighting factions). In a minor way,

the looting of civilians' possessions already demonstrates this. More significantly, the fighting was concentrated in the southern and eastern areas, which were rich in natural resources and fertile in agricultural products (Keen, 2005). By 1994, the RUF occupied the major diamond-mining areas. However, the areas continued to be targeted by various fighting forces to use the profits to support their war efforts.

In many ways, the above-mentioned features of the civil war in Sierra Leone were common among recent conflicts in low-income and weak states (see Humphreys and Weinstein, 2006). The war in Liberia also featured atrocities committed against civilians and apparently economic incentives (Ellis, 1995). Indeed, the RUF seems to have adopted tactics from both the National Patriotic Front of Liberia in Liberia and the Mozambican National Resistance rebels in Mozambique (Abdullah and Muana, 1998; Richards, 1996). The Sierra Leonean war also has two other characteristics that were commonly observed among contemporary conflicts. One is that it was in many ways both regionalised and internationalised. For instance, the initiation of the conflict was greatly aided by Charles Taylor in Liberia and Muammar Gaddafi in Libya and the majority of the original RUF fighters were Liberians, with some also from Burkina Faso (Keen, 2005; Gberie, 2004). In turn, some Sierra Leoneans who had fought in their own civil war went on to join other rebel movements in West Africa (see Hoffman, 2011). Furthermore, international diamond and arms companies were behind the continuation of the RUF's war efforts (SLTRC, 2004d). Another characteristic is that children and young people were greatly involved in the fighting forces. Of the total 137, 865 members of Sierra Leone's armed forces in the conflict, 48,216 were estimated to be children (McKay and Mazurana, 2004). In the RUF, the majority of command and control structures were considered to have been made up of individuals under 30, with great atrocities being committed by children themselves,

although many of the children are considered to have been forcefully recruited (Rosen, 2005).

2.5 Root causes of the Sierra Leonean civil war

Below, I will review the various explanations for the Sierra Leonean civil war focusing on the issues within Sierra Leone. Of course, the civil war in Sierra Leone was not precisely an 'internal' conflict as was touched upon above. However, there were specific issues in the country. After the initial incursion, the war gained its own momentum quickly by recruiting Sierra Leoneans and they became the great majority by the end of 1992 (SLTRC, 2004c). Keen (2005) states that '[i]f the war sometimes resembled a virus spreading from Liberia, it was the weakness of the Sierra Leonean "body" that allowed it to spread so quickly and widely' (p. 58). Therefore, in this section, I will review the existing knowledge of the root causes of the conflict in Sierra Leone (the weakness of the Sierra Leonean 'body') that allowed the civil war to spread so quickly and be so prolonged. I will also discuss the role of education.

The Sierra Leonean war is arguably a key reference point for the 'new' wars (Weinstein and Humphreys, 2006; Peters and Richards, 1998). It clearly has the features of new wars, in that it was not a straightforward contest, unlike conventional war, between the rebel (i.e. RUF) and the government forces (i.e. SLA) and the distinction between them was rather ambiguous. In addition, the RUF had distinct economic interests but not the political ones that rebels are supposed to have. Furthermore, the war in Sierra Leone can be seen as the 'poster child' of the new wars because it is treated in the literature as one of the primary instances of 'new' wars and, as a result, a diverging set of explanations exists (Peters, 2011). This can be seen in contrasting explanations by Kaplan and Richards. On the one hand, Kaplan's (1994) work depicts the war in Sierra Leone as the prototype of the new

wars that pervade the developing world, underpinned by an anarchy and chaos and cannot be understood with Western rationality. It is an end in itself, like criminal violence in which, far from being 'a continuation of politics by other means', young men find liberation in violence. On the other hand, Richards (1996), in the first book-length study of the Sierra Leonean civil war, goes to the other extreme in explaining the war. He depicts the RUF as a coherent political organisation aligned with a conventional model of 'revolutionary war.' More specifically, Richards argues that the RUF is a political organisation run by dissident educated elites, the purpose of which is to revolt against the collapsing and patrimonial state under President Momoh. He traces the origin of the RUF to the radical student groups of the 1970s and claims that the RUF's violence is 'an intellectual project' (p. 33); educational institutions were deliberately attacked because of the excluded intellectuals' grievances against them and apparently random and anarchic violence against civilians is a rational act when it is seen as a 'performance' in which techniques of terror cover up the lack of equipment and limitations of the RUF.

Richards (1996) further explains that what made the expansion of the RUF possible, as well as the extension of the struggle, was 'the crisis of youth' in Sierra Leone. Young people in rural and mining areas started to have at least partial educational opportunities with the expansion after independence. However, they came to be the most marginalised group in Sierra Leone as the patrimonial state ran out of resources in the 1980s to support education, and as development policies continued to be biased toward urban areas. 'Modernised' by the power of education, according to Richards, the young people were frustrated; they did not want to go back to farming but lacked opportunities to further their education or get employment (other than farming) that could help them move beyond the

status of 'youth.' Therefore, the RUF put the provision of education and employment high on its agenda, a tactic which attracted these young people.

On the one hand, Richards' account clearly falls short in explaining the complexity of the war and the ways it diverges from the conventional model of warfare as described above (see Bangura, 1997; 2004). In particular, Richards' depiction of the RUF as a revolutionary political movement led by 'excluded intellectuals' drew a number of criticisms from Sierra Leonean academics. Abdullah (e.g. 1998), Rashid (2004; 1997), Bangura (1997) and Gberie (2005) agree that the origin of the RUF can be traced to a student radical movement, but argued that, fundamentally, 'Richards' belief in an excluded intellectual group in the RUF is unfounded' (Abdullah, 1998, p. 217). This is because the student radicals had abandoned the 'revolution' before the RUF came to be formed. Abdullah (1998) also rejects Richards' explanation for the violence against citizens as a rational act and explains that it was actually conducted because the RUF (as well as other fighting factions) came to be involved with or rather base itself on the 'lumpen youth' who, as I have described above, had long been immersed in violence and crime, and who considered violence as a kind of labour (i.e. Hoffman, 2011).

On the other hand, Richards' analysis that the roots of the war largely lay within the Sierra Leonean state and in 'a crisis of youth' is considered to be accurate and expanded by other works (such as Keen, 2005; SLTRC, 2004c; Abdullah, 1998; 2004; Peters, 2011; Bangura, 1997; 2004; Rashid, 1997; 2004). The weakness of the Sierra Leonean state in relation to a violent conflict is pointed out by many (e.g. Keen, 2005; SLTRC, 2004a). As Keen (2005) put it, 'Whilst at one level the rebel incursion threatened to bring down the government, at

another level government in Sierra Leone was already collapsing' (p. 34). SLTRC (2004a) similarly concludes that conditions in Sierra Leone by 1991 made a conflict 'inevitable.'

Richards' (1996) notion of a 'crisis' of youth resonates with a common contention that the majority of the combatants in all the fighting factions were marginalised young males. They are classified commonly into three categories: urban 'lumpens' (who used to be 'thugs' for politicians); the young band of illicit miners called 'sansan boys'; and rural 'youth' who were oppressed by chiefs and elders in the community (see Keen, 2005; SLTRC, 2004c; Abdullah, 1998; Bangura, 1997). Similarly, Humphreys and Weinstein (2004; 2006; 2008), based on a survey of 1,043 ex-combatants, find a 'striking consistency' in the demographic profiles of combatants across the factions. That is, they were 'young' males (average age being 28) who were poor and little educated, with partial schooling at primary or secondary level (or not at all), and students or farmers by occupation. The similarities in background are also argued to explain why the combatants on supposedly two different sides colluded. That is, they were increasingly drawn from the same but fluid group of marginalised youth, who switched sides at their convenience (see Keen, 2005).

What motivated these young people to join the fighting factions and what the RUF as an organisation wanted are other areas of contention, however. The discussions on this revolve around the role of 'greed' (or economic incentives) and 'grievances.' While Richards' (1996) analysis of the Sierra Leonean civil war can be seen to have followed a conventional explanation of war, seeing political (and educational) 'grievances' as the only cause of the conflict, Collier and Hoeffler (2004; 2000) dismiss this and offer 'greed' as the key cause. They cite the case of Sierra Leone as an ultimate illustration of a rebel movement motivated by economic incentives, particularly for diamonds; the RUF was

involved in the diamond business and Foday Sankoh demanded to be the minister in charge of mining (Collier and Hoeffler, 2000).

Recent studies indicate, however, that it is not a question of 'either–or' but that in fact both economic incentives and grievances are pertinent in understanding the war. Keen (2005) not only recognises the roles of both but shows the relationships between the two. Keen considers that what explains the kind of atrocious violence committed against civilians – in addition to taking away their properties – is the accumulated grievances from pre-war Sierra Leonean society. Because they were angry and filled with hate, they did not balk at using violence to get what they wanted. Humphreys and Weinstein (2004; 2006) also found both political and material incentives behind the mobilisation of the combatants but they further clarify the kinds of the incentives. They state that, rather than control of the lucrative natural resources, what were relevant were the political and economic incentives directly relevant to the lives of the combatants, such as jobs, money, food, offers of protection, and education. Indeed, in terms of the conditions in the Lome Peace Accord, too, the majority of the fighters were only concerned with those that would affect them directly, such as the ceasefire, provision of jobs, and the amnesty for fighters (Humphreys and Weinstein, 2004).

As the complex account of the war so far makes it clear, diamonds were only one element that fed into the war (e.g. Keen, 2005; SLTRC, 2004c; Hirsch, 2001). Unlike the popular perception, diamonds only came into the dynamics of the war after 1994, and there were other ways of making money. Furthermore, the benefits from the diamond trade were concealed from the majority of fighters and thus brought no benefit to them directly (Keen, 2005; Humphreys and Weinstein, 2004).

Thus, various explanations were offered in explaining the Sierra Leonean civil war, ranging from, among others, Kaplan (1994) who saw it as chaos and anarchy in the developing world not understandable by Western rationality, Richards (1996) who attempted to explain it adhering to the conventional model, and to Collier (2000) who offered an alternative economic explanation, coining it the 'greed' model.

2.6 Education as part of the root causes of conflict

Although seen as a prototype of the 'new' wars by Collier or Kaplan, a unique aspect of the Sierra Leonean war is that the role of education is much debated as part of the explanations. Although the role of education in the war is contested in a few ways, it is agreed that young people who were highly educated (the radical students) and who were little educated (lumpen youth) joined together in the 'revolution.' The section further shows how education came to contribute to a situation where young people could be easily mobilised. It will explore the elitist and unequal nature of the educational system itself, the elitist and unequal nature of education as a form of symbolic capital, and the failure of education to meet the expectations of young people as a form of symbolic capital.

As revealed above, education is a factor that comes up in many of the explanations of the Sierra Leonean civil war (i.e. Richards, 1996; Abdullah, 1998; Bangura, 1997; 2004; Rashid, 1997; 2004; Gberie, 2005; Keen, 2005; Humphreys and Weinstein, 2004; 2008). Yet exactly how education played a role in the war is a contested area. The contention is on two fronts. One is on the extent to which grievances about education were the reason for young people joining the rebel movement, and the other is on whether the radical student group which formed the RUF continued to be part of it or not. On both fronts, Richards most strongly argues for the role of education in the war. That is, as shown above, he argues that the RUF was led by dissident highly educated people who had been part of

the radical student group and that, for both the excluded intellectuals and for the young people in rural areas who had partial education, the grievances about education were key in taking up arms against the state. Peters and Richards (1998) similarly conclude, presenting findings from interviews with young combatants, that 'loss of educational opportunity is seen as a major factor in the decision to fight' (p. 187). Keen (2005) is more moderate but he too highlights education as a powerful source of grievances for young people who joined the war. The reasons he raises are similar to Richards (1996), in that it was not only the decline of services per se since the 1980s but the decline of education which frustrated a group of young people who dropped out from the system. In contrast, several Sierra Leonean academics (Abdullah, 1998; Bangura, 1997; 2004; Rashid, 1997; 2004; Gberie, 2005) dismiss the role of education on both fronts: the highly educated dissidents were not part of the RUF as the radical student group had left the 'revolution' before the RUF came to be formed; and the grievances of young people were not with education per se but were more generally held against the state and the society that marginalised them.

Regardless of the different views on the two fronts, the link of education to the war is agreed in two points. One is that, whether the radical student group became part of it or not, the origins of the RUF can be traced to the radical student group at FBC (Richards, 1996; Abdullah, 1998; Bangura, 1997; 2004; Rashid, 1997; 2004; Gberie, 2005). Secondly, it is agreed that the majority of young people who joined the fighting forces had little education, in that they were students at primary or secondary level, 'dropouts' from the school system, or those who have not been to school at all (Keen, 2005; Wright, 1997; Richards, 1996; Peters and Richards, 1998; Humphreys and Weinstein, 2004). 'Dropouts' here refers to those who dropped out from schooling, especially at the secondary level, or those who completed schooling but failed to achieve qualifications. The two points of commonality in

the link of education to the war are that, in short, the two groups of young people differentiated by their level of education came to be mobilised into 'revolution.'

Why did these two different groups of young people come to be involved in 'revolution', either with the RUF or in the movement before its formation? Rashid (2004; 1997) argues that it is again education that linked them. When the student radicals started the 'revolutionary' movement in the 1970s, they went into the city to sensitise the young people there, i.e. the 'lumpen youth, to their political ideology. Rashid (2004; 1997) argues that the lumpen population had changed significantly since the 1970s due to the expansion of schooling in the country after independence. The youth had schooling at primary or secondary level and were politically aware. Therefore, it is this new generation of 'lumpen' youth who mingled with student radicals and became the core group in the early RUF.

A more fundamental question, however, is whether education as a system came to fuel the root causes of the war or not and, if so, how it did. There are a few studies that discuss it, including my own work elsewhere (Wright, 1997; Skelt, 1997; Krech and Maclure, 2003; Paulson, 2006; Matsumoto, 2011). These works argue that the relationship built around what 'education' had come to represent in Sierra Leonean society facilitated state fragility. In other words, education contributed to a situation where young people could be easily mobilised when there was a trigger in the form of rebellion against the state. Wright (1997) states that, 'in quite unintended ways, education in Sierra Leone has been an accomplice in creating the climate of rebellion which culminated in civil war' (p. 20).

Krech and Maclure (2003) in particular emphasise an approach in which education is seen not as a discrete phenomena but in the context of political, economic and ideological

forces, for it was not education per se but rather the relationship between the educational system and the context that came to fuel the root causes of the conflict. Following Krech and Maclure's (2003) approach, I have argued in Matsumoto (2011) that education seems to have played into the political, economic and social marginalisation of children and young people in three ways. First is the nature of the educational system itself, which was elitist and unequally accessible. As I have described earlier, the educational system developed in Sierra Leone was British centred and 'bookish', being therefore of little relevance to rural children in Sierra Leone. Moreover, access to education was unequally distributed between Freetown and the hinterland, urban and rural, and the south and the north. The governance of education came to be overly-centralised in Freetown, too. This mirrored the disparities in development on the whole, between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' in Sierra Leone, rather than countering them. Furthermore, the elitist and irrelevant system, focusing on passing academic examinations, is considered to have produced 'clever conformists' (Wright, 1997, p. 22) to the 'British manners and taste' (Krech and Maclure, 2003, p. 147). The Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission (SLTRC) also identified education, being elitist and unequal historically, as one of the key 'historical antecedents to conflict' (SLTRC, 2004c).

The second link of education to the underlying state weakness that ultimately enabled the outbreak of the war is the elitism and exclusion that arises from the representation of education as a form of symbolic capital. In the history of education in Sierra Leone, education came to be highly valued as a form of symbolic capital (see Section 2.3 above). What is of relevance to the root causes of the war is that the established credentialism was of an exclusive standard. Only when one was successful in graduating from college was one considered to be fully 'educated' (Interview, SLTU President, 25 October 2009).

Therefore, not only was the system itself elitist, but the value of 'being educated' became an exclusive form of symbolic capital only available to a few university graduates. As a result, the majority of the young people who were only partially schooled were 'modernised but frustrated', as described above by Richards; they could not further their education or find employment (other than farming) or achieve the social status they wanted but, at the same time, because they were not fully educated, they were only perceived as 'dropouts' in the society (Richards, 1996).

The third link of education to the root causes of the conflict is that the expectations placed on the power of education – as symbolic capital – were no longer being realised for the majority of young people by the 1990s. Young people had expected that, as earlier generations had seen, the government would provide a public-sector job upon their completion of tertiary education. However, due to the economic crisis and exacerbated patrimonial politics, they came to realise that what they considered to be a *promise* of the government would not be met (see Section 2.3 above). Krech and Maclure (2003) argue that it was this 'failed *promise* of education' (p. 149, emphasis in original) that became the source of young people's disillusion and anger. The collaboration between radical student group members at FBC and the 'lumpen youth' can arguably be attributed to their realisation, and attendant frustration, that regardless of education levels, employment was no longer available to them without strong political connections (Matsumoto, 2011).

2.7 Conclusion

The chapter has provided the essential background of Sierra Leone to the study by showing the historical context, the features and the root causes of the Sierra Leonean conflict, as well as how education relates to the war. By extension, the chapter substantiates why Sierra Leone is a fitting case to the study. For one, the Sierra Leonean

conflict arguably represents the 'new' civil wars that have been emerging increasingly in the low-income and weak states and that exhibited some features that could not be understood by the conventional model of warfare. And yet the Sierra Leonean conflict is unique among the 'new' wars in that the role of education is much debated. What is behind this is the significant role education came to play in Sierra Leonean society in the course of its long and 'eminent' history.

Further, as I will show in the next chapter, theoretically advancing knowledge on the role of education in 'new' wars, the exploration of the case of Sierra Leone is considered to bring wider theoretical benefits to the field of education and conflict. This is because the role of education in the 'new' wars like the one in Sierra Leone has been little discussed in the field and the ways in which education is considered to have fuelled the war there point to elements and relationships that the studies in the field have not expounded. Now I turn to the review of educational literature in Chapter Three, where these points will be substantiated.

Chapter Three:
Literature Review I

Educational literature on the role of education in violent conflict

3.1 Introduction to the chapter

This chapter is the first of the two literature reviews in the study. While this chapter reviews educational literature on the role of education in violent conflict, the next reviews social science literature on contemporary conflict depicting the role of education in it. The present chapter shows that the understanding of the role of education in violent conflict in the field of education, or more specifically in the field of education and conflict, has been advanced but is skewed in scope and limited in depth. The studies are mainly about how education fuelled an ethnic conflict or the Second World War, with studies on ethnic conflict being the great majority. On the other hand, the studies on how education can fuel contemporary non-ethnic conflict are rare and theories are yet to be established on the whole. Further, whether labelled as 'ethnic' or not, the discussion in the field about how education fuels the 'root causes' – or the initial circumstances and factors that underlie an emergence of violent conflict – of contemporary conflict has been limited.

It is for the purpose of overcoming the shortcomings of educational literature on the role of education in violent conflict that I will review social science literature on contemporary conflict in the next chapter (Chapter Four). The social science literature does touch on how education fuels contemporary non-ethnic conflict and how education fuels the root causes of contemporary conflict, albeit marginally. The distinctions between studies in the field of education and other social sciences have become more blurry than they were at the time I started this study in 2007; there are now more studies trying to engage with both education

and social science literature (e.g. Novelli and Cardozo, 2008; Hilker, 2010; Brown, 2010) and for some studies it is not clear whether they belong to education or to other fields in social sciences (e.g. Barakat and Urdal, 2009; Ostby and Urdal, 2010). However, I believe it is still useful to separate the two to highlight the distinct achievements and limitations of educational studies and of non-educational studies with regards to the role of education in contemporary conflict.

The chapter is organised with four major sections. In the first section, I review briefly the development of the field of education and conflict as a background to the review of studies on the role of education in conflict. I will show how the development of the field has been shaped by the discourse changes in the international community and how this may have influenced the ways in which the trend of studies on the role of education in contemporary conflict in the field may have (and have not) developed. In the second section, theoretical or generic ideas about the role of education in violent conflict in the field of education and conflict are reviewed. The case studies on the relationships between education and the Second World War are reviewed in the third section while the fourth reviews the empirical studies on the role of education in contemporary conflict (mainly case studies on 'ethnic' labelled conflict). In the two sections in which the empirical studies are reviewed, I will first make a detailed description of a country (or countries) as a 'showcase' of how education is considered to have fuelled the Second World War or ethnic conflict there, respectively, and the understandings gained from other cases will be added onto them. The intention behind describing the showcases in details is also to illuminate the limitations of the understandings offered by the case studies in the field. Therefore, literature beyond the field of education is incorporated in making the descriptions of the 'showcases.' As a way to conclude the literature review, I will discuss the achievements and the limitations in

understandings of the role of education in conflict among education literature, highlighting the limitations that the present study attempts to tackle and how it does this.

I should note some points before the review unfolds. By 'education', I only refer to the form of formal schooling provided by the state as it is the focus of the study (see Section 1.3.1). Therefore, only studies on how formal schooling is considered to fuel (or have fuelled) violent conflict are reviewed in this chapter. Again, this does not mean that other forms of 'education' are not relevant. On the other hand, 'conflict' in this chapter takes a broader definition including inter-state war and genocide (in the case of Rwanda) as well as internal violent conflict. This is so as to have a more general understanding of the role of education in violent conflict. However, terrorism and education's contribution to it is not reviewed here or in the next chapter as it is regarded as a distinct phenomenon. The inclusion of the case studies on the Second World War needs a little explanation because the review draws from the field of educational history and is narrower in scope than other sections. I include them here because they offer rich materials and yet are often ignored in the field of education and conflict. This is despite the fact that some of the theoretical or generic pieces in the field of education and conflict cover both inter-state war and internal conflict and often draw cases from the Second World War as examples. A last note is that the review will not go into detail about how each feature in education is considered to be able to fuel or to have fuelled violent conflict, as I will discuss this feature by feature in Chapter Five.

3.2 Development of the field: education and conflict

The study is situated in the 'emerging' field of educational study on the relationships between education and violent conflict, which I will refer to as the field of 'education and conflict' following some of the leading academics on the topic (e.g. Davies, 2004; Smith,

2005). The field is related to another 'emerging' field, but of policy and practice, commonly called 'education in emergencies,' on guiding the provision of education in contexts of crisis and post-crisis transitions. My contention here is that the field of study on the relationships between education and violent conflict has been largely taken forward by practitioners in the field of 'education in emergencies.' This seems to have affected the knowledge development of the role of education in violent conflict in the field so far. Therefore, I will briefly review the development of the field, education and conflict, to elucidate it, although some reviews have been written from different angles (see Winthrop, 2009; Kagawa, 2005).

Since the 1990s, most notably in the past decade, there has been a surge of literature on the relationship between education and violent conflict. Many, both practitioners and academics, have claimed the 'mushrooming' (Buckland, 2005) of literature since the 1990s as an 'emergence' of a 'field' of education and conflict, albeit under different names (see Arnhold et al., 1998; Sinclair, 2002; INEE, 2004; Burde, 2005; Kagawa, 2005; Karpinska, Yarrow and Gough, 2007). However, it should be noted that there had been academic studies on the relationships before then (e.g. Monchar, 1981; Beirne, 1985), including studies on the relationships between education and the Second World War conducted by educational historians (see Section 3.4). Furthermore, the practice of providing education to people and communities affected by war and disaster dates back to the Second World War (Kagawa, 2005; Winthrop, 2009).

What has 'emerged' since the 1990s then? It seems more accurate to describe – rather than claiming it as an emergence of a field – an emergence of a recognition of profound relationships between education and *contemporary* violent conflict in the mainstream

discourse of the *international community*. In the field of international development before then, education had been seen as an imperative tool *for development in the long-term*. Education can alleviate poverty and drive economic and social development (e.g. Psacharopoulos and Woodhall, 1985; Amartya, 1999; Annan, 2005), but not as part of *short-term* humanitarian relief efforts (Burde, 2005). This is because humanitarian assistance was limited to activities that saved human lives and their essential needs, such as water, food, shelter and health services (c.f. Sphere, 1997). Such thinking had also assumed that education is 'inherently benevolent' (Smith and Vaux, 2003; Bush and Saltarelli, 2000) or that education will inherently contribute to development. In the 1990s, these notions in the international community – i.e. that education inherently contributes to development and is not part of humanitarian assistance – started to change. For one, lack of provision of education in refugee camps and in conflict-affected countries more generally just because education is not part of humanitarian assistance started to draw attention as an urgent issue to be tackled; as contemporary conflicts tend to last a long time and are often repeated, children may well spend their entire childhood in refugee camps and therefore miss out on an education if they are not provided with one there (Winthrop, 2009; Kagawa, 2005; Sinclair, 2002). This issue came to be highlighted in the community by a milestone UN report by Graca Machel as part of a study of the impact of violent conflict on children (Machel, 1996) and further by the discourse of EFA and MDGs (Kagawa, 2005; Winthrop, 2009; see Section 1.2.1 above); in short, the goals of EFA or MDGs cannot be met unless the children in conflict-affected countries gain access to basic education.

The other assumption on education in the international community that education is inherently good (and contributes to development) started to collapse in the late 1990s. As I

have already shown (see Section 1.1), the Rwanda case was one of the primary instances that made the international community aware that education can potentially fuel violent conflict or genocide. This awareness was also part of a more general realisation that developmental and humanitarian aid can potentially do more harm than good (Anderson, 1999; Winthrop, 2009). Responding to the growing concern, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has examined the role of schooling in contemporary conflict (Tawil, 1997) and in 2000 the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) published a report (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000). The report by UNICEF, entitled *The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict,* came to be the most influential report on the topic in the international community. Both reports similarly argue that education can have a negative impact on conflict by fuelling it ('negative' face) as well as positively by contributing to prevent it and further to promote peace ('positive face'). The first EFA GMR published in 2002 (UNESCO, 2002) also recognised the potential of education to fuel violent conflict.

The discourse of 'fragile states' and their relationship with education since 2001 has also augmented the international community's concern about education and contemporary conflict. As mentioned in Section 1.2.1, fragile states are considered to have a high risk of instability in the face of terrorism and violent conflict. In the 'fragile states' discussion, education is touched upon frequently (Kirk, 2007) as it is seen as a crucial social service to be provided in those contexts: to reduce the risk of terrorism by promoting tolerance, social cohesion, and democracy as well as to ensure the right of children to education in such contexts (e.g. DFID, 2010a; 2010b).

What has emerged and has been developing since the 1990s, therefore, are three related areas of interests in the international community: 1) the effects of conflict and emergencies (including natural disasters) on educational opportunities for children and delivery of education in conflict-affected and 'fragile' state contexts; 2) education's 'negative face' that can fuel 'fragility' and contemporary conflict; and 3) education as a key tool to promote 'social cohesion,' peacebuilding, and democracy in these 'fragile' and conflict-affected countries. It is in this context that the academic field of education and conflict as a sub-field of comparative and international education has 'emerged.' It is well argued that the field of study, 'education and conflict,' has been greatly influenced by the discourse on education in the international community that is shown above and which has been pushed forward by practitioners more than the researchers (e.g. Smith, 2005; Karpinska, Yarrow and Gough, 2007). This is made clearer in that the 'mushrooming' of grey literature – reports, discussion papers and policy papers by governmental and non-governmental agencies – came before that of academic literature since the late 1990s. Just to name several influential ones, these reports have included work by UNESCO (Tawil, 1997; Tawil and Harley, 2004), UNICEF (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000), United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (Roger, 2002), World Bank (Sommers, 2002; Buckland, 2005), bilateral-donors, e.g. the United Kingdom (Smith and Vaux, 2003), the United States (Burde, 2005) and Germany (Seitz, 2004), the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of OECD (Rose and Greeley, 2006), and by international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as Save the Children (e.g. 2006; 2007). On the other hand, academic literature started to come out later: first in 2004 (Harber, 2004; Davies, 2004) and mostly in the last five years; for instance, several international and comparative education journals have had special issues on the relationships: Comparative Education Review (Davies and Talbot, 2008); International Journal for Educational Development (Johnson and Stewart,

2007); Current Issues in Comparative Education (2002; Subramanian, 2007); Research in Comparative and International Education (Paulson, 2008); and Harvard Education Review (2009).

It is in this context that the understanding of the role of education in violent conflict in the field of education and conflict has been advanced. It may be understandable in the context that the great majority of studies in the field have been on education's role in ethnic conflict while knowledge on the causes of contemporary conflict (whether labelled as ethnic or not) and the role of education as part of them has been significantly developed in social science literature. The concentration on ethnic conflict cases and stagnation of knowledge development beyond it may be related to the 'dilemma' of the international community (see Smith, 2009). The literature points out that the role of education in violent conflict is an 'uncomfortable' topic for policymakers and donors (Davies, 2004; Tawil and Harley, 2004; Smith and Vaux, 2003; Smith, 2009). The main reason is that mainstream educational development attempts to be 'apolitical' in character and that some donors are afraid to be too closely involved in the analysis of education provision within member states as it is considered as encroaching on national sovereignty (Tawil and Harley, 2004; Smith, 2009; UNESCO, 2011). However, the apparent role of education in ethnic conflict had alerted the community that education was not 'inevitably a force for good' and thus they should ensure their educational assistance did not fuel a conflict, in opposition to their intentions (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000; Tawil and Harvey, 2004). Indeed, there are surely other possible explanations for the fact that studies on the role of education in violent conflict have only focused on ethnic conflict. It is a complicated area of research by nature as it is extremely difficult to establish causal relationships between education and conflict (Hilker, 2010; Smith, 2009; Arlow, 2004; Ohnuki-Tierney, 2002; Neave, 1992). I also see

that the predominance of the ethnic conflict cases is natural to some extent. Many of the contemporary conflicts, particularly in the 1990s, are labelled as 'ethnic' (e.g. Stewart, 2008a) and education is often observed to have a role in such conflicts. For instance, in Sri Lanka, the policy that Sinhala be replaced as the only official language of instruction is thought to be a significant contributing factor behind the Tamil rebellion (Johnson and Stewart, 2007).

Recently, the tendency of the field seems to have begun to change and educational literature has begun to engage more with social science literature on contemporary conflict. As an epitome of this, perhaps, the EFA Global Monitoring Report (2011) draws from the social science literature and recognises four schools of thought on the root causes of conflict (economic motivations, state fragility and resource traps, ethnic composition, and grievance and injustice), although it primarily sticks to the traditional explanation, grievances and injustice, when it comes to exploring education's role in them. Nevertheless, several background papers to the report have taken the interdisciplinary approach to disentangling the role of education in contemporary conflict (i.e. Ostby and Urdal, 2010; Hilker, 2010; Brown, 2010).

Against such a background then, I will review educational literature on the role of education in violent conflict in the following sections.

3.3 Theoretical understanding of the role of education in violent conflict

Overall, the theoretical literature in the field is thin and underdeveloped, something that has been pointed out in the literature (e.g. Rappleye and Paulson, 2007). At the same time, there are some theoretical ideas that are yet to develop into established theories, but that

point to different ways in which education might fuel violent conflict. They can be categorised into three explanations:

1) Education fuels ethnic conflict by promoting ethnic divisions and hatred.
2) 'Violence' in school promotes and exacerbates violence and violent conflict in society.
3) Education fuels contemporary conflict by fuelling the 'root causes' of it.

I will discuss each theoretical idea in turn below.

3.3.1 Education and ethnic conflict

The first theoretical idea is about the role of education in ethnic conflict. 'Ethnicity' is defined as 'a sense of collective based on religion, language, culture or some other shared origin' (Gallagher, 2004, p. 10). The main claims in this strand are similarly that education fuels ethnic conflict by promoting divisions and hatred among ethnic groups. One of the main studies is Bush and Saltarelli (2000), published by UNICEF. Their central work lies in the delineation of elements that constitute the 'negative' and the 'positive' faces of education, in other words the elements that can fuel ethnic conflict or that can promote prevention of it and, further, peace. In terms of the 'negative face' of education, they are in the curriculum and structure of the educational system and can be summarised as follows:

1) uneven distribution of education;
2) denial of education;
3) segregated education to ensure inequality, lowered esteem and stereotyping;
4) education as a weapon for cultural repression, i.e. restriction in the language of instruction;
5) manipulation of textbooks for political purposes, particularly in the areas of history and geography; and
6) inculcation of low self-worth and hatred towards 'others.'

Bush and Saltarelli (2000) demonstrate this by drawing various examples of contemporary and historical ethnic conflicts or tensions, including Kosovo, India, Rwanda, Turkey, Israel and Palestine, Nazi Germany, South Africa and the US.

Gallagher's (2004) *Education in Divided Societies* reaches a similar conclusion but from academic case study analyses. He explains that ethnic tensions have been resurgent since at least the 1970s, partly because the expectation that modernity would sweep away 'ethnicity' by creating ethnically homogeneous nation-states was erroneous. Rather, modern states typically have come to be ethnically heterogeneous due to multiple factors, such as colonialism, migration, and continuing territorial deputes. He argues that the way an educational system deals with ethnic heterogeneity, or 'differences,' has either a negative or positive impact on society. It becomes negative and may result in violent conflict when it deals with differences through intolerance and/or hatred. He argues this through mostly historical cases where the question of identity and ethnicity was central and where education responded to it in various ways, i.e. the US, Britain, South Africa, continental Europe, Nazi Germany and Northern Ireland.

Although Bush and Saltarelli (2000) and Gallagher (2004) focus on the claim that education promotes ethnic tensions or hatred, thereby contributing to ethnic conflict, they do not take a view that ethnicity is *the cause* of ethnic conflict, particularly in contemporary cases. Rather, they, as many authors in the field, consider 'ethnicity' or 'ethnic tensions' a label or a force on the surface (e.g. Bush and Saltarelli, 2000; Smith and Vaux, 2003; Gallagher, 2004; Tawil and Harley, 2004; Johnson and Stewart, 2007; Smith, 2009). For instance, Bush and Salterelli (2000) assert that the nature of contemporary ethnic conflict is 'highly complex' and includes factors such as economic tensions and 'bad' governance. They state the role of ethnicity in contemporary ethnic conflict as follows:

> [E]thnicity neither causes conflict, nor in many cases does it accurately describe it. Rather ethnicity/identity is increasingly *mobilized* and *politicized* in

> contemporary violent conflicts (Bush, 1997, cited in Bush and Saltarelli, 2000, p. vii, emphasis added).

In other words, ethnic conflicts are not considered to be inevitable clashes arising from inherent cultural differences, as some have argued (e.g. Connor, 1994).

Despite their recognition of the complex factors that surround the emergence of contemporary ethnic conflict, claims in this strand are limited to being about how education reinforces the 'label.' Moreover, they seem to claim that their theoretical ideas are applicable to both cases in the Second World War and contemporary ethnic conflicts. This is demonstrated by cases and examples in Bush and Saltarelli (2000) and Gallagher (2004) being drawn from countries that participated in contemporary conflict, e.g. Northern Ireland, and those that promoted ethnic nationalism in inter-state war efforts, e.g. Nazi Germany.

This strand of literature, particularly Bush and Saltarelli (2000), has become the basis of a theoretical or generic idea of the role of education in violent conflict in the field. The simplification by Bush and Saltarelli (2000) of education having 'two faces' has provided the framework to the later literature on the relationship between education and conflict, whether or not it is labelled as 'ethnic.' This includes both 'grey' literature (e.g. Smith and Vaux, 2003; Seitz, 2004) and academic studies in the field of education and conflict (e.g. Paulson, 2008; Evans, 2008; Davies, 2010; see also Section 3.5.2. below).

3.3.2 Violence in school and violent conflict

The second strand argues that 'violence' in school promotes and exacerbates violence and violent conflict in society. The conceptualisation of violence by Salmi (2000 reproduced in 2006) is central in this strand. He categorises violence into four types:

1) direct violence (or physical violence);
2) indirect violence (that does not have a direct relationship between the victims and the perpetrator);
3) repressive violence (that refers to basic forms of violations of human rights); and
4) alienating violence (that is about deprivations of a person's higher rights, such as the right to psychological, emotional, cultural or intellectual integrity).

I do not have space to discuss each type of violence here, but it suffices to recognise that among the four types, only *direct violence* is what is commonly referred to as violence: a behaviour in which physical force is employed (or is intended) to hurt, damage or kill someone or something (adapted from the Oxford English Dictionary definition).

Although Salmi only refers to violence in school being mutually reinforcing with individual violence in society, Harber (2004; 2002) takes the idea further to argue that violence in school promotes organised violence as well as individual violence in society, such as 'racist/ethnic violence and, in extreme cases, even genocide' (2002, p. 13). His argument centres on the idea that it is the authoritarian aspect to schooling that provides the structure in which 'violence' – in the form of the four types of violence drawn from Salmi (2000; 2006) – is accepted and reproduced in schooling. He states: 'A combination of crude loyalty to a social group and blind obedience to authority is a dangerous mixture and both have been promoted by schooling' (2002, p. 13). Harber (2004) more specifically sees corporal punishment as a key element of authoritarian schooling and schooling as violence, stating that 'the perceived right' of teachers to punish is the 'most ritualised form' of physical violence in schools. He further discusses other elements in school that perpetuate violence: the 'hate' curriculum, sexual abuse in school, stress and anxiety through examinations, teaching of struggle, violence and war, and militarisation of school. He draws examples from various contexts, such as Nazi Germany, Kosovo, South Africa, and Rwanda.

Similarly, what Davies (e.g. 2004) discusses as the 'direct' preparation of children for war is mostly underpinned by this strand of explanation. In addition to the elements similar to those raised by Harber above (e.g. Davies, 2004; 2010), she also adds lack of political education and critical pedagogy (c.f. Freire, 1970) as elements that can prepare children for conflict; by doing so, schooling is failing to cultivate the pupils' critical thinking skills that are essential for them not to accept distorted political messages on faith (see Davies, 2004; 2005).

3.3.3 Education as part of 'root causes' of violent conflict

The third theoretical idea is about understanding how education fuels the 'root causes' of contemporary conflict. In addition to her treatment of the 'direct' preparation of pupils for conflict as presented above, Davies (2004) explores how education 'indirectly' fuels the root causes (or 'roots' as she puts it) of conflict. She identifies three roots of conflict: economic or class inequalities; gendered violence and inequalities; and pluralism and diversity (particularly of ethnicity and religion).

More recently, two further approaches have attempted to understand how education fuels the roots of conflict. One focuses on how education plays into 'fragility.' As mentioned in Section 1.2.1, the notion of the 'fragile state' is a popular discourse and framework in the international community in regard to states that are considered to have a high risk of conflict and instability. There are studies both by academics and by practitioners trying to understand how education fuels it (see Kirk, 2007; Conflict and Education Research, Group, 2008; Mosselson and Wheaton, 2009; INEE Working Group on Education and Fragility, 2010; INEE, 2011). The other emerging approach engages with social science literature on root causes of contemporary conflict in order to explore how education fuels these root causes (Smith, 2005; Novelli and Cardozo, 2008; Brown, 2010; Ostby and Urdal,

2011). Smith (2005) and Novelli and Cardozo (2008) take a similar path in delineating three strands of explanations for contemporary conflict: 1) political explanations, or structural inequalities within the global economy and polity (such as Duffield, 2001); 2) economic explanations, or a neo-liberal rational choice perspective (such as Collier and Hoeffler, 2000); and 3) socio-cultural explanations, or modernisation theories (Huntington, 1996; Stewart, 2000).

The last two approaches are yet to be developed. The 'fragility' approach has a fundamental problem to overcome. That is, the concept of 'fragility' is ill-defined (c.f. Bengtsson, 2011) and the 'fragile state' discourse's relevance to contemporary conflict is contested (see Section 4.4.1). The ambiguity of the concept results in a discussion that does not offer any significantly new perspective. Many treat a conflict-prone country and a 'fragile' state interchangeably and, as a result, their discussions are essentially the same as discussions on the role of education in violent conflict (e.g. Mosselson et al., 2009; INEE Working Group on Education and Fragility, 2010; Kirk, 2007; Conflict and Education Research Group, 2008). On the other hand, the interdisciplinary approach that explores education's role in the root causes of conflict is yet to be developed. More specifically, how or what features in the educational system can play into the root causes of conflict has just begun to be delineated. Only Ostby and Urdal (2010) delineate the features in education that can fuel the root causes of conflict, but they have only done so in reviewing quantitative studies, and the only empirical study taking the approach which I have found so far is Hilker (2010) on the case of Rwanda.

* * * * *

In summary, there are three theoretical ideas about role of education in violent conflict: they are about the role of education in ethnic conflict, violence in school promoting violent

conflict, and education fuelling the root causes of conflict. Among them, the literature on how education fuels 'ethnic' conflict is predominant while the approach to understanding the role of education in the root causes of conflict is yet to be developed.

Having the three theoretical ideas in mind, I will review the empirical studies available on the role of education in violent conflict in the field of education, first covering studies on the Second World War cases and, next, studies on contemporary conflict, particularly on ethnic conflict.

3.4 Case Studies on education and the Second World War

3.4.1 Introduction: relationships between education and the Second World War

The case studies on the relationships between education and the Second World War illuminate complex relationships between them; not only did the War have a great impact on the educational system, but also education responded to it. The ways in which education responded to the War include, in many cases, the employment of education in support of the war efforts. Before I delve into reviewing the role of education in the War, I will discuss briefly the complex relationships between education and the War illuminated in literature as an introduction.

A volume of case studies edited by Roy Lowe (1992), *Education and the Second World War: Studies in Schooling and Social Change*, shows complex relationships between education and the war through the 14 case studies, which consist of all the major participant nations of the war such as Japan, the Soviet Union, the US, Australia, and the European countries. Although Lowe states that the primary focus of the volume is to examine the 'impact' of the war on educational systems, the volume is not only about

describing schooling during wartime or how the war disrupted and had devastating effects on education. These matters are well documented in the volume, including evacuation programmes, the realities of schooling during the war as experienced by children, shortage of materials or of male teachers, or the reconstruction efforts after the war. Yet the volume further shows how education responded to the war and the different ways in which it did so even in countries that were in similar conditions. For instance, countries that were occupied by Germany, such as Poland, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands, faced severe pressure to reform their educational systems during the war (Neave, 1992; Krasuski, 1992). However, these countries responded differently to this pressure. In France, the proposed educational reform gained considerable legitimacy while in the Netherlands and Belgium it met strong opposition and was never realised. In Poland, although Germany had formally reformed the schooling, the rapid diffusion of clandestine education became a medium for resistance (Krasuski, 1992).

Furthermore, how educational systems were mobilised to support the war efforts is also depicted strongly in the volume by Lowe (1992) as part of the 'responses' of education to the war. He states:

> It is interesting and significant that most (but not all) of the chapters collected here place an emphasis on the ways in which the schools sought to transmit a sense of nationhood and support for the war effort. There is a very real sense in which *education itself became mobilized* during the Second World War (p. 2, emphasis added).

Against this background, education's 'contribution' to the Second World War will be the focus of the review below. It should be noted that my review draws mainly from studies in Lowe (1992). As Lowe (1992) himself states, his book is 'the first attempt to examine the impact of the Second World War on schooling systems worldwide' (p. 1) and allows

international comparisons of the relationship in a great scale. This is not to say, however, that there is no earlier work on the relationship, as there is (e.g. Horn, 1976). Nevertheless, most of the earlier studies, as well as other recent studies, are single country case studies of well-studied cases such as Germany, Japan, the UK, and the US and the relationship of the educational system to the war is not the focus in many of the studies. Indeed, the scarcity of literature on the role of education in the Second World War is repeatedly pointed out by some of authors reviewed (e.g. Neave, 1992; Lowe, 1992; Rubinger, 1992; Horvath, 1992). Neave (1992) comments on two reasons for this. One is that the educational historians do not want to admit the close relationship between education and war or national defence, despite there being a close relationship historically. The other is that the causal relationships between education and the war are ambiguous. Regardless of the reasons behind it, the scarcity of literature on the topic was in fact Lowe's primary motivation behind deciding to produce the volume, as he felt that many questions have been left unanswered.

3.4.2 Role of education in the Second World War

The case studies reveal that educational systems were mobilised to support the Second World War. The main way of doing this was through the promotion of a nationalistic ideology that supported the war and/or through supporting the war efforts more directly. This is seen, as one would expect, in well-known cases such as Germany and Japan where the state powerfully mobilised the educational systems to promote the war. However, it is also visible in one way or another in cases where the educational systems were not centralised, such as the US and Australia.

To begin to discuss how the educational system is considered to have fuelled the Second World War, I will provide a detailed account of a country case as a 'showcase.' I believe

that the role of education in war cannot be understood fully by examining the educational system in isolation; instead, the full picture only emerges when education is seen in the context of the state and the society. Other cases will be brought in after the description of the 'showcase' in order to consider similar and different ways in which educational systems are considered to have fuelled the war and the factors that enabled them to have done so.

The case that I will describe in depth is Japan. I believe there is no other country that demonstrates how powerfully education came to support the war. Rubinger (1992), on Japanese education during the war in Lowe (1992), states: 'No modern nation has used schools so systematically for the purposes of indoctrination into the political, military, ideological imperatives of the state as did Japan in the early Twentieth Century' (p. 61). Some might wonder about the cases of Germany and of Italy, but I will show later that the schooling systems there were not as central as in Japan as a tool to mobilise the masses for the war efforts. Through the detailed and contextualised description of Japan, I will also attempt to tease out some features that will demonstrate why and how Japan enabled the education system to do this.

The mass educational system in Japan had been a central tool for the government from many years before the Second World War in the mobilisation of the masses for the ideology of ultra-nationalism and wars. More specifically, education was employed to indoctrinate the masses with nationalistic and imperialistic ideologies and to militarise them.

The origin of education becoming a central means to mobilise masses for wars can be seen as early as the late nineteenth century, at the beginning of the Meiji period. In 1890, four years after the first implementation of a comprehensive school system in Japan, the Imperial Rescript on Education was promulgated. The Rescript set forth the fundamental purposes of education as being to cultivate 'virtues,' which meant specifically loyalty and filial piety to the emperor as well as to parents. Furthermore, the idea that one should sacrifice oneself for the sake of one's country was already prescribed explicitly: 'In the case of national emergency, one should sacrifice oneself courageously for the country by guarding the Imperial Throne, which is coeval with heaven and earth' (The Imperial Rescript on Education, cited in Ohnuki-Tierney, 2002, p. 78). The Rescript remained the basic and most influential guide to educational goals until 1945 (Rubinger, 1992).

As the Second World War approached, political nationalism and militarism intensified in the country, including in the education sector. Militarisation of the schooling system was formalised in 1925 when military officers were assigned to all middle and higher schools to provide military training (Rubinger, 1992). As the war started and progressed, the educational system came under the tighter control of the military. This was epitomised by the fact that the General of the Army and one-time Minister of War (1931–1934) Sadao Araki was appointed as Minister of Education in 1938 (Rubinger, 1992). The number of hours of teaching was also cut in the 1930s, so that students could perform community services and support the war efforts (Rubinger, 1992).

The nationalistic indoctrination and militarisation was particularly pronounced at the primary school level. There was a comprehensive reform in 1941 based on five principles for teaching 'the Imperial Way' and deepening 'faith in the national polity' (Article One of

the 1941 Order, cited in Rubinger, 1992, p. 64). In order to fulfil the goals, the curriculum was reduced to four basic areas: citizenship; science and mathematics; physical training (martial arts); and arts. The physical training assumed greater importance in the curriculum, with the increased number of hours spent on it. Moral lessons were woven throughout the curriculum, in addition to ethics classes (*Shushin*). It was mandatory to teach the Imperial Rescript on Education at every school, being recited at all important school events, and students were required to memorise the text (Rubinger, 1992). In addition, Rubinger (1992) argues that the ceremonies had considerable importance, given the moral goals in the educational system, and were conducted either at Shinto shrines or at school assemblies. For instance, each morning the school assembled pupils and made them bow in the direction of the Imperial Palace.

Three mechanisms in the schooling system surface in the literature as having been particularly important in inculcating the nationalistic ideologies and promoting militarism. Rubinger (1992) claims the *Shushin* classes were the principal mechanism. They were mandatory for all grades, primary to secondary, and were officially considered the most important subject from the time the comprehensive school system was implemented in Japan. In addition to these classes, Ohnuki-Tierney (2002) highlights the importance of school textbooks and school songs in inculcating the ideologies. Having examined diary writings by the pilots of the *Tokkotai* (the 'Special Attack Force', also known as the *Kamikaze*), she argues that school textbooks and school songs were two of the key means to promote militarisation and the nationalistic ideology to the masses. For example, she argues that textbooks in the 1900s already employed the ascetics of symbolism, i.e. cherry blossoms, to promote the totalitarian nationalistic ideology, using an expression such as

'One should fall like cherry petals' (p. 127). In terms of school songs, she shows that, as early as 1887, a blatant 'die for the emperor' ideology was explicitly included in them.

Thus, the schooling system was used systematically by the Japanese government to inculcate the state ideology in the minds of the people and to train them under it (Rubinger, 1992). The Japanese government's approach even extended to its colonial policies. Education was a key tool to accomplish a main goal in governing its colonies, such as Korea (Pak and Hwang, 2011), Taiwan (Tsurumi, 1979) and Guam (Higuchi, 2001): to assimilate or *Japanise* the native people there into the empire but under the Japanese. Assimilation was done through the teaching of the Japanese language and the inculcation of the empire's ideals through moral education. The segregation was apparent by the different types of schooling available to the natives and to Japanese residents. Only primary schooling and vocational tracks were available for the colonised, while the Japanese had access to secondary and higher education. This implied, consequently, a limitation in the social and economic mobility the colonised people could achieve (Pak and Hwang, 2011).

Despite the obvious intensification of militarism and nationalism in schooling towards the war, Rubinger (1992) warns against the idea that the war deviated education completely from an earlier progressive tradition of Japanese education and also from the post-war reform. He argues that elements of progressive tradition remained from the pre-war, wartime and to the post-war period. For instance, there was a move to decentralise the power of the Ministry of Education from within, a month before the end of the war. This would have meant that the Ministry was giving away the power to manipulate the system

for its political purposes. Nevertheless, its centralisation was quickly re-established after the war.

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As the above account shows, education was powerfully employed to mobilise the people for the war efforts in Japan. At the same time, I have also shown that some elements of education seem to have continued from pre-war, during the war to the post-war period, unaffected by the events of the war. An important question, in reflecting on the case of Japan, seems to be: what were the features in the educational system that allowed it to be effectively manipulated for the war efforts? In pondering this, three features surface. One is that almost universal compulsory education was achieved before the war. According to official statistics, 99.6% of children of compulsory school age actually attended school between 1935 and 1939, the highest percentage achieved in the world at that time (Rubinger, 1992). This suggests that education was *the* institution where virtually all young people gathered, making the schooling system the most effective and convenient means of propagating the state's ideology and militarising its young people. Related to the first point, secondly, the system was highly centralised or, more precisely, it became centralised since the government recognised the benefit of doing so. For example, the government enacted a policy in 1904 that authorised the Head of the Ministry of Education to choose all the textbooks (Ohnuki-Tierney 2002). The 1941 reform, in addition, mandated a creation of a new post, vice principal, whose principle role was to act as a liaison between public authorities and teachers and to enforce government policies in schools (Rubinger, 1992). The third feature of the Japanese education system that may have allowed the mobilisation of the system for the war efforts is the strength of the system as a state institution. For example, the 1941 reform was implemented within a

month of its announcement (Rubinger, 1992). The rapid communication to and implementation of it in every school in such a short time seems to reveal that educational institutions were strong and coherent in Japan.

Were the ways in which the educational system was mobilised in Japan to support the war efforts unique? It does not appear to be so. The Fascist regime in Italy (e.g. Wolff, 1992) and the Nazis in Germany (e.g. Giles, 1992) also used schools as instruments for propaganda. In Germany, the schooling system was radically reformed in support of militarism and racist nationalism under the Nazi rule in 1933. Mann's (1938) *School for Barbarians* already shows that by then propaganda permeated the curriculum, in geopolitics, mathematics, language, and 'Racial Instruction', and in 'religious studies', which taught racial peculiarity as a will of God. Such nationalistic and militaristic trends in the educational system escalated as the war started in 1939 (Giles, 1992). The structure of the system was segregating as well; increasingly, Jews and non-German nationals could not enrol in the formal schooling system of the 'Aryan' Germans (Giles, 1992). Furthermore, just as in Japan, the symbols and rituals were also deployed by Hitler in Germany and Mussolini in Italy among others for the mobilisation of masses (Ohnuki-Tierney, 2002).

Yet Germany and Italy did not use the formal schooling system as powerfully as Japan did. In Germany, scholars such as Horn (1976) and Giles (1992) point out that the schooling system was not the most powerful institution in mobilising children and young people, which was rather the youth organisation under the Nazi Party, the Hitler Youth. Both Giles (1992) and Horn (1976) state that formal education institutions declined during the years from 1933 to 1945, whereas the Hitler Youth took on 'an unprecedented importance'

(Giles, 1992, p. 17). The activist programme of the Hitler Youth left children no energy for class or time for homework and the young Nazis in the Hitler Youth agitated and disrupted schools. The Nazi government itself appears to have had a belittling attitude towards the formal education system. For example, the Education Minister Rust never once had a face-to-face talk with Hitler after the war started. He even found out about Hitler's decision to create a new secondary school through a newspaper (Horn 1976; Giles, 1992). In addition to the Ministry of Education being relatively weak, the Nazi Teachers' Association never became influential either, despite the potential that it could have had for mobilising teachers (Giles, 1992). Similarly in Italy, a Fascist youth organisation, separate from the schooling system, was created to raise 'the new Fascist Man' (Wolff, 1992). As for the education system, Wolff (1992) concludes that it did not alter much; the prime concern of the government with regard to the education system was unemployment among educated youth, and thus initially there was no plan to censor textbooks or inculcate Fascist ideals.

In addition to the countries above that had been under totalitarian regimes, in countries where the educational systems were more decentralised, such as the US and Australia, schools were also reformed to support the war efforts, albeit to a much lesser extent. In the US, the United States Office of Education (USOE) could not impose its will on all the schools while in Australia a national office of education was absent until 1945 (Spaull, 1992). Yet Spaull (1992) argues that in both countries the war brought greater attention to political education and to fostering patriotism. For instance, the war accelerated interests in teaching twentieth-century world history, geography and international relations. The war also revitalised secondary schools' interest in teaching national history and geography. In the US, moreover, the secondary school curriculum was reformed to meet wartime demands (Spaull, 1992). USOE sponsored the establishment of the High School Victory

Corps, or youth service organisations, in each school (Spaull, 1992; Cohen, 1992). As a result, they were established in more than 70% of high schools in the country and trained young people for war-related services or encouraged them to participate in community war efforts. Additionally, half of the secondary schools in the US introduced courses in pre-flight aeronautics and physical education programmes (Spaull, 1992).

3.4.3 Summary and reflections on the role of education in the war

This review of historical case studies on the relationship between education and the Second World War is far from thorough and, moreover, literature on education's contribution to the war remains scarce. Nevertheless, some important insights on how education came to support the war efforts in various countries have emerged.

There are some common mechanisms through which education seems to have been mobilised for war efforts. One common method appears to have been the inculcation of an ideology that supported the war, i.e. (totalitarian) nationalism. This was incorporated in teaching or the textbooks of various subjects, particularly related to history and geography. This 'propaganda' was most evidently used under totalitarian regimes and included an effective use of symbols. More directly, schooling was militarised. Inside schools, practical education was emphasised and military training was conducted. The hours of schooling were cut in some countries to support community war efforts or youth organisations. In cases like Japan and Germany, schooling became segregated. Nationals and non-nationals did not go to the same schools and non-nationals only had access to the lower level of schooling and in the coloniser's or the dominant nationals' language. What seems an essential factor that allowed the powerful mobilisation of the educational system for the war was the centralisation of the system and a strong state institutional capacity. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that, even in centralised systems like Japan, some

elements in education seem to have been able to remain unaffected by the war and, on the other hand, more decentralised education systems such as in the US and Australia came to support the war efforts.

As a reflection, the overall common factor that facilitated education's support of the Second World War, regardless of whether the system was centralised or not, may be related to the nature of the war itself. Lowe (1992) discusses, albeit briefly, the two natures of the war. He states that the war was, on the one hand, a 'total war', which can be defined as follows: 'a war is total to the extent that it spares no established institution not being mobilised. Total war is a threat to institutions' (Hughes, 1942, p. 398, cited in Spaull, 1992, p. 159). If the Second World War was a total war then, we may understand that the educational system had no choice but to support the war efforts as any other institutions did at that time. Secondly, Lowe (1992) discusses the other nature of the war: 'a war of competing ideologies.' That is, it was 'a struggle either to preserve an existing world order, or to establish a new one' (Lowe, 1992, p. 2). In the struggle, the role of education was increasingly seen to support the national values at stake. These natures of the war, as Lowe (1992) discusses, facilitated the educational system being charged with two tasks to support the war efforts: first, to transmit a sense of nationhood and, second, to support the war effort. These two manners in which education supported the war are, as shown above, common among the case studies reviewed.

3.5 Empirical studies on the role of education in contemporary conflict

3.5.1 Introduction: studies on the relationships between education and contemporary conflict

The empirical studies in the field of education and conflict are mostly qualitative country case studies.[3] Similar to the theoretical literature (see Section 3.3 above), the predominant empirical studies that discuss the role of education in contemporary conflict are on ethnic conflict cases. They show the ways in which education is considered to have fuelled ethnic divisions and hatred and, as a result, ethnic conflict.

There are studies on non-ethnic conflict cases, but many do not discuss whether and how formal schooling is considered to have fuelled conflict there; most studies rather focus on other aspects of the relationship, such as the effects of conflict on education (e.g. Ezati, Ssempala and Ssenkusu, 2011; Flores, 1999), the promotion of resilience through education (e.g. Bird et al., 2010; Hammond, 1998; Beirne, 1985), or challenges in the post-conflict education (e.g. Murphy et al., 2011; Cunningham, 2011; Chaux, 2009; Nicolai, 2004; Bekalo, Brophy and Welford, 2003). They look at the cases of East Timor (Nicolai, 2004), Colombia (e.g. Chaux, 2009; Novelli, 2010a), Cambodia (e.g. Clayton, 1999), Northern Uganda (e.g. Murphy et al., 2011; Cunningham, 2011; Ezati et al., 2011; Bird et al. 2010), Somaliland (e.g. Bekalo et al., 2003), and El Salvador (e.g. Hammond, 1998; Beirne, 1985; Flores, 2004).

Against this background, I will primarily review and discuss the cases of ethnic conflict and how education is considered to have fuelled conflict there. As before, rather than giving an exhaustive review of all the case studies, I will focus on elucidating the understandings that these studies offer on the topic. I will do so by first providing a

[3] There are exceptions, of course; to name but two, Monchar (1981) and Bird et al. (2010).

contextualised account of two showcases, Burundi and Rwanda, then bringing in other cases to consider similarities and differences in how education is considered to have fuelled the various cases of contemporary conflict.

3.5.2 The role of education in contemporary conflict

The case studies that touch upon education's contribution to ethnic conflict show some common ways in which education does so, principally by promoting divisions and hatred among ethnic groups through the structure and/or curriculum. Yet they also show the complexity of the issue through the contextualised accounts. Some of the studies further suggest that education may fuel ethnic conflict in other ways than merely promoting ethnic divisions and hatred.

In exploring the role of education in ethnic conflict, Rwanda and Burundi are elaborated as the showcases below. Both of them have often been written about as 'classic' cases in which education is considered to have fuelled a contemporary ethnic conflict. And yet, recent analyses of the cases (often done by non-educationalists) show the complex ways in which education might have fuelled conflict there and a level of complexity beyond that so far captured by educational studies on any ethnic conflict cases in the field, be they theoretical pieces (see Section 3.3.1 above) or the empirical ones to be reviewed in this section. That is to say, the cases of Burundi and Rwanda below demonstrate that promoting ethnic divisions or hatred may not be the only ways in which education has fuelled (or can potentially fuel) ethnic conflict; instead, education may potentially fuel (or have fuelled) the issues or root causes that underlie it.

The cases of Rwanda and Burundi show that the educational system, since the beginning of colonial times, has fuelled the divisions and hatred among ethnic groups, particularly

between Hutus and Tutsis. As a result, education is considered to have fuelled the ethnicity-based violence and conflicts experienced in the 1990s. The literature also suggests some other ways in which education may be fuelling the 'ethnic' conflicts there.

Rwanda and Burundi are considered to be non-identical twins. Rwanda was one kingdom, one state and one people, and so was Burundi. Both countries are composed of the same ethnic groups: Hutu (approximately 85% in Burundi and 90% in Rwanda), Tutsi (approximately 15% in Burundi and 9% in Rwanda) and Twa (1% or under in both countries) (Obura, 2003; 2008). Burundi and Rwanda were joined together as Ruanda-Urundi under the colonial control of Germany (1899–1916) and then of Belgium (1916–1962). They were separated at their independence in 1962.

Both countries experienced cycles of violence after independence which culminated in the 1990s. The violence in the 1990s in both countries was, at least on the surface, based on ethnic tensions, particularly between Tutsis and Hutus. In the post-independence Rwanda, the state was led by Hutus and the Tutsi population faced increasing discrimination and worsening opportunities. The civil war which began in 1990 was launched by the Tutsi-led Rwanda Patriotic Front against the Hutu-led state, which was followed by the genocide in 1994 (Obura, 2003). On the other hand, Tutsis held the political power in Burundi after independence and the discrimination and exclusion of the Hutu there consequently worsened. It experienced ethnic violence repeatedly, which culminated in the 12-year civil war from 1993. The war started when the first democratically elected Hutu president, Ndadaye, was assassinated by Tutsi extremists (Obura, 2008).

Obura (2003; 2008) argues that the ethnic tensions and divisions between Hutus and Tutsis are considered to date back to colonial times. This is because the relationships among Hutu, Tutsi and Twa were harmonious before colonisation and, fundamentally, the groups were *not* ethnic groups as the colonisers believed but were actually *socio-identity groups*. According to Obura (2003; 2008), this denomination means that they know themselves and are known by others by which group they belong to and yet the groups are mutable: a Hutu could become a Tutsi through increasing property and acquiring higher social status and a Tutsi could be relegated to Hutu status if they lost their economic assets. However, the colonial powers defined the groups as 'ethnicities' which are, by definition, not mutable, and they applied the rigid division between them as a basis for the political control of the colony. They used an 'indirect control' approach, which meant that they delegated the functioning of the state to one group of colonised people, i.e. Tutsis, to take a superior administrative role, while the other group(s), i.e. Hutu and Twa, were relegated to an inferior labouring role. In addition, the Belgian approach became increasingly 'direct' and divisive, in that they even removed all the Hutu chiefs and assistant chiefs from the traditional political structures and replaced them with Tutsis (Obura, 2008).

The origin of modern schooling dates back to the beginning of colonial control there and the churches took the main responsibility for the schooling of the colonised (Obura 2003; 2008). From the beginning, access to education was unequally provided among 'ethnic' groups (see Bush and Saltarelli, 2000). The main purpose was to train Tutsis as support staff for the government (Obura, 2003) and thus preference was given to Tutsis in schooling under the colonial control. This is epitomised in the enrolment ratio at Astrida Secondary School, the most prestigious educational institution in Rwanda. In 1932, the year of opening, 45 Tutsi pupils were enrolled alongside only nine Hutu pupils, despite

Hutus being the great majority of the colony. The gap remained until the end of the colonial rule, albeit smaller in degree (Obura, 2003). Such unequal access to schooling is regarded as a source of the divisions because of its (perceived) returns. That is, access to schooling has been perceived by people as the 'door to employment, wealth acquisition and power' and thus the unequal distribution of it has been seen 'rightly or wrongly, as the source of all other inequalities in the nation' (Mariro, 1998, cited in Obura, 2008, p. 61). Access to secondary schooling was particularly important because it was, or was at least seen to be, the path to the elite administrative cadres that would assist the colonial government (Obura, 2008).

In addition to the unequal provision of schooling, the curriculum also contained discriminatory elements. Textbooks during the colonial period, such as history, geography and civics, were full of ethnicity-related elements. They emphasised the differences in physical features and intellectual capacities between Hutus and Tutsis, showing Tutsis as intelligent and destined to rule the nation and Hutus as unintelligent, meek and only suitable for manual work (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000). There were also differences in the subjects taught to Tutsi and Hutu pupils, according to the different positions they were expected to occupy in colonial society. For instance, French was taught to Tutsis whereas Hutus had lessons in singing. Natural science was taught to Tutsis, while it was only an optional subject for Hutus (Obura, 2008).

After independence, ethnic divisions continued to be promoted or mirrored in the education sector as well as in other sectors both in Burundi and Rwanda, albeit in different ways. In Burundi, where Tutsis held onto power, the discrimination against Hutus in education persisted and even worsened (Obura, 2008). In Rwanda, where Hutus took

political control after independence, on the other hand, the educational system became increasingly discriminatory against the Tutsi population. For instance, an ethnic quota was applied from the 1970s on. This ensured the enrolment of Hutus in schooling while a great number of Tutsis were purged from university (Hilker, 2010). The various elements in education were ethnically defined, such as the pupil identification files (Rutayisire, Kabano and Rubagiza, 2004). Hilker (2010) also states that teachers segregated the class from time to time into Hutu and Tutsi pupils in the period immediately before the genocide (1990–1994).

In Rwanda, the version of history taught in schools is considered as a particularly significant factor in arousing ethnic divisions and prejudice (Obura, 2003; Hilker, 2010; Freedman et al., 2008). Gasanabo (2004, cited in Hilker, 2010) analysed textbooks and teaching materials from between 1962 and 1994 and suggests that primary and secondary schools propagated a version of the past that supported the political ideology and rhetoric of the Hutu regimes. The distorted historical perceptions were not only taught in history and civics classes but incorporated throughout the whole educational system (Obura, 2003). Hilker (2010) argues furthermore that the version of history taught in schools in the early 1990s not only inculcated the ideology of ethnic division but also fear among the Hutu population against the Tutsis. Nataganda (2002, cited in Obura, 2003) shows, on the other hand, that unschooled people did not hold an ethnicised view of history but rather held that all Rwandans share a common ancestor in the form of Gihanga.

It should be noted, however, there is no empirical evidence on the link between the discrimination and divisions in the educational system and the violence in the 1990s in Rwanda and in Burundi (see Hilker, 2010). Moreover, the extent to which ethnic tensions

and hatred drove the violence itself remains contentious. In the case of the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, researchers such as Straus (2006) and Fujii (2009) refute the idea that ethnic hatred or discrimination primarily motivated the perpetrators. Straus (2006) argues that it was fear not of Tutsis but of intra-Hutu intimidation and violence that made ordinary Rwandans become perpetrators. In addition, the importance of personal motives and situational factors is claimed by Fujii (2009) to be behind individual participation. Another factor that is often pointed out as having fuelled the genocide in Rwanda is the combination of the centralised and strong state on the one hand and the Rwandans' sense of obedience and loyalty to authority or to community on the other. Straus (2006) and Obura (2003) similarly argue that the centralised state institution penetrating to the local level was one of the factors that facilitated the organisers of the genocide to enforce the decision countrywide in a short time. Uvin (2001) shows that the traditional characteristics of Rwandans as 'unquestioning' 'obedient' and 'conformist' (p. 84) is partly considered to have contributed to many people taking part in the genocide when they were told to do so. In the case of Burundi, Daley (2006), for instance, shows that the ethnic line became salient in violence there not because of ethnic hatred among ordinary citizens, but because political elites mobilised ethnicity and ethnic violence in their struggle for economic gain and control of the state.

How education relates to the above-mentioned root causes of violence in Rwanda and Burundi, other than in terms of ethnic divisions and hatred, is largely left unanswered. However, there are two features in the educational system that may relate to the genocide in Rwanda in other ways than the promotion of ethnic hatred or divisions. The first is the lack of education. Hilker (2010) states that the majority of those who carried out the genocide were unemployed and undereducated young people and that rural young people

without education or employment prospects are argued to have played a key role in expanding the scale of the genocide. Evidence for this is that secondary education had been largely inaccessible in pre-genocide Rwanda. Although primary schooling expanded after independence, secondary schooling remained accessible only to wealthy elites. For instance, the enrolment rate at the secondary level was just 11 % despite a 96% enrolment rate being achieved at primary level in the 1975–76 school year (Obura, 2003). There had long been reform plans to improve access at the secondary level but had never been implemented.

Another feature in education that may have a different link to the genocide in Rwanda is the authoritarian teaching style or teacher-centred pedagogical approach. Some scholars, such as Freedman et al. (2008), Walker-Keleher (2006), and Muhumpundu (2002, cited in Hilker, 2010), suggest that the top-down teaching approach in the pre-genocide years encouraged the 'unquestioning' 'obedient' and 'conformist' features of Rwandans without fostering critical thinking or a sense of individual responsibilities. This was also something recognised by Rwandans themselves. The National Curriculum Development Centre staff similarly stated that the excessive emphasis in the curriculum on loyalty to the group and to the community had helped foster the blind obedience observed during the genocide (Obura, 2003).

* * * * *

As the above account shows, the educational system in Rwanda and Burundi is argued to have fuelled the ethnic violence these countries suffered in the 1990s. Primarily, this was by its promoting ethnic tensions and hatred. Tutsis, the small minority, were provided with greater access to schooling especially at the secondary level, while Hutus and Twas had been marginalised since colonial days. Inside the school, too, the stereotypes of the

superior Tutsis and the inferior Hutus (and Twas) were promoted through various subjects, including history and civics. The educational systems continued to promote ethnic divisions even after independence in both Rwanda and Burundi. The account above shows, furthermore, that ethnic tensions were at least not the *only* cause that underlay the violence. Although there has as yet been little focus on how education might have fuelled other root causes, the connections between scarce access to schooling and authoritarian teaching to the violence have been explored to some extent.

Many of the elements in education that are considered to have fuelled the violence in Rwanda and Burundi are not unique among contemporary ethnic conflict cases. Deliberate unequal distribution of education among different ethnic groups has been seen in, for instance, Nigeria (Ukiwo, 2007) and South Africa (Johnson, 2007; Barakat, 2008). The teaching of history classes is also connected deeply to conflict in Kosovo (Sommers and Buckland, 2004) and Israel and Palestine (Steinberg and Bar-On, 2009). Moreover, stereotypes regarding different ethnic groups were also promoted in cases such as Sri Lanka (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000).

In other cases, different features of schooling from those seen in the cases of Rwanda and Burundi seem to have played a more essential role in fuelling ethnic tensions and divisions. In cases like Northern Ireland (see Arlow, 2004; Nolan, 2007; Dunn, 1986), South Africa (Johnson, 2007), and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Pasalic-Kreso, 1999), the educational system was either apparently or discreetly segregated by ethnicity. In the early days of the conflict in Northern Ireland, the schools were separated by religion into Protestant and Catholic institutions (Nolan, 2007). A further feature related to segregation of the system is language, as it was in South Africa under Apartheid (Johnson, 2007) and Malaysia (Brown,

2007). In South Africa, the system was segregated by language, i.e. English or Afrikaans, as well as by race. Johnson (2007) argues that the debate on whether to use Afrikaans or English as the language of instruction reflected and reinforced the struggles for dominance between the Afrikaans- and the English-speaking groups and, as a result, the mandate to use Afrikaans triggered a nationwide uprising. Language has also been used as a means to oppress in Sudan (Sommers, 2005), Nepal (Shields and Rappleye, 2008), Kosovo (Sommers and Buckland, 2004), and Sri Lanka (Perera, Wijetunge and Balasooriya, 2004). In Sudan, the government attempted to impose Arabic as the sole language of instruction in schools in Southern Sudan, an area where non-Arab non-Muslims are predominant (Sommers, 2005).

Regardless of the elements, the basic finding that education, whether through its curriculum or structure, is considered to have contributed to heightening ethnic tensions appears to be common among different cases. Nevertheless, recent studies in the field add complexity to this common principle. Barakat (2008), reviewing South African and Palestinian education, argues that education not only was and can be a divisional factor between ethnic groups, it also did and can promote divisions 'within' the same side of a conflict. For instance, in South Africa the Apartheid government used schooling as a tool to divide the non-white population so that it would be difficult for them to create a common opposition force. This strategy was successful to some extent, although in the end a common opposition emerged. In the case of Nepal, Shields and Rappleye (2008) explore how education not only fuelled conflict but also contributed to mitigating it. That is, education contributed to reinforcing social inequalities whilst it played a role in maintaining social cohesion between opposing sides. That a well-intentioned educational system fuelled political violence in contrary to intentions in Bhutanese refugee camps is

asserted by Evans (2008), wherein an educational programme that aimed to empower the beneficiaries was used by them to promote political violence. In some other cases, as in Kosovo (Sommers and Buckland, 2004), Southern Sudan (Sommers, 2005) and in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (Nicolai, 2007), although the state-funded educational system was oppressive and biased to one ethnic group, an alternative education system (in the form of a parallel system) for the discriminated against was established and played a role in the resistance against the state authority. In addition, Watson (2007) shows the complexity of the issue of the language of instruction in relation to potential ethnic conflicts. On the one hand, as above, language is an important element of local cultures and ethnic identities and restrictions in regard to the language of instruction in schools can be a mechanism through which education represses culture. On the other hand, teaching people with local languages exclusively has provoked (and may provoke) resistance from the local people themselves; after all, many of the administrative and modern sector jobs were held by those who could speak the language of the colonial master and therefore being taught only in the local languages can be perceived as them being excluded from this modern society.

Another complexity related to education's contribution to conflict is found in the vexed issue of how to turn it around. Many case studies discuss the difficulty of reform, such as in South Africa (Johnson, 2007), Kosovo (Sommers and Buckland, 2004), Malaysia (Brown, 2007), Israel (Neuberger, 2007), Northern Ireland (Nolan, 2007) and Sri Lanka (Cardozo, 2008). Nolan (2007) on Northern Ireland and Johnson (2007) on South Africa contend that segregation can be deeply rooted in the social structure, which is difficult to reform even within education institutions. In Sri Lanka (Cardozo, 2008) and Israel (Neuberger, 2007), education initiatives that attempted to actively promote 'peaceful'

messages to society – peace education in Sri Lanka and democratic education in Israel – produced limited positive effects. They all point to the deep-seated contextual and structural issues in a society that greatly hinder the reforming effects of education on that society. An account on Kosovo exemplifies a case where the 'context' was greatly neglected in reform efforts, with long-standing efforts thereby having ambivalent results. Sommers and Buckland (2004) describe how the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, which took the lead in the reform, intentionally marginalised the experienced Kosovar educational managers and specialists of the previous system. The result was the sacrificing of 'trust'; many of the veterans who had originally expressed a commitment to the change withdrew from the process. Williams (2005) argues that the mistake in the Kosovo education reform lies in seeking to 'conquer context and history' being led by 'outsiders' (p. 269).

More fundamentally, some case studies suggest, similar to the cases of Rwanda and Burundi, that education does more than promoting ethnic tensions and hatred, although they are yet to be more rigorously examined. For instance, the role of the highly educated in initiating conflicts in the name of 'revolution' was suggested by Pherali (2011) in Nepal, and he also suggests there is a link between the use of violence in schooling, i.e. corporal punishment, to the conflict there. In addition, the link between low educational provision and conflict, one of the elements identified in Rwanda and Burundi, is also suggested in Southern Sudan (Sommers, 2005) and Nepal (Sheilds and Rappleye, 2008; Pherali, 2011); young people who were partially educated and without employment are believed to have been mobilised into conflict the most.

In addition to the insights on the role of education in ethnic conflicts, I want to briefly note some insights about the role of education in non-ethnic conflict offered by a few studies. There are a few studies in this regard and I have already mentioned those on the case of Sierra Leone (i.e. Wright, 1997; Skelt, 1997; Krech and Maclure, 2003; Paulson, 2006; and Matsumoto, 2011; see Section 2.6). In addition, the way in which education is argued to have contributed to non-ethnic conflict cases is similar to how it is considered to have done so in the cases of ethnic conflict or the Second World War. For example, in the case of Afghanistan, Matsumoto (2008) and Jones (2009) discuss how education has been an 'ideological battlefield' (Matsumoto, 2008, p. 67) seen to promote different ideologies, i.e. communism, Islamism, and fundamentalism, at different times. In addition, the languages of violence and war, including jihad (against the Soviets), were accepted and normalised in the curriculum there. Other cases – Frayha (2004) on Lebanon, Tetzaguic and Grigsby (2004) on Guatemala, and Balegamire (2004) on Mozambique – similarly contend that the formal education system through the fragmented school structure, curriculum content, language policy, and segregated structure reinforced divisions, discriminations and political tensions in the countries, which are ultimately seen to have fuelled conflicts there.

3.5.3 Summary on the role of education in contemporary conflict

In summary, the case studies on education's role in contemporary conflict are largely about ethnic conflict. The studies have shown some common mechanisms in the curriculum or structure of the formal schooling considered to have promoted ethnic divisions and hatred there. More specifically, this includes unequal provision of education, curricula that promote ethnic hatred or divisions, particularly through teaching and textbook of history and geography, selection (or imposition) of language of instruction, and segregation of the system by ethnicity. The studies have further shown the complex relationship of education to ethnic conflict. They also show how difficult it is for education

to be reformed, given that the issues are so deeply rooted in society itself. In addition, some studies suggest, although in preliminary ways, that education does more than promote the 'ethnic' aspects of tensions and hatred; in fact, contemporary 'ethnic' conflict seems to be driven not only by ethnic tensions or hatred but also by other underlying issues in society, which education may be fuelling.

3.6 Current knowledge on the role of education in violent conflict

A considerable amount of research has been done recently on the role of education in violent conflict in the field of education and conflict. In particular, literature on how education may fuel ethnic conflict (both in terms of contemporary ethnic conflicts or wars in which countries employed ethno-nationalism, such as Germany and Japan) has been treated both empirically and theoretically. Essentially, the theoretical ideas and the empirical studies on the role of education in ethnic conflict or war reviewed do not contradict each other. The basic principle that education promoted ethnic tensions through the curriculum and structure, thereby fuelling ethnic conflict, is consistently argued either among contemporary ethnic conflict or cases of the Second World War that employed ethno-nationalism. However, the few empirical case studies there have been have shown the complexities of the mechanisms involved, going beyond the simplified theoretical ideas available in the field. Furthermore, although the available literature is much scantier than the body on ethnic conflict, the idea that violence in school promotes violent conflict seem to complement, to some extent, the ways education has been seen to fuel violent conflicts, whether they were labelled as ethnic or not. Militarisation of the curriculum and physical violence in school was observed in cases from the Second World War, particularly Germany and Japan, and a few of the contemporary ones such as Afghanistan. Furthermore, the authoritarian education style has also been cited in some cases, such as

Japan and Germany during the Second World War and, among contemporary cases, Rwanda.

And yet our knowledge about the role of education in violent conflict is still yet to develop in many ways. I focus on elucidating four major limitations that my study attempts to tackle. First, the theoretical ideas are yet to be established. Even the most predominant theoretical ideas in the field about ethnic conflict and war only discuss how education may have fuelled ethnic tensions and hatred on the surface, either in the cases of ethno-nationalism or contemporary ethnic conflict, and as some case studies recognise (e.g. Arlow, 2004; Ohnuki-Tierney, 2002; Hilker, 2010), no empirical evidence is available to show with certainty that the elements discussed theoretically or empirically have contributed to ethnic conflict. The violence in schooling approach, too, is only found in a handful of case studies, and it is yet to be substantiated just how school-based violence comes to promote violent conflict, an *organised* and *armed* violence beyond the individual, especially given that the concept of 'violence' employed in those works includes non-physical acts. Finally, the approach to understanding how education might fuel the root causes of violent conflict is at an incipient stage, having only just begun to delineate how and what features of education can do so and with a few empirical studies having taken the approach.

Second, even the theoretical ideas that are relatively more developed, on the role of education in ethnic conflict and the role of violence in school, do not directly address how education fuels the root causes of violent conflict. As mentioned above, the ethnic conflict thread only addresses how education may fuel the 'labelling' of it, promoting ethnic divisions or hatred. Moreover, it does not distinguish how education may fuel conflict

differently in terms of contemporary ethnic ones and the ethno-nationalism seen during the Second World War, in spite of the case studies pointing out the different natures and causes of contemporary 'ethnic' conflict and the Second World War.

Third, it is clear that both theoretical and empirical studies in the field have been greatly concentrated with education's role in ethnic conflict. In contrast, knowledge on how education may fuel or has fuelled non-ethnic-labelled contemporary conflict is limited both theoretically and empirically. Empirically, the studies on non-ethnic conflict cases that discuss the role of education in conflict there are countable (see Section 3.5.1 above). Theoretically, the approach that attempts to understand the role of education in the root causes of conflict is promising but is yet to be developed, and the only approach applicable to non-ethnic cases is the 'violence in school' approach (see Section 3.3).

Last, the studies in the field have predominantly focused on how elements *inside* education as an *independent provision* of education or schooling, such as the structure, curriculum, or governance, may fuel conflict. For one, there is no discussion on how schooling as a social institution is entangled in the political economy of a country that allows or promotes the emergence of violent conflict. This is in spite of the growing body of knowledge regarding the political economy of violent conflict and the role of education in it in the social science literature, which I will explore in the next chapter. Another implication of this is that how education is *received* or *perceived* by the beneficiaries is not discussed. In terms of curriculum, for instance, Williams (2004) argues that whether education fuels conflict or not depends on the 'attained curriculum' or what students actually learn, for it is 'naïve to assume that learners acquire the material in the curriculum precisely as intended' (p. 472). And yet the attained curriculum has not been empirically investigated in relation to the role

of education in conflict. With regards to the structure, too, no studies in the field have empirically studied people's *perceptions* about unequal provision, for instance. This is in spite of arguments in much of the ethnic conflict-related literature that the unequal provision of education can fuel the frustrations of people and ultimately conflict because education *is perceived to be* a key tool for their socioeconomic mobility and power (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000; Johnson and Stewart, 2007; Ukiwo, 2007; Johnson, 2007; Obura, 2008). The tendency to focus on provision and policies is something common in the empirical studies in the field of education and conflict as a whole. The only exceptions that investigate learners' perceptions or experiences are, as far as I am aware, Obura (2003), Bird (2007), Winthrop and Kirk (2008), and Cunningham (2011).

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has elucidated the achievements and limitations regarding existing knowledge on the role of education in violent conflict in the educational literature. It also further substantiates the selection of Sierra Leone as the case for the study. In essence, the case of Sierra Leone allows an exploration of the aspects of the role of education in violent conflict that have been little discussed in the field of education and conflict. One is that Sierra Leone is a country that has experienced a non-ethnic contemporary conflict, which has been little studied in the field as mentioned above. There have been several studies that touch on how education is considered to have fuelled the civil war in Sierra Leone, but the difference between them and the present study has already been mentioned (see Section 1.3). Secondly, how education is believed to have fuelled the civil war there points to components that have not yet been rigorously examined in the field. The previous chapter has shown that more than elements *in* the *provision* of the educational system – which most of the studies in the field have concentrated on as pointed out above – it was *the relationships* between education and society, particularly how the role of education came

to be *perceived* by young people in terms of their high expectations, that are considered to be relevant to understanding the conflict.

Given the two limitations of the theoretical ideas in the educational field – that they are not established yet and do not concretely address how education might fuel the root causes of conflict – the study follows the interdisciplinary approach that also engages with the social science literature on the root causes of contemporary conflict. The approach seems to be the most logical among other attempts that try to understand the role of education in the root causes of conflict (namely 'fragility' and Davies' (2004) approaches). Not only are there established theories on contemporary conflict in social science literature, but also many of the studies there pay attention to the role of education as part of the root causes of contemporary conflict. Therefore, now I will turn to reviewing the social science literature in the next chapter.

Chapter Four:
Literature Review II

Social science literature on the root causes of contemporary violent conflict

4.1 Introduction to the chapter

At the end of the previous chapter, I mentioned that the study follows and attempts to further advance the interdisciplinary approach in the field of education and conflict so as to understand the role of education in the root causes of contemporary conflict, engaging with social science literature (Smith, 2005; Novelli and Cardozo, 2008; Ostby and Urdal, 2010; Hilker, 2010; Brown, 2010). The first step in this aim is to review the social science literature, which is the purpose of the chapter. This also corresponds to fulfilling the first aim set out in the thesis (see Section 1.3).

The review in this chapter does not aim to be exhaustive but is deliberately selective; it reviews three distinct but predominant explanations of contemporary conflict that also touch on the role of education. This is so that literature reviewed here will be helpful in advancing understanding of the role of education in contemporary conflict in low-income and weak states, the core interest of the study. The first strand of the explanations represents a conventional explanation of conflict, the 'grievance' approach. In it, I will mainly draw on the idea of 'horizontal inequalities (HIs)' by Stewart. The second is an alternative economic explanation. There I focus on the idea of the 'opportunity cost of rebellion' by Collier and others. The third is a political explanation by Bates that focuses on the role of the state and ruling elites in the emergence of civil war. While all three, Stewart, Collier and Bates, incorporate elements related to 'education' in one way or another, I also complement their explanations with others in order to strengthen the link of

these explanations to education: Stewart's idea with the idea of 'relative deprivation' by Gurr, Collier et al.'s with the 'youth bulge' theory, and Bates' with Reno's explanation.

Before the chapter unfolds, I should note two points. One is that the purpose of my study does not lie in attempting to test the validity of explanations in general or the validity of the explanations with regard to the role of education depicted in them. More moderately, the study attempts to learn from the explanations about the role of education in the root causes of contemporary conflict as that understanding has been little advanced in the field of education. Nevertheless, I will bear in mind the limitations of the explanations and critically engage with the role of education depicted in them. Secondly, given the specific aim of the review, some explanations of contemporary conflict in social sciences that do not have direct relevance to education are not taken up here. Such explanations include the 'green war' theory (Homer-Dixon, 1994), the relevance of the government's regime types (i.e. democratic or authoritarian regimes) to conflict (e.g. Hegre, 2003; Hegre et al, 2001), and the role of natural resources in conflict (e.g. Ross, 2004).

The chapter is organised as follows. I will review the three theoretical explanations, starting from the 'grievance' explanation (Stewart's idea complemented by Gurr's), the economic explanation (Collier et al.'s together with youth bulge theory), and finishing with the political explanation that focuses on the role of ruling elites and state (Bates and Reno). For all three strands, I will first describe the main ideas. Then their ideas in relation to education are elaborated and critically analysed. This is to elucidate what the explanation offers to advance understanding of the role of education in contemporary conflict as well as to recognise its limitations. At the end of each strand, I will also discuss some critiques of the explanation as well as its relevance to the case of Sierra Leone.

4.2 HIs and 'relative deprivation'

4.2.1 The main ideas of Stewart and Gurr

Stewart argues that HIs may lead to violent struggles when the HIs are *sharp* and *multidimensional* (Stewart, 2008a). The concept of HIs is defined as 'inequalities between culturally defined groups or groups with shared identities' (Stewart, 2008a, p. 12). 'Culturally defined groups or groups with shared identities' are called 'cultural' groups in short (Stewart, 2002b), and this refers to ethnic, religious, and regional groups, as well as caste, class, and race among other things. Stewart calls the inequalities among 'cultural' groups HIs to distinguish them from inequalities among individuals, which she terms vertical inequalities. Her theory is concerned with group inequalities (HIs) because, she argues, violent conflict occurs when a group is mobilised, not individuals (e.g. 2002b).

Stewart argues that sharp and multidimensional HIs are relevant to violent conflict because they can arouse deep resentment between cultural groups. For her, therefore, violent conflict is not caused by 'cultural' differences per se as some argue (e.g. Connor, 1994). Cultural explanations are not sufficient because there are many multicultural societies that live together peacefully (Stewart, 2008a). Instead, she states that cultural group differences can only become salient when they coincide with economic and political causes, i.e. inequalities (Stewart, 2002a). This idea also stems from her broadly social constructivist view of group formation. That is, group boundaries, including those of cultural groups, are not fixed or 'given,' but change over time – often through political actions (Stewart, 2002b; 2008a) – and yet, in the course of the change, people themselves come to believe in 'the *essential* nature of their identities and that of others' (Stewart, 2008a, p. 10, emphasis in original).

She explains that 'cultural group' identities tend to become salient in contemporary conflict because they tend to meet three conditions that facilitate people's frustrations regarding group differences. One is that the divisions of the groups have strong 'social significance' (e.g. Stewart, 2008a). In other words, those in and outside groups perceive that the divisions influence their behaviour, income and well-being in a significant manner. The second is that the groups are enduring; in other words, there is limited freedom to switch groups. The third is that the identification of group members is relatively easy. These characteristics fuel powerful group grievances; people know that the group divisions make a great difference to the quality of their lives (in other words, they hold 'social significance'), and yet they are stuck in one cultural group, even if they want to change to another or even if they try to pretend to be another, because the cultural group's identity is apparent.

As mentioned earlier, HIs are prone to intersect with violent conflict when they are multidimensional as well as when they are sharp. HIs are categorised into economic, social, political and cultural status dimensions, and each dimension contains a number of elements. It is in this categorisation that education is incorporated in the idea of HIs; education is a part of social HIs, which refer to 'inequalities [among cultural groups] in access to a range of services, such as ***education***, health care and housing, as well as to the benefits of ***educational*** and health care outcomes.' Among the four categories, cultural status HIs have been only added recently (see Stewart, 2009).

- **Economic HIs** include inequalities in access to and ownership of assets—financial, human, natural resource-based and social, and also inequalities in income levels and employment opportunities, which depend on such assets and the general conditions of the economy.
- **Social HIs** include inequalities in access to a range of services, such as ***education***, health care and housing, as well as to the benefits of ***educational*** and health care outcomes.

- **Political HIs** include inequalities in the distribution of political opportunities and power among groups, including control over the army, the cabinet, local and regional governments, parliamentary assemblies, the police and the presidency. They also encompass inequalities in people's capabilities to participate politically and to express their needs.
- **Cultural status HIs** include disparities in the recognition and standing of different groups' language, religion, customs, norms and practices.

(Stewart, 2010, p. 2, emphases added)

The extent to which each element may become relevant to violent conflict depends on the extent to which the element holds 'social significance.' As mentioned above, social significance is the extent to which the element influences one's behaviour, income and well-being. Therefore, when an element matters to people it can be salient to political mobilisation in one society, but may not in others if it does not hold social significance there. Stewart (e.g. 2008a) further explains that the social significance of the element can be found in its innate value or in its instrumentality for achieving other goals, such as incomes and well-being. These points are important to keep in mind in unravelling the relationship of education to conflict using Stewart's theory in the following section.

The Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (CRISE) that Stewart leads has been testing the HI hypotheses in various ways, conducting quantitative and qualitative studies as well as synthesising findings from similar studies. The accumulated findings and analyses are summarised in Stewart (2008b). Among them, the key finding to be mentioned here is the different functions of HIs by category in fuelling violent conflict. For one, it is social and economic HIs that increase the probabilities of conflict. For instance, she cites Ostby (2008) who found that the probability of the onset of conflict across countries significantly rose for countries with sharp social and economic HIs. However, Stewart concludes that it is the nature of the political HIs that determine whether social and economic HIs lead to conflict. For example, Ghana and Bolivia are

countries that have high social and economic HIs but have avoided substantial conflict (Langer and Ukiwo, 2008; Caumartin, Molina and Thorp, 2008). Stewart (2008b) argues that this is partially due to the government's arrangements to reduce political HIs. More specifically, a relevant factor for Ghana not having had identity-based conflict is considered to be consecutive Ghanaian regimes' policies and strategies that have aimed at diminishing the north–south divide (Langer and Ukiwo, 2008). On the other hand, Stewart (2008b) shows that a higher probability for conflict is found when the political and socioeconomic HIs are sharp and run in the same direction; for example, in Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire where the political exclusion and socioeconomic HIs coincided, violent conflict has broken out (Langer, 2008; Ukiwo, 2008). This relates to her point elsewhere that political HIs are more likely to motivate group leaders or elites to instigate a rebellion, while socioeconomic HIs are more likely to motivate the mass of population to do so (Stewart, 2008b). Therefore, when political and socioeconomic HIs run in the same direction, both the mass and the elites suffer from and are frustrated with inequalities, with frustrated elites consequently galvanising the grievances of the masses for a conflict. An important hypothesis that Stewart (2008b) has not succeeded in testing, due to scarce evidence, is whether violent conflict is more likely to occur when HIs are widening. Nevertheless, she claims that there is 'piecemeal' evidence that supports the hypothesis (c.f. Mancini, 2008).

What I find ambiguous in Stewart's idea of HIs is the explanation with regard to people's perception. On the one hand, people's perception is pertinent to her explanation because she defines group identity as 'individuals' *perception*s of identity with a particular group – [the] self-*perceptions* of those "in" the group, and *perception*s of those outside the group' (Stewart, 2000, p. 6, emphasis added). Moreover, Stewart recognises that such perceptions

of group identity and group differences can change and that it is highly possible that the perceived inequalities differ from the actual inequalities (Stewart, 2008b). In fact, CRISE conducted a survey on perceived inequalities in Ghana and Nigeria (Langer and Ukiwo, 2008) which found differences between perceived HIs and objective HIs, as well as differences between Ghanaians and Nigerians in their perceptions of the social significance of ethnicity. Referring to such results, Stewart concludes that people's perceptions of HIs greatly influence the likelihood of conflict (Stewart, 2008b). And yet she takes a stance that perception reflects some reality, with her studies mainly relying on the 'objective' HIs, i.e. inequalities that are measurable in objective circumstances such as income and the degree to which people have access to social services and political participation (Stewart, 2000).

While Stewart's theory is focused on objectively measurable inequalities, not on people's perceptions, Gurr's theory of 'relative deprivation' centres on perceptions.[4] In his book *Why Men Rebel* (1970), Gurr defines relative deprivation as a '*perceived* discrepancy between men's value expectations and their value capabilities' (p. 13). Value expectations refer to 'the goods and conditions of life to which *people believe* they are rightfully entitled' and value capabilities indicate 'goods and conditions *they think* they are capable of attaining or maintaining, given the social means available to them' (1970, p. 13, all emphases added). In a simple sense, relative deprivation is the perceived gap between 'ought,' i.e. what they should get, and 'is,' i.e. what they can get in reality. Gurr explains that '[d]iscontent arising from the *perception* of relative deprivation' is the basic condition for the potential of collective violence (1970, p. 13, emphasis added). This means that discontent may not be about their position compared to that of others in society. It may

[4] I am aware that, in some of his later works (e.g. Gurr, 1993), he focuses on objective inequalities as well.

arise from the perceived gap between their own past experiences and their actual capabilities in the present, as it is ultimately about a difference felt psychologically between people's expectations and their capabilities in reality.

As such, Gurr's theory is centred on people's perceptions and is considered to complement Stewart's theory in the 'grievance' explanation strand. While Stewart's theory focuses on objective inequalities among groups of people, Gurr's is concerned with people's perceptions of deprivation, which encompass a sense of a gap about themselves: between their expectations of what they think they should be able to do and their own capabilities in reality. Further, while Stewart's theory explains the group dynamics behind ethnic conflict, Gurr's idea helps understand people's sense of grievances in contexts where 'ethnicity' or cultural groups did not become key to the conflict, such as we see in Sierra Leone. Indeed, as I will discuss later, the explanations of Gurr are relevant to our understanding of the grievances behind the civil war in Sierra Leone, particularly with regards to the role of education.

4.2.2 HIs, relative deprivation and education

As depicted earlier, educational inequalities are part of social HIs: 'inequalities in access to a range of services, such as ***education***, health care and housing, as well as to the benefits of ***educational*** and health care outcomes.' Gurr, on the other hand, depicts education as a factor that can heighten people's sense of deprivation by increasing people's expectations while their capabilities in reality may be unaffected by it.

An appropriate starting point for the theoretical exploration of educational HIs and the risk of violent conflict appears to be the unpacking of the relationship between education and its social significance. In Stewart's explanation, an element needs to have social

significance in order for inequalities by cultural groups in that element to be relevant to a risk of violent conflict. If they do not, then HIs in that element will not frustrate people. Thus, whether educational HIs matter to a risk of conflict depends, first of all, on whether education carries social significance in a particular society. Secondly, if it does, the next question to be examined is what kind or level of education holds this social significance. In other words, even if there are inequalities in education at one level, e.g. in primary education, if that level of schooling does not hold social significance then such inequalities may not be significant in regard to the risk of violent conflict. Thirdly, in understanding the kind of education that holds social significance, we also need to examine the reason a particular kind of education has it. In other words, we need to ask whether it is the innate value or the instrumental value of the kind of education that is crucial (or perhaps both). Recall that the element can have social significance in itself or can be socially significant because of its instrumentality in achieving other goals, i.e. incomes or well-being.

Education's innate value may refer to the importance of learning itself for the well-being of people in society, and the instrumental value of education may point to the value of educational qualifications, skills and knowledge as a means to acquiring higher income and improved social status. This is an important distinction to make. On the one hand, if education in its innate value holds social significance, then educational inequalities on their own, irrespective of the conditions of other sectors in society, can become relevant to the risk of violent conflict. On the other hand, if it is education's instrumental value that predominantly has social significance in the society in question, understanding of whether or not and what kind of educational inequalities are relevant to the risk of violent conflict seems to require examination of two variables. One is the goals and aspirations that people want to achieve through education. The other is the level and kind of education that is

instrumental to achieving such aspirations. The aspirations of people through education determine the level and kind of education that has social significance, therefore, and the inequalities at the level and kind of education are what may be considered relevant to the risk of violent conflict.

The relation of the instrumental value of education with HIs and violent conflict deserves some exploration here. For one, inequalities in education are a source of tension in some societies (and violent conflict in some) precisely because the instrumental value of education is highly regarded. The instrumental value of education for socioeconomic mobility has become much appreciated in modern societies to the extent that some are concerned with its excess; society has become too stratified by credentials, a phenomenon known as 'diploma disease' (see Dore, 1997). Because of the high instrumental value of education in countries such as Nigeria (Ukiwo, 2007), educational inequalities have become (or more precisely, have come to be perceived as) a source of perpetuating socioeconomic inequalities in society (Stewart, 2008b). However, contrary to people's perceptions of the strong instrumental value of education, the instrumentality of education remains a premise that needs to be critically examined, particularly in developing countries. This is because the returns on education are contested; more specifically, those who have been schooled to a higher level remain unemployed, such as in India (Jeffrey, Jeffery and Jeffery, 2008), Peru (Crivello, 2009) and West African countries (Cruise O'Brien, 1996). In the case of Sierra Leone, too, it was university students who were frustrated because they could not get the public-sector jobs they had expected, and who instigated the original 'revolution' (see Chapter Two).

Considering a possible disconnect between education and its returns, the manner in which Stewart conceptualises social HIs is useful, at least partially. Social HIs are conceptualised as inequalities in access to services, including education, as well as *inequalities in the benefits of outcomes*. This suggests that Stewart recognises that inequalities in accessing the service and in the benefit of the outcomes of the service may be potentially different. Indeed, Figueroa (2008), who is part of CRISE, shows that indigenous people in Peru have not only far less access to education than the mestizo or the white population but also have significantly lower returns on their education (measured as additional income earned from education). This means that, in Peru, not only do educational HIs exist at the both levels, i.e. access to the provision and the returns, but the HIs are wider in the returns than at the level of provision. The reasons behind this phenomenon are pointed out as a poorer quality of education, less productive social networks, and discrimination in employment.

So, does this disconnect have any connection to the risk of violent conflict? Stewart does not touch upon this, but Gurr (1970) argues that there is indeed. Education raises aspirations (that is, increases value expectations) to some extent, and yet if a person finds no job available or that their payment or political capabilities remain low upon receiving an education (that is, constrained value capabilities), the gap between expectations and capabilities becomes rather widened. The likely consequences of this are disillusionment and anger. However, whether disillusionment and anger due to education leads to political violence is not so straightforward; Gurr argues that on its own it seldom leads to political violence but that it is more likely to do so when accompanied by pre-existing relative deprivation – one that is both intense and wide in scope – in the society (Gurr, 1970). The point that the sense of deprivation based on education alone is unlikely to lead to conflict appears to reflect a similar point made by Stewart, who stated that violent conflict is more

likely to emerge when HIs are multidimensional. From this, both Gurr and Stewart seem to agree that differences in education alone – both in terms of educational HIs and the widened gap between expectations and capabilities due to education – are not sufficient to spur a conflict.

In summary, Stewart's explanation of HIs, complemented with Gurr's theory of relative deprivation, provides a sophisticated lens through which to examine how education may fuel grievances, a conventional root cause of conflict. Stewart suggests that for educational inequalities to be relevant, first of all education has to hold a social significance. In other words, she shows that not all kinds of educational inequalities among cultural groups can be relevant to a risk of conflict. In order to fully examine the ways in which educational inequalities increase a risk of conflict, the idea of HIs further implies the importance of examining the level or the kind of education that has social significance, and whether the social significance lies in the intrinsic or instrumental value of education. If it is valued instrumentally, one needs to understand whether it is achieving the expected goal or not. If not, as Gurr's idea also suggests, the gap between expectations regarding the power of education and the actual capability of it can fuel people's disillusionment and anger. However, we should remember that educational inequalities alone or a sense of relative deprivation due to education alone are not sufficient to trigger a conflict, according to both Stewart and Gurr.

4.2.3 Critiques and relevance of 'grievance' theories

This section reviews some of the critiques against the ideas by Stewart and Gurr and also assesses the relevance of their ideas to the case of Sierra Leone. The 'grievance' theories (which include the ideas of Stewart and Gurr) are dismissed by some researchers, most notably Collier and Hoeffler (2004). They dismiss them and offer, as I will show in the

next section, an alternative explanation focusing on 'greed' or economic motivations as the primary root cause of contemporary violent conflict. Grievances are dismissed based on cross-country quantitative findings. Researchers such as Collier and Hoeffler (2004) use the statistical insignificance of vertical inequalities, i.e. income or land, and ethnic or religious diversity in relation to the probability of violent conflict as evidence against grievance theories (see also Fearon and Laitin, 2003).

However, it should be noted that both these factors of vertical inequalities and ethnic/religious diversity are not adequate to counter Stewart's theory. Stewart explicitly distinguishes HIs from vertical inequalities and recognises that the latter do not have significant impacts on the likelihood of conflict (Stewart, 2008a). The irrelevance of ethnic diversity to the probability of conflict is not sufficient evidence either to disregard Stewart's hypothesis or the link of ethnicity to violent conflict. Stewart's theory is not about the relevance of ethnicity itself to conflict but rather about the inequalities among ethnic and other cultural groups. Further, some others make claims, based on cross-country quantitative data, for the importance of ethnicity in different ways: the importance of ethnic heterogeneity and political grievance when restricting the data to identity-based conflicts (e.g. Sambanis, 2001), ethnic polarisation as opposed to diversity (e.g. Collier and Hoeffler, 1998; Montalvo and Reynal-Querol, 2005), or the relevance of the ethnopolitical configuration of power in the state to conflict (Wimmer, Cederman and Min, 2009).

At the same time, the idea of HIs is a hypothesis that is yet to be satisfactorily confirmed or rejected. Collier and Hoeffler (2007) claim that there is no empirical measure available to test Stewart's hypothesis in a cross-section of countries. Stewart recognises this, saying

that there is a difficulty associated with obtaining data on HIs (Stewart, 2008b), and thus the studies by her and other members of CRISE have mostly been quantitative country case studies.

Despite the critiques against 'grievance' theories, the role of grievance in the civil war in Sierra Leone cannot be ignored (see Section 2.5). In particular, Gurr's theory seems to elucidate the sense of deprivation and frustration felt by the young people mobilised in the war. For one, it sheds light on a sense of relative deprivation between generations. As discussed, some argue that young people were frustrated because the government did not meet its 'promises', particularly those in relation to an education system that suggested public employment would be provided upon graduating from college (e.g. Krech and Maclure, 2003). It was those frustrated college students who initially planned the 'revolution' in Sierra Leone (e.g. Rashid, 2004), which suggests that the 'youth' who did not have or could not gain social or economic status were frustrated because they had seen that the 'older' generations had established their statuses having done the same thing in getting a university degree. Thus, their expectations were established based on the achievement of the older generation and yet their actual capabilities did not allow such expectations to be fulfilled. On the other hand, the argument that young people who were in the rural areas were most mobilised for the war (Richards, 1996) can be seen as underlining their sense of deprivation by locality, i.e. rural versus urban.

The idea of HIs has relevance at least partially to the case of Sierra Leone. There have been acute multidimensional inequalities among regions in Sierra Leone since the early colonial period, including in the educational arena (see sections 2.2 and 2.3). These regional inequalities suggest inequalities by ethnicity as different ethnic groups reside in

different regions (Mende in the south and east and Temne and Limba in the north). In terms of the civil war itself, these HIs did *not* become salient. At the same time, the regional and ethnic dimensions cannot be ignored completely in relation to the war. Heightened ethnic confrontations and discrimination during the war were reported (c.f. Keen, 2005). This is partly due to the reality that the Civil Defence Forces formed to fight against the rebels were almost exclusively composed of the Mende ethnic group, as they derived from a traditional Mende militia, the *Kamajors* (e.g. SLTRC, 2004c). Furthermore, the fact that HIs were not salient in the last civil war does not mean that they will not be salient in future instabilities if they are not reduced. Indeed, since the war there has been a growing concern regarding the ethnicisation of politics. As democracy has resumed, the political competition by region between the SLPP supported by Mendes and APC supported by Northerners has not only resumed but is perhaps intensifying the ethnic and regional polarisation in the country (Kandeh, 1999; 2003; International Crisis Group, 2008).

4.3 The opportunity cost of rebellion and the youth bulge

4.3.1 The main ideas by Collier et al.

Collier and others (2000; 2004; 2009) argue that, for a civil war to emerge, the war has to be viable or profitable economically. One of the conditions under which a civil war can be viable or profitable is that there is an abundant source of cheap labour (whose opportunity cost is low) that will fight as rebels. This is what Collier et al.'s idea of the opportunity cost of rebellion is essentially about. The conventional explanation of violent conflict that grievances are the primary root cause of it – on which the ideas of HIs by Stewart and relative deprivation by Gurr are based as well as mentioned earlier – has been challenged in the past decade. The most prominent researcher who has brought the challenge to the fore is Collier, originally terming the debate 'Greed versus Grievances.' Collier and others

put forward an economic explanation for civil war, completely dismissing the role of political grievances as the key root cause or even as one of the root causes of it. Although Collier et al.'s argument has evolved over the years (c.f. Collier and Hoeffler, 1998; 2004; Collier, Hoeffler and Rohner, 2009), their idea that the 'opportunity cost of rebellion' needs to be taken into account in understanding the risk of civil war is unchanged and I will focus on reviewing the idea in this section. The so-called 'youth bulge' theory will also be reviewed as they are related theories.

In essence, Collier perceives two explanations; the 'greed' and 'feasibility' explanations. Collier and Hoeffler (2004; 2000) claim 'greed' as the alternative explanation to grievances as the primary root cause of the rebellion. They argue that a rebellion should be understood more as an organised crime; civil war occurs when the rebels see profits from the costs incurred in the rebellion, and thus 'greed,' or the opportunity to gain profit, is the primary motivation for rebels to launch a rebellion. This profit can be gained, for example, through acquiring natural resources such as diamonds and oil. In the 'feasibility' explanation (Collier, Hoeffler and Rohner, 2009), however, Collier et al. come to claim that civil war occurs when the circumstances are viable, materially and financially, whatever the motivations behind the war – whether it is 'greed' or 'grievances.' They argue that essentially civil war cannot occur if it is not feasible materially or financially, given that the establishment of a rebel army (and sustenance of it) is 'both prohibitively expensive and extremely dangerous' (Collier, Hoeffler and Rohner, 2009, p. 3). They have come to abandon motivations altogether as an explanation for civil war because motivations can be misperceived, i.e. grievances can be exaggerated, and they are not observable.

Although the overall theoretical explanations have changed, the idea of the opportunity cost of rebellion, which the study focuses on reviewing, has been consistent. As mentioned, the idea of the opportunity cost of rebellion is one of the measures to examine the profitability or the viability of a civil war; if the opportunity cost of rebellion increases, the risk of civil war becomes lower. An opportunity cost is a concept in the rational choice theory of economics that refers to the value of the next-highest-valued alternative use of that resource (e.g. Henderson, 2008). An application of this concept to rebellion suggests that, for a person to join a rebellion, he or she cannot spend time doing something else. If his or her next-best alternative to joining the rebellion is working and earning money, the opportunity cost of rebellion is the cost associated with joining the rebellion plus the money that is foregone by not working. Collier et al. argue that an important criterion for a civil war to emerge is the availability of an abundant labour supply whose opportunity cost is lower than the profit that the rebels expect to make (from the 'greed' lens) or is low enough for the war to be viable (from the 'feasibility' lens). Otherwise, the rebels as an organisation cannot (afford to) recruit enough labour for a rebellion to be actualised.

Three major 'proxies' are employed to 'measure' the opportunity cost of rebellion. The proxies or substitutes are used since the concepts of the opportunity cost of rebellion, grievances, and greed cannot be directly measured quantitatively. Among the three proxies for the opportunity cost of rebellion, one pertains to education: the male secondary school enrolment rate (Collier and Hoeffler 2000; 2004). The rationale behind this is that young males are the group from which the rebels are the most recruited, and the average number of years they have been in school affects their income-earning opportunities and the opportunity cost of rebellion; if the male secondary enrolment rate is higher, the opportunity cost of rebel labour is higher and thus the risk of civil war is lower. The two

other major proxies that have been consistent through Collier et al.'s studies are mean income *per capita* and the growth rate of the economy (Collier and Hoeffler, 2000; 2004; Collier, Hoeffler and Rohner, 2009). Mean income *per capita* is self-explanatory as a proxy for the opportunity cost; a population with high income has more to lose through rebellion than a population with low income (Collier and Hoeffler, 1998). The growth rate is intended to proxy the availability of income opportunities; the greater the growth, the higher the opportunity cost because people have other income opportunities (Collier, Hoeffler and Rohner, 2009). The results in Collier and Hoeffler (2000; 2004) show that the opportunity cost of rebellion, proxied by male secondary education enrolment rate, mean income *per capita,* and the growth rate of the economy, was statistically significant when the regression model was run separately. Thus, it is concluded, albeit with a statistical issue, that a higher opportunity cost as measured by the three proxies has substantial effects on reducing the risk of conflict. I will come back to the education related variable, as well as the statistical issue associated with this conclusion, in the following section.

Before I move on to discuss the role of education in the idea of the opportunity cost of rebellion in more detail, the youth bulge theory needs some attention, as it lies behind Collier et al.'s claim that the young males are the group that are recruited most to rebellion. Youth bulge theory, simply put, claims that a large cohort of young males ('youth bulges') in the population increases the risk of political violence in society. The theory has a long history (e.g. Moller, 1968) but has received increasing attention since the mid-1990s following the popular debate over the international and national security implications of population pressure and resource scarcity, i.e. civil war and terrorism (Kaplan, 1994; Urdal, 2006). Reflecting the theory, Collier and Hoeffler (2004) have included both the proportion of young men, i.e. those aged between 15 and 29, in the population and

population density as well as the male secondary school enrolment rate as variables. In terms of the reasons why youth bulges can be a risk factor for civil war, Collier (2000) explains that the greater the proportion of young men in society, the easier it would be for the rebel movement to recruit rebels as it means that the society has a large pool of potential candidates to be recruited. The empirical results about the significance of youth bulge proxies are mixed in Collier et al.'s studies; Collier and Hoeffler (2004) did not find either the proportion of young men in the population or the population density to be significant factors, whereas Collier, Hoeffler and Rohner (2009) found that the proportion of young men in the population does increase the risk of civil war.

Overall, Collier's argument centres on the country level, not individual levels. Therefore, Collier's studies should be distinguished from studies that focus on individual motivations, investigating the profiles of ex-combatants. Even though the concept of the opportunity cost alludes to the individual level, the approach his studies takes is macroeconomic; he infers motivation (in the focus on 'greed') from observational proxies and measures the costs and benefits at the organisational level, looking at the rebels as a single agent.

4.3.2 Opportunity cost of rebellion, youth bulges, and education

As touched upon earlier, the male secondary school enrolment rate is one of the proxies used to measure the opportunity cost of rebellion (Collier and Hoeffler 2000; 2004).[5] This is based on the idea that, when young males do not have a secondary education, their income will be unusually low and thus the economic opportunity cost of rebellion is suggested as low. Collier and Hoeffler (2000; 2004) find that male secondary education enrolment together with mean income *per capita* and the growth rate of the economy has

[5] More specifically, the enrolment rate is measured as the gross enrolment ratios (GER), i.e. the ratio of total enrolment regardless of age to the population of the age group that officially corresponds to the level of education shown, and the male secondary enrolment rate figure is cited from World Bank Development Indicators (1998).

substantial effects on reducing the conflict risk and their explanation is that it is because they increase the opportunity cost of rebellion. However, the relevance of the male secondary school enrolment rate to the risk of conflict has some conflicting evidence and a statistical issue, and whether its relevance to the risk of conflict can be explained by the idea of opportunity cost of rebellion is yet to be demonstrated.

There are a few issues associated with the conclusion that a higher male secondary school enrolment rate reduces the likelihood of civil war. One is the statistical issue; the male secondary education enrolment rate and *per capita* income are highly correlated and as a result these two variables cannot be used in the same regression model (p= 0.8). Chauvet and Collier (2007) discuss what this statistical issue implies for the finding on the connection between the male secondary school enrolment rate and the risk of violent conflict. In essence, they argue that the evidence is *consistent* with the hypothesis that a more educated society is less prone to war but *falls short of demonstrating* it. They state:

> When [income *per capita* and male secondary school enrolment rate are] investigated separately, each is significant: societies with both more education and higher per capita income are considerably less prone to civil war. However, it has not proved possible to disentangle whether the causal process runs through education, through income, or indeed through some third but unobserved factor which is highly correlated with both of them. The evidence is thus *consistent* with the hypothesis that the more educated is a society the less prone is it to war, but falls short of demonstrating that this is the case (p. 7).

In addition to the statistical difficulty, evidence on the relevance of the male secondary school enrolment rate to the risk of conflict contradicts country case studies that have been conducted based on Collier and Hoeffler's model (2004) (Collier and Sambanis, 2005). On the one hand, African country cases are broadly consistent with the hypothesis; the countries that have experienced civil war, e.g. Mali, Senegal, and Sudan, have had a low

male secondary school enrolment rate. On the other hand, Eastern European and Middle Eastern country cases contradict the hypothesis. That is, countries that have had high enrolment rates of education, e.g. Yugoslavia, Georgia, Russia and Lebanon, have experienced civil war. For instance, Lebanon has achieved one of the highest literacy rates in the Arab world (60% adult literacy rate) and yet has experienced one of the longest civil wars. This can be seen in contrast to Saudi Arabia, which has an extremely low secondary schooling rate (4%) but has not experienced civil war (Sambanis, 2005).

Interpreting the regional differences in the results on the relationship between the secondary school enrolment rate and violent conflict, Samabnis (2005) proposes two different ways in which education may influence the risk of civil war. One is that, as Collier and Hoeffler (2004) argue, secondary schooling increases the opportunity cost of enlisting as rebels. The second role of education is the inculcation of a nationalist ideology in schooling; education can be used to mobilise support for conflict, particularly in countries where education is sectarian as in Lebanon. This line of argument is consistent with the traditional view of the role of education in conflict or war reviewed in Chapter Three, and the potential role of education in 'changing attitudes' (p. 569) is also acknowledged in Collier and Hoeffler (2004).

It is reasonable to think that the duel effects of education on the risk of conflict and conflicting evidence on them may have led Collier to take out the male secondary school enrolment variable in Collier, Hoeffler and Rohner (2009). However, it is too early to disregard the relevance of male secondary schooling in increasing the opportunity cost of conflict or reducing the risk of violent conflict. Indeed, Collier et al. do not completely disregard the link of schooling of young men to increasing the opportunity cost of

rebellion. Chauvet and Collier (2007) argue that education is likely to have two effects on reducing conflict risks; one is that young men are occupied while they are in school and the other is that schooling increases the employability to follow. This is based on their argument that 'when young men lack something to occupy them the risk of trouble is increased' (p. 7).

Further, the relationship between education (particularly of male secondary schooling) and the risk of violent conflict has been taken up by studies based on youth bulge theory, and they demonstrate the significant relationships between them. The study that most thoroughly investigates the relationships is Barakat and Urdal (2009). They find that a large proportion of the population being young males is likely to increase the risk of conflict in societies *where male secondary education enrolment is low*. Furthermore, the combined effect of low education, i.e. male secondary school enrolment, and a large proportion of the young males in the population on the risk of conflict is found to be greater in low and middle-income countries. Similarly, Thyne (2006) finds that the higher school enrolment rates (the primary enrolment rate, secondary enrolment rate, and the male secondary enrolment rate), the lower the probability of civil war. Among the three types of enrolment rates tested, the male secondary education enrolment rate is found to have the strongest effect.

For the moment, let us put aside the role of education in potentially 'changing attitudes' and focus on understanding the relevance of the higher enrolment rate to the lower risk of conflict that has been demonstrated above. A question that seems important is whether the opportunity cost of rebellion that Collier et al. argue is an appropriate interpretation of the empirical finding that the higher enrolment rate reduces the probability of conflict. This

question arises, first of all, because the two effects of education on increasing the opportunity cost of rebellion that Chauvet and Collier (2007) point out above are somewhat ambivalent. To reiterate, the two effects of education they mention are the meaningful engagement of young men while they are in school (by the mere fact that they go to school every day) and that schooling increasing the employability to follow. The logic behind the first effect is rather straightforward; by the time male children get to secondary school they are 'young men' and, therefore, secondary schooling is the relevant level of schooling that occupies the young men (rather than primary schooling) while they are in school. However, the logic behind the second effect needs critical scrutiny because the contention that secondary schooling increases future income is debatable in the reality of developing countries, as I have discussed (see Section 4.2.2). At the same time, I also recognise that the premise that secondary schooling leads to higher employment being broken in reality may not change the relevance of secondary schooling to the opportunity cost of rebellion; whether or not the premise functions in reality, a relevant point of concern may be the *perceptions* or expectations of the beneficiaries of secondary schooling, i.e. young males. If they perceive that their schooling increases future income prospects, then the perception already may mean that the opportunity cost of enlisting as rebels is increased.

In summary, the idea that education increases the opportunity cost of rebellion, and thus reduces the risk of violent conflict, allows the exploration of the role of education in violent conflict beyond the premise of grievances as its primary cause. And yet the links among education, particularly male secondary school enrolment rate, the opportunity cost of rebellion explanation, and the risk of violent conflict, remain contested and are to be examined in more studies from different angles.

4.3.3 Critiques and relevance of the opportunity cost of rebellion

I will discuss below the three major criticisms of Collier's studies as well as the relevance of his ideas to the case of Sierra Leone. Most critiques are aimed at the 'greed' hypothesis developed in Collier and Hoeffler (2004), although some points made by these critiques are overcome in his latest study (Collier, Hoeffler, and Rohner, 2009). This is because Collier and Hoeffler (2004) remains the most influential of his studies. Therefore, the critiques regarding Collier's argument to be discussed here include ones against the 'greed' explanation.

The first point of criticism is that Collier et al.'s explanation is 'rebel-centric'; by only focusing on rebels being 'greedy,' it neglects the role of the state as an actor in the conflict (Reno, 2006; Cramer, 2002; Humphreys, 2003; Ballentine and Nitzchke, 2005; Azam, 2006). For instance, Reno (2006) argues that the fault to begin with should be attributed to the state officials who created a political economy in which predatory behaviours were promoted. In essence, it is the political economy that prompted the rebels to be 'greedy.' On the one hand, the criticism mentioned above seems to be appropriate as Collier et al. do focus on the role of rebels in explaining civil war: 'Civil war occurs as a result of rebellion. Hence, the phenomenon to be explained is the emergence of a rebel organization' (Collier and Hoeffler, 2000, p. 3). Recognising that Collier et al.'s explanation is 'rebel-centric,' the role of ruling elites and the state where conflict emerges will be elaborated as the third strand of explanation later, focusing on explanations by Bates (2008) and Reno (e.g. 2000; 2002; 2006). On the other hand, it is misleading to state that Collier et al. completely ignore the role of the state in conflict; they examine elsewhere the elements related to the state, such as regime type (i.e. democracy versus autocracy), the state's reliance on exports

of a primary commodity, and governance issues, in considering the likelihood of civil war (Collier and Rohner, 2008; Collier and Hoeffler, 2005).

The second line of criticism is that Collier et al.'s claim that their 'greed' or 'feasibility' models are superior to the 'grievance' model – against which the statistical tests are conducted – is at best partial (e.g. Humphreys, 2003). This is because their construction of proxies for both models (the 'grievance' model against the 'greed' model in 2004 and the 'motive' model against the 'feasibility' model in 2009) are ambiguous. It is true that the link between the proxies and the theoretical argument is somewhat loose. Many of the proxies that Collier and Hoeffler (2004) employ for measuring the 'greed' hypothesis can also be used for the 'grievance' hypothesis or other theoretical conclusions (Humphreys, 2003; Keen, 2005). For instance, income *per capita* is treated as one of the proxies to measure the opportunity cost of rebellion by Collier et al., but the same variable is interpreted as a proxy for state strength by Fearon and Laitin (2003). The use of income *per capita* as a proxy for the opportunity cost of rebellion is also criticised in that it cannot suggest any behavioural conclusions as it is about the poverty of nations (Guichaua, 2010). It does not suggest the number or concentration of poor people within countries, which seems to be a more appropriate measure of the opportunity cost (Humphreys, 2003). Furthermore, the proxies for the grievance model do not fully encompass what 'grievance' is about. The 'grievance' model is proxied by 'cultural' fractionalisation (i.e. ethnic, religious, and social fractionalisation) and inequality measures (i.e. land, income, and political rights). As already touched upon (see Section 4.2 above), these proxies are not sufficient to be able to claim the superiority of the 'greed' or 'feasibility' explanation over the 'grievance' explanation.

The third point of criticism is whether greed or feasibility can ever be *the* primary cause of violent conflict. Not many argue against the relevance of the availability of 'profitable' natural resources or 'greedy' rebels to violent conflict (e.g. Keen, 1998). However, a question is whether a dichotomy – between greed and grievances or between motivations and feasibility – being used to choose *the* primary cause of violent conflict is justifiable (e.g. Humphreys, 2003; Stewart, 2004). In other words, for conflict to emerge, it may not be a dichotomous question of 'either-or,' but different factors may be intertwined and at work. Ballentine and Nitzchke (2005) summarise the point:

> [W]hile the availability of lucrative natural resources has important consequences for conflict dynamics … qualitative studies suggest that economic motives of self-enrichment and economic opportunities for insurgent mobilisation are not the sole or even primary cause of conflict. Rather, the outbreak of conflict tends to be triggered by the interaction of economic motives and opportunities with socio-cultural, political, and economic grievances (p. 5).

In addition to the 'economic motives and opportunities' and 'socio-cultural, political, and economic grievances' pointed out by Ballentine and Nitzchke (2005), some researchers point out the importance of security dilemmas as one of the motivations behind people enlisting as rebels (e.g. Kasfir, 2004). Security dilemmas refer to groups or individuals searching for ways to protect themselves as, when the state has collapsed or conflict has emerged, there is no state authority or rule to protect them. Some therefore decide to become affiliated to a rebel movement in order to ensure their own safety (e.g. Humphrey and Weinstein, 2004).

While recognising the criticisms above against Collier et al.'s theories, they are nevertheless relevant to understanding the case of civil war in Sierra Leone. As discussed in Chapter Two, there is evidence of looting of properties of citizens by all fighting forces and a clear interest on all sides in occupying the diamond mining areas (typical 'greedy'

behaviours) (e.g. Keen, 2005). Indeed, Collier and Hoeffler (2000; 2004) use the civil war in Sierra Leone as their illustration of a rebellion caused by 'greed' (see Section 2.5). The relevance of secondary schooling to the lower risk of conflict is also supported in the case of Sierra Leone by many studies, as we have already seen. For instance, Humphreys and Weinstein (2006) find that individuals with little or no education are nearly 8% more likely to join a fighting faction than those with a secondary education or more. A glimpse of the findings on the case of Sierra Leone above suggests that the war there is not understandable merely by grievance explanations and that Collier's explanation contributes to a fuller picture of the war there.

4.4 Role of state and ruling elites in state collapse and civil war

4.4.1 The main ideas of Bates and Reno

Bates (2008) argues, using game theories, that political order is not a given. It only occurs when the ruling elites, whom he regards as 'specialists in violence,' 'choose to employ the means of coercion to protect the creation of wealth rather than prey upon it' (p. 5) and, at the same time, when citizens 'choose to set weapons aside and to devote their time instead to the production of wealth and to the enjoyment of leisure' (p. 5). This indicates that the political order exists in an equilibrium of choices by rulers and citizens, which others may refer to as a 'social contract' (e.g. Azam and Mesnard, 2003). On the other hand, the political order collapses (and civil war emerges as a result) when 'specialists in violence' turn from being 'guardians' to 'predators,' preying upon the wealth of the production of citizens, and citizens – reacting to this behaviour by their rulers – take up arms. As such, the third explanation concerns the role of the state and ruling elites in the emergence of violent conflict, drawing mainly on Robert Bates in *When Things Fell Apart: State Failure in Late-Century Africa* (2008). While Stewart and Collier's explanations focus on why insurgents take up arms, Bates reveals how the incumbent state-officials 'prepared the field'

(2008, p. 131) for insurgents to decide to take up arms against them. Bates' explanation is complemented with ideas from Reno in order to strengthen the link between education and the explanations on the role of the state and ruling elites in considering the risk of violent conflict.

When Things Fell Apart is essentially an explanation of the specific phenomenon of civil war, which emerged in many of the sub-Saharan Africa countries in the late twentieth-century as a result of state collapse. Generalising the phenomenon, Bates (2008) explains that the first move by the 'specialists in violence' (or the ruling elites) becoming predatory (having previously been 'guardians'), which ultimately leads to the waging of civil war by citizens against them, is the transformation of the state into an authoritarian regime. Such a system allows the ruling elites to keep resources for themselves and neglect the public. The move towards authoritarian regimes was, according to Bates, due to the rulers' concerns over the cost of the provision of public goods, including education. In post-independent Africa, ruling elites faced political dilemmas as electoral competitions had become extremely costly. Incumbents had to compete against challengers in elections and in order to win the popular vote and preserve their positions in office they increasingly distributed material benefits in the form of public goods. This is because local political elites agitated for material benefits, and behind them were the electorates' expectation of the material benefits to be brought to their local community. As it became too expensive for incumbents to keep distributing public goods to maintain their position in the state, they decided to make the regime authoritarian. They prohibited the establishment of opposition parties and the holding of elections. As a result, the incumbents no longer had to compete to win popular votes or to distribute goods in a universal way. This change allowed the incumbents to be more 'predatory'; they retained more for themselves and distributed

benefits as they liked, i.e. more narrowly and privately. Bates (2008) argues that this change also meant that, for political opponents as well, promising and providing the constituency with services was no longer important. This is because what they needed was not votes from people but the political favour of the ruling elites, on which their chance of success and being included in the narrowing 'private' distribution of material benefits depended. Consequently, '[p]rivate benefits drove out public goods' (Bates, 2008, p. 52).

In addition to the move towards authoritarian regimes, Bates (2008) lists three key variables that lead the 'specialists in violence' to becoming predators rather than 'guardians.' They are a decrease in public revenue, the high rewards from predation, and the shorter-term perspective that these 'specialists of violence' cultivate. These are complex concepts and a full explanation is beyond the scope of this thesis. Rather, I focus on the most relevant variable to the study: the decrease in public revenue. This is most relevant to the study because it contributes directly to the weakening of state institutions and services, including in education. Bates explains that the decrease in public revenue increases the benefits of being predatory because the decrease in public revenues represents a decline in the rewards from public service, i.e. protecting citizens.

What deserves particular attention in Bates' explanation regarding the decrease of public revenue is that it is the policy and political choices of the rulers themselves that had led to lowering, albeit partially, the public revenue in late twentieth-century Africa. Why did the ruling elites deliberately choose policies that would lower the public revenue? The main policy packages they chose were the so-called 'control regimes', characterised by a centralised, closed and regulated economy. The package was economically devastating as well as costly, resulting in greatly decreased revenue. Bates (2008) claims, however, that

the ‘control regimes’ had unarguable political benefits. One such benefit was being able to ease the regional tensions that had been caused by the competition among regions in order to take control of key industries in the country. The package allowed the nationalisation of the industries and therefore the direct control of the government. In other words, the ‘control regimes’ increased the resources that were at the direct command of the president. Therefore, although the package had a devastating effect on the economy, it was politically beneficial for the ‘specialists in violence’.

Reno (e.g. 2006; 2002; 2000) provides a different perspective to that of Bates (2008) with regards to why the ruling elites came to neglect the provision of public goods and why they made policy choices that weakened the state institutions. These are important points as they relate directly to education as a part of the provision of public services. Reno (e.g. 2002) emphasises the security concerns that ruling elites were facing as a primary factor that led them to prioritise the private distribution of benefits over the provision of public goods. As local political elites and strongmen agitated for material benefits, ruling elites had to try hard to buy their loyalty or at least their compliance through the provision of material benefits. If not, they could organise their followers to challenge the ruling elites. The most efficient, albeit short-term, measure was to distribute resources and assets to the key strongmen as patronage, rather than as public goods in a universal way. Reno (e.g. 2002) goes so far as to state that, ‘From this perspective, expenditures on services like *education* and health care… would be *wasted*’ (p. 840, emphasis added).

As to why the ruling elites made policy choices that resulted in the weakening of state institutions, Reno (2002; 2006) argues that the weakening of formal institutions itself was indeed the rulers’ deliberate choice. The rulers deliberately undermined their own state

institutions and the provision of public goods, a move which was again rooted in their fear; if institutions are strong, potential opponents, i.e. local political elites or strongmen, can take control over them to defy the rulers. In other words, if the institutions were strong and services were provided well, those administrators who provide popular public services, such as security, education, and health, could acquire support from beneficiaries who were grateful to them and then challenge the rulers.

Thus, the behaviour and choices of the rulers as expounded by Bates and Reno show that weakened institutions should be seen as a consequence of a collapsed state; the root of the problems lies in the nature of the political deals characterised by patronage and the political manoeuvring of the ruling elites. Such an academic explanation differs from the 'fragile states' discourse in the policy field, which partly argues that weak state institutions themselves facilitate, or even 'drive,' an emergence of violent conflict. As mentioned a few times in the study (e.g. sections 1.2.1 and 3.2), in the 'fragile states' discourse a link is often made between the 'fragile state' and the risk of violent conflict. An exemplary work in which such a claim is strongly supported is a DFID working paper by Vallings and Moreno-Torres (2005). It puts forth the argument that weak political institutions are the central *driver* of 'fragility.' 'Fragility' here implies political instability, of which violent conflict is the ultimate manifestation. They argue that weak institutions are the central driver because essentially 'fragility' occurs because weak institutions fail to non-violently manage the 'natural' conflicts that arise in society. According to Vallings and Moreno-Torres (2005), other elements can contribute to fragility when they are *combined with* weak state institutions, but they are not able to drive it on their own.

The point by Vallings and Moreno-Torres (2005) and other policy documents that weak state institutions are less capable of managing conflict non-violently finds agreement in some academic studies. Indeed, the point is recognised by both Stewart and Collier et al., stating that the weakness of the state increases the risk of violent conflict by it not being able to suppress potential conflict (e.g. Stewart, 2008a; 2000; Collier and Rohner, 2008; Collier and Hoeffler, 2005). However, the dispute arises when weak state institutions are regarded as a 'driver' of violent conflict. For one, there is a problem of endogenity. In much of the development literature, the endogenity of the 'fragile state' and violent conflict is implicitly assumed. It is common for indicators of fragile states to include the experience of conflict or political instability, and fragile states and conflict-affected countries tend to be treated together (e.g. DFID, 2005b; Rice and Patrick, 2008). Similarly, some of the academic literature on state failure includes violent conflict in defining the conditions for state failure or collapse (e.g. Bates, 2008; Rotberg, 2004). Another reason is that a perspective that merely focuses on the weakness of formal state institutions as a driver of conflict misses out much of the political manoeuvring of the rulers, which ultimately gives rise to violent conflict. The rulers' political manoeuvring outside formal institutions, more specifically in 'informal' markets (or the 'Shadow state' in Reno's (1995) words), are as equally or more significant than that inside the formal institutions (Reno, 1995). Therefore, although there is a profound link between a weak, failing, or collapsing state and violent conflict, weak state institutions and violent conflict are treated as part of the consequences of the political manoeuvres of the ruling elites.

4.4.2 Ruling elites, the state and education

The explanations by Bates and Reno provide a theoretical lens through which to look at education as part of the public services provided by the state and as part of the state institutions, as well as how it came to be neglected deliberately by the ruling elites as a

result of their political manoeuvring. Bates and Reno only briefly touch upon the role of education in their explanations, and this is already encompassed in the general description of their theories above. In this sub-section, therefore, I simply summarise Bates and Reno's points that touch on education (or public services and state institutions more generally), highlighting the similarities and differences between them.

Both Bates and Reno depict education as one of the public goods the state used to provide but came to neglect, albeit from a different rationale. Bates (2008) explains that it was because the provision of public services became too expensive when the ruling elites were selected by elections. Once the state became authoritarian, the ruling elites did not have to please the populace by providing public services and, as a result, they started to neglect such provision and focused on distributing resources privately as they wished. Reno (e.g. 2002) takes the view that the ruling elites came to neglect public services due to security concerns. The ruling elites were mainly concerned with ensuring the local political elites and strongmen were under their control. In this perspective, the private distribution of the material benefits to those who may potentially challenge them was the priority, meaning the provision of public services (including education) to the general populace was simply a 'waste' of resources.

A further difference between Bates and Reno is in whether the ruling elites deliberately undermined their own institutions and provision of public services, which include the education sector. Bates and Reno similarly contend that the ruling elites deliberately chose policies that lowered public revenue, which had a direct influence on education, weakening educational institutions and, as a result, weakening the capacity of the state to provide formal schooling. However, Bates (2008) explains the lowering of public revenue

and the weakening of state institutions as a trade-off necessary in the pursuit of their other political goals. On the other hand, Reno (e.g. 2006; 2000) argues that the ruling elites deliberately undermined the state institutions because they were afraid that strong institutions may provide sufficient power and followers for the administrators of the institutions to challenge them.

4.4.3 Critiques and relevance of the explanations on the role of the state and ruling elites

Here, I briefly review a major criticism of the explanations put forward by Bates and Reno, as well as looking at their relevance to the case of Sierra Leone. A major criticism particularly against Bates (2008) is the ambiguity surrounding the concepts of state collapse and ruling elites. Bates does not discuss the precise relationship between state collapse and civil war, but civil war is seen as a major characteristic or symptom of state collapse. Bierschenk (2009) argues that Bates (2008) does not explain why the alleged three variables pushed only some countries to the state collapse that is accompanied by civil war, but not others, considering that there was civil war in less than 20% of African states by the late twentieth century according to Bates' (2008) figure. Another ambiguity that is left unanswered is who exactly the 'specialists in violence' or the predatory elites are. They appear to be sometimes a small circle of elites clustered around the president, but at other times they seem to indicate a wider group (Bierschenk, 2009).

Whilst bearing in mind the criticism against the ambiguities in the concepts used by Bates, the role of the state and ruling elites is nevertheless extremely relevant to the case of Sierra Leone. As elaborated in Chapter Two, the political culture and manoeuvres seen in post-independence Sierra Leone, particularly in regard to Stevens, fit the description of ruling elites outlined by both Bates and Reno. Stevens created a one-party state, banning

opposition parties, and he extended patronage to 'insiders' by providing state resources to them while neglecting the state institutions. He also nationalised and centralised major industries, including the diamond industry. While the economy was in major crisis and public services and state institutions were weakened considerably by the mid-1980s, the ruling elites around Stevens and his successor President Momoh were doing well until the state collapsed and civil war emerged in 1991 (see Section 2.2). Indeed, the tactics used by Stevens in Sierra Leone are referred to by Bates (2008) and Reno (1998; 1995), who extensively focus on the case of Sierra Leone.

4.5 Conclusion

The chapter has reviewed three strands of explanations on the root causes of contemporary violent conflict in the social science literature. These explanations complement each other by covering and explaining different aspects of the complex phenomena of contemporary violent conflict. The idea of HIs by Stewart has shown how inequalities among cultural groups can arouse grievances among them and lead to an emergence of ethnic conflict. Collier et al.'s idea of the opportunity cost of rebellion – the availability of cheap labour (whose opportunity cost is low) for a rebellion – elucidates, albeit partially, why conflict is more feasible in low-income countries. Bates' idea of 'specialists in violence' describes how civil war breaks out in failing states, highlighting the ruling elites' political choices as the main factor that prepares the ground for a state to collapse and for civil war to emerge in the vacuum.

More importantly, all three theoretical explanations explored in the chapter seem to be useful for advancing our understanding of the role of education in contemporary conflict. As pointed out at the end of the previous chapter, the theoretical ideas on the role of education in violent conflict in the field of education and conflict are yet to be established

and, on the whole, studies in this field are limited in scope and depth. In terms of the role of education in *contemporary* violent conflict, the studies have only depicted how elements *inside* educational institutions can contribute to the *labelling* of ethnic conflict, i.e. ethnic divisions and hatred, but are yet to address how education fuels the root causes of contemporary conflict, whether they are labelled as 'ethnic' or not. In contrast, the social science literature reviewed in this chapter depicts the role of education as part of the three kinds of root causes of contemporary conflict. More specifically, Stewart and Gurr show how education can fuel people's grievances, thereby raising a risk of violent conflict. Collier et al. expound that enrolling in school may reduce the likelihood of conflict by increasing the opportunity cost of rebellion. Bates and Reno show how education, as part of the public services and state institutions that the ruling elites can come to neglect deliberately, comes to fail, with the ultimate result being the emergence of civil war.

Yet the social science literature also has a major limitation in elucidating the role of education in contemporary conflict, in that this topic is only lightly touched upon as one of the elements and is not rigorously examined or explored theoretically. This is because, for one, the social science literature is not primarily concerned with education's link with the risk of conflict and, moreover, they are macro-level theories. As a result, there are some ambiguities in the explanations of the role of education. For instance, I have pointed out that, although Collier et al. and other youth bulge studies find that enrolment in secondary education, particularly of males, significantly reduces the risk of conflict, the conclusion by Collier et al. is reached with statistical difficulty and there is conflicting evidence on it. Further, Collier el al.'s explanation of that conclusion, i.e. that education increases the opportunity cost of rebellion, seems to require further interrogation for it to be validated.

As has been mentioned, it is outside the scope of this study to test the validity of the explanations in the social science literature reviewed in the chapter. However, the limitations and ambiguities in the role of education as it has been depicted as part of the root causes of violent conflict will be explored in Chapter Nine and Ten with the data on the case of Sierra Leone. For now, while recognising the limitations and ambiguities of the role of education in the explanations, what the study needs as a next step is to bring education back to the centre so as to advance the study as an educational study. In it, I will synthesise the role of education in conflict depicted in the literature reviewed so far (from chapters Two to Four). The creation of the framework will be the task of the next chapter.

Chapter Five: Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

5.1 Introduction to the chapter

The task of the chapter is to establish a theoretical and conceptual framework. This will be done by synthesising the role of education in violent conflict discussed in the literature reviewed in the thesis so far: on the case of Sierra Leone in Chapter Two, in the education literature surveyed in Chapter Three, and in the social science literature covered in Chapter Four. The framework is established to approach the second aim of the thesis: to identify the characteristics of educational systems that are considered to be associated with violent conflict (see Section 1.3) and is envisaged to serve theoretical and empirical purposes.

The theoretical purpose of the framework is to help delineate features in and around education that can fuel contemporary violent conflict, particularly in weak and low-income states. As has been mentioned, the interdisciplinary approach the study follows has just begun to delineate which features in or around education can, based on the theories in social sciences, fuel the root causes of contemporary conflict; the only work being done in this regard is the simple delineation of them as a way to organise a literature review by Ostby and Urdal (2010) (see Section 3.3.3). Therefore, the establishment of a refined framework delineating the features in and around education that can fuel the root causes of conflict is the first step to advancing the approach further. In the framework I include the features in education that are considered to fuel violent conflict by educational literature, despite these ideas not being fully established yet or not being directly about conflict in low-income and weak states. This is also a way to synthesise the existing knowledge on

the role of education in conflict from both the educational literature and social science literature. Further, by surveying both bodies of literature, whether and the extent to which the social science literature helps advance understanding of education's role can be discussed later on.

The empirical purpose of the framework is to depict the elements and the constituents that are to be investigated in Sierra Leone to address the research question. In examining the case of Sierra Leone, it is considered essential to examine all the features that are considered by the literature as fuelling violent conflict generally, including features that are considered to have fuelled contemporary ethnic conflicts or the Second World War. Although the civil war in Sierra Leone was different in nature and in 'label' to such conflicts (being a contemporary non-ethnic conflict), one nevertheless cannot deny the possibility that the features that were irrelevant to the civil war may become salient and fuel a cycle of conflict in present-day Sierra Leone.

5.2 Overview of the theoretical and conceptual framework

The theoretical and conceptual framework of the study is illustrated in Figure 3 below. The framework has three constituent parts. The first is the level of analysis of education, in terms of the educational system as it is planned and implemented at the level of institution, or at the national level (in short, education at the level of institution), and the educational system that is experienced and perceived by the beneficiaries at the micro level (in short, education at the level of beneficiaries). The level of institution is further divided into two sub-levels: by plan and by implementation of educational system at the national level. The second constituent is the relationship of the educational system to three dimensions of society: the social-cultural, economic, and political dimensions. This is adopted from Stewart's categorisation of HIs. The last constituent in the framework is the four elements

inside the educational system. They are: 1) conception (goals and expectations at the level of institution, and representations and expectations at the level of beneficiaries); 2) structure; 3) curriculum and quality; and 4) governance.

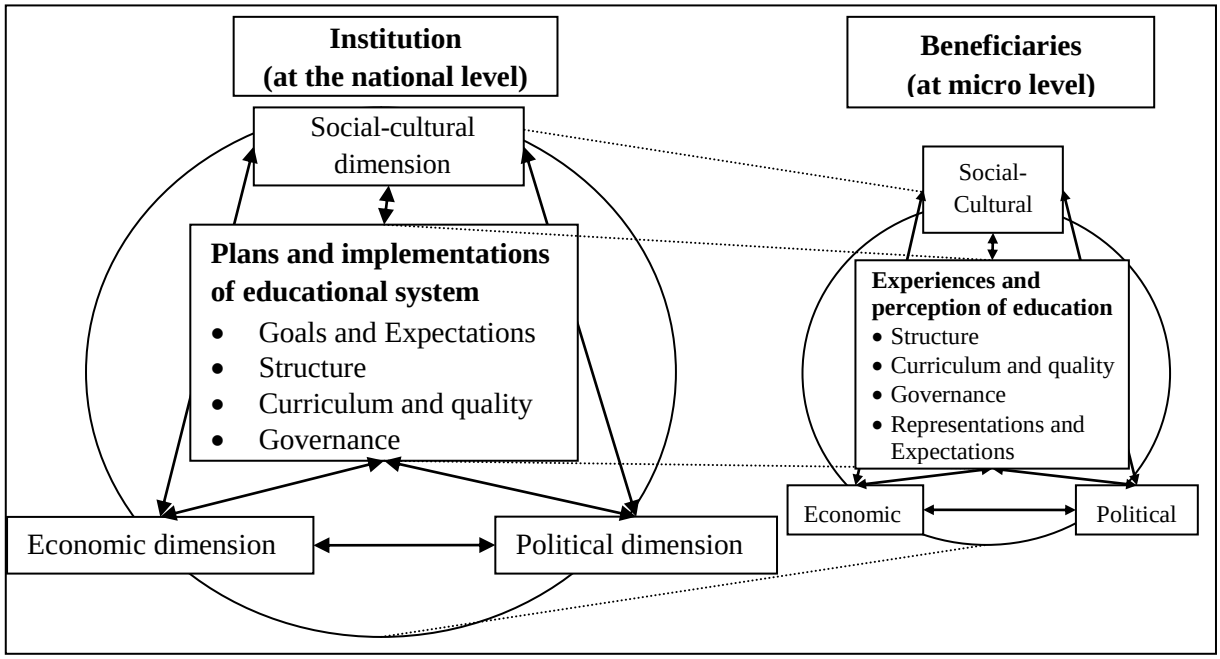

Figure 3: Theoretical and conceptual framework of the study

Before I discuss each component in more detail below, it should be noted that there are some analytical tools on education and 'fragility' developed by development agencies (i.e. EFA FTI Secretariat, 2008; INEE, 2008; USAID, 2006; Berry, 2009). Some of the constituent parts of these analytical frameworks overlap with those in my study's framework above. However, the analytical frameworks of the development agencies differ from the purpose of the framework in my study here; they aim to provide practical indicators for measuring fragility while the framework here is used to depict elements and relationships that are theoretically and conceptually relevant to the exploration of the role of education in (the risk of) conflict in the society under consideration.

I describe why each constituent in the conceptual framework is important, starting from the larger one: from the levels of analysis of education, education in the wider context, and

to elements in education. In justifying the importance of every constituent, some discussions necessarily overlap because, quite simply, the constituents are themselves related to one another.

5.3 Two levels of analysis: institution and beneficiaries

The framework depicts two levels of analysis of education: the level of institution (educational system planned and implemented at the national level) and the level of beneficiaries (education experienced and perceived by beneficiaries at the micro level).

The importance of analysis of education at the level of institution does not need much justification as the great majority of the studies in the field of education and conflict – both theoretical and empirical – have focused on this level; they have analysed policies, mostly on the structure and curriculum (see Chapter Three). Unlike the majority of the studies in the field, however, the framework further divides the level of institution into two sub-levels: *education by plan* and *education by implementation*. Plans and implementations are treated separately mainly because all the plans may not necessarily be actually implemented, particularly in weak states. As Bates and Reno elucidate (see Section 4.4.2), in weak or failing states the extent to which state institutions function and public services are delivered – including education – is not dependent on written policies as much as on the ruling elites' agendas. Indeed, written policies may mean very little in practice; in the case of Sierra Leone, the Education Act implemented in 1964 was not repealed until the Education Act of 2004 was enacted. Therefore, it is considered essential to examine separately the policies that are written on paper and the policies that are actually implemented.

As well as analysis at the level of institution, the framework depicts the analysis of education at the level of beneficiaries, i.e. how the beneficiaries experience and perceive the education provided to them and the role of it in their lives. As was mentioned in Section 3.6, this level of analysis is limited in the field of education and conflict, yet the social science literature reviewed in Chapter Four *implies* the importance of this level of analysis in order to fully understand the role of education in contemporary conflict. This is fundamentally because the theories (with the exception of those by Bates and Reno) are concerned with why ordinary citizens collectively take up arms. Thus, in terms of education, they depict how it becomes a part of the reason citizens take up arms, making the focus citizens or beneficiaries' perceptions and experiences of education, not education at policy levels. In fact, Gurr's idea of relative deprivation most strongly suggests the importance of the analysis of education at this level (see Section 4.2.2). As relative deprivation is about the gap between people's expectations and actual capabilities, it requires examination of what beneficiaries expect from education and what education actually enables them to do in their lives, as well as identifying if there is any gap between them. The relevance of such a perspective in the case of Sierra Leone has already been mentioned; education increased university students' expectations, widening their sense of a gap between their actual capabilities and expectations and ultimately fuelling the 'revolution' (see Section 2.5). Stewart's theory also implies the necessity of analysis at the level of beneficiaries. For HIs in education to be relevant to the risk of conflict, the first condition is that education has social significance in the society in question. This requires an examination of what education is actually accomplishing in the lives of beneficiaries, in terms of their income or well-being (the actual social significance), as well as how beneficiaries perceive the social significance of education (social significance *in perception*). Furthermore, for Collier et al.'s idea that education (in the form of secondary

schooling) raises the opportunity cost of rebellion to be useful as an explanation of the role of education in conflict, examination at the level of beneficiaries is also required (see Section 4.3.2). More specifically, this examination must focus on whether education, or more specifically secondary schooling, actually increases future income for beneficiaries or at least is perceived to do so by the beneficiaries. If it does not (or is not perceived to do so), their argument that education raises the opportunity cost of rebellion, thereby reducing the risk of conflict, becomes irrelevant.

Thus, we can see then that, although the social science literature *implies* the importance of analysis at the level of beneficiaries in examining the role of education in conflict, this does not mean that the literature has empirically examined it. As has already been mentioned, the literature consists of macro-level theories not aiming to understand the role of education in conflict. Therefore, their arguments about the role of education, particularly at the level of beneficiaries, should be best described as theoretical speculations. This further enhances the importance of empirically examining education at the level of beneficiaries to see whether and how these theoretical speculations are useful and to further advance understanding of the role of education as part of the root causes of conflict.

5.4 Education in context

The conceptual framework depicts education's interaction with three dimensions of society, in the form of economic, political, and social-cultural dimensions. This categorisation is adopted from Stewart (e.g. 2010; see Section 4.2.1).[6] The economic dimension refers to employment opportunities and income levels as well as access to and ownership of assets.

[6] Originally, the categorisation and the framework of the study (see Figure 3) were partially inspired by Fagerlind and Saha (1989).

The political dimension is about political participation and power. I also include security as part of the political dimension for security, or one's own safety, is suggested as an important factor in motivating people to join a fighting faction (e.g. Kasfir, 2004; Humphreys and Weinstein, 2006; 2004; see sections 2.5 and 4.3.3). Finally, the social-cultural dimension is concerned with access to a range of services (e.g. health and education), social status, and the recognition and standing of different groups' languages, customs, norms and practices. As Stewart has only come to define cultural status as an independent category in her latest studies (see Section 4.2.1), the social and cultural dimensions are treated together in this study.

The theories in the social science literature (see Chapter Four) as well as the case of Sierra Leone (see Chapter Two) highlight the role of education in the context of (other dimensions of) society in fuelling the root causes of violent conflict. For Stewart and Gurr, a sense of grievance towards education per se – either educational inequalities among cultural groups or the gap between people's expectations and their actual capabilities – is not sufficient to spur a conflict (see Section 4.2.2). Rather, grievances related to education can fuel conflict when *combined with,* for Stewart, other HIs (in social, cultural, economic, and political dimensions) and, for Gurr, with pre-existing intense relative deprivation that is wide in scope (i.e. found in various dimensions of society). In Stewart's idea, moreover, an examination of the *actual* social significance of education – a part of the first condition for educational inequalities to be a relevant factor for the risk of conflict – requires an examination of education 'in context' because it is about whether and how education leads to increased income or well-being in the lives of beneficiaries. Moreover, if the social significance of education lies in its instrumental value, it also requires an analysis of whether and how education actually enables its beneficiaries to acquire the goal they

expect to reach. In Collier et al.'s argument too, what needs to be empirically examined is the relationship between education and economic dimensions: what economic 'opportunities' is education offering in reality (as well as in perception)? This is because what is crucial is the value of education in raising the opportunity cost of rebellion, i.e. the income foregone by enlisting as rebels. While Collier et al.'s argument focuses on the economic context, Bates and Reno's perspectives may be seen as being concerned with the political dimension: how is education provided by the state, as part of public goods, and how do educational institutions, as part of state institutions, function? In the case of Sierra Leone, Krech and Maclure (2003) emphasise that the ways in which education has fuelled the civil war there can be elucidated only when education is seen in the context of political, economic and ideological forces, not as a discrete phenomenon (see Section 2.6).

Therefore, the framework depicts the educational system in its wider context. This perspective is considered to make a contribution to the field of education and conflict as the existing studies there have generally examined the educational system as an independent institution and, in consequence, have kept their spotlight firmly on elements inside that system (see Section 3.6).

5.5 Elements in the educational system

5.5.1 Conception

The conception of education is, in a basic sense, about what people expect from (receiving or promoting) education in the society in question. I use different terms within each level of analysis, talking of 'goals' and 'expectations' at the level of institution and 'representations' and 'expectations' at the level of beneficiaries. At the level of institution, the focus is on what policymakers aim to achieve and what rationale they have behind their plans and implementation of the educational system. At the level of beneficiaries, the

conception of education is about the 'social significance' of education *in perception*, i.e. the benefits of education that beneficiaries perceive and the goals for which they pursue education.

The 'goals' and 'expectations' for the educational system envisaged by policymakers are considered to provide initial clues as to whether and how the educational system contains features that may contribute to violent conflict. Here, 'goals' are considered to be the 'official agenda' of the government for the educational system written in policy documents. On the other hand, I use the term 'expectations' to refer to the broader, and perhaps more ambiguous, rationale and expectations for the educational system that may not necessarily be written on paper but are shared by the parties involved in the planning or implementation of the system.[7] Although not all 'expectations' are transformed into 'goals' or actual policies, both are important. In extreme cases, such as in the case of Japan elaborated in Chapter Two, the 'goals' of education – in other words, the purpose of education as written in governmental documents – clearly conceived of it as a means to promote ultra-nationalism and the 'sacrifice' of citizens' lives in war. In cases such as Rwanda and Burundi, it is beyond the study's scope to determine whether the education of Tutsis to be support staff for the colonial government was written in government papers or not, but it may be easily inferred that the rationale behind the education of Tutsis was an 'expectation' that was clearly understood among the government and the churches in charge of the provision of education there. As such, in less extreme cases, the 'agenda' behind education may not be apparent in the 'goals' but may be very much present in the 'expectations.' Furthermore, regardless of whether it surfaces as a goal or an expectation,

[7] I am aware that, for instance, Dale (1989) defines the words 'goals' and 'expectations' of education differently to the present study. However, for the sake of my study, the word 'expectations' is also used to refer to young people's ambiguous desires and hopes upon acquiring 'education.' Therefore, I consistently use the term 'expectations' in relation to more ambiguous desires and hopes on the part of both policymakers and beneficiaries in the study.

the agenda of policymakers and ruling elites which sees education as a tool to promote war directly or to emphasise ethnic divisions has underpinned how specific elements in education, including the structure, curriculum, and governance, were organised and came to promote conflict in the cases of Japan, Rwanda and Burundi. Moreover, at the theoretical level, Bates and Reno show how the ruling elites conceive public services and state institutions (including education) as having direct effects on the extent to which services or institutions are neglected in failing states; indeed, we have seen that the ruling elites deliberately neglected them for their political agendas. That deliberate intention is considered to have directed how education as part of the state institutions and public services came to be weakened (see Section 4.4.2).

On the other hand, the 'representations' and 'expectations' in relation to education held by beneficiaries of the educational system are considered important in understanding the social significance of education *in perception* in the society under consideration. Remember that, in Stewart's conception, educational inequalities become relevant to a risk of violent conflict when education has (or is perceived to have) social significance (see Section 4.2.2). While the *actual* social significance is covered by understanding education in context (how education actually leads to benefits economically, politically or socially), the social significance of education *in perception* is essentially about what people 'expect' from education. A full understanding of this requires, as I have expounded, three layers of examination. The first obvious question is whether people perceive education to have social significance. The second question – if education is indeed perceived to have social significance – is whether it is the intrinsic or instrumental value of education that is perceived to have social significance. If only the intrinsic value of education is valued, then the third layer of examination is not necessary. However, if education is valued

instrumentally, it is important to examine the goals beneficiaries expect to reach by means of education and the level or type of education that is most 'instrumental' to achieving those goals. As well as understanding the social significance *in perception* then, the third layer of examination is also important in understanding the *actual* social significance of education; the goals that the beneficiaries expect to achieve determine the level and type of education that actually enables them to achieve the goals. As a result, that is the level and type of education that has *actual* social significance.

It is not only Stewart that suggests the importance of understanding 'social significance' *in perception*. Gurr and Collier et al. also imply it is important, albeit using different terminologies. In the measures of relative deprivation by Gurr, one of the two variables is people's expectations upon receiving education (against their actual capabilities). In terms of education, then, it refers to people's expectations of benefits upon receiving an education (against the benefits they get in reality). Thus, the expectations of benefits through education can essentially be seen as about social significance in perception. In the idea of the opportunity cost of rebellion by Collier et al. too, what they theoretically infer is that the individual beneficiary makes a rational choice, calculating the cost and the benefit of being involved in a rebellion, and that he or she with secondary education *perceives* that the opportunity cost is too high because he or she *perceives* that their level of education has increased the income to come. Therefore, what needs to be examined for the theoretical inference to be valid and useful is whether people in fact *perceive* and *expect* that education, or more specifically secondary schooling, significantly increases future income. This can be also seen as being encompassed in the idea of social significance in perception, as expounded above.

In addition to the theoretical importance of understanding beneficiaries' expectations in regard to education, empirical studies also suggest its importance. In pre-war Sierra Leone, how education came to ultimately fuel the war was closely linked with what people came to expect with respect to the benefits of education (see Section 2.6). Young people without the chance to pursue higher levels of education felt frustrated because they *expected* that education would lead them to obtain employment and a higher social status in society and yet they were unable to get the chance. On the other hand, young people who had been able to get the higher level of education were frustrated because of the same expectation; they had *expected* that the level of education they received would bring them good employment, but they realised the expectation could not be met in reality. In addition, such discrepancies between expectations and the reality of the benefits of becoming an educated person (or the sense of relative deprivation if Gurr's idea is applied here) are argued to be common in other developing countries, as has been touched upon in the literature (e.g. Krech and Maclure, 2003; Jeffrey, Jeffery and Jeffery, 2008; Crivello, 2009; O'Brien, 1996; see also Section 4.2.2).

5.5.2 Structure

The structure of the educational system is about how schooling is organised and who has access to it. The structural issues pointed out in the literature mainly relate to inequality and insufficiency of access, as well as to the extent to which different 'cultural' groups are segregated.

The access issues – both inequality between cultural (or ethnic) groups and its general insufficiency – are frequently mentioned as factors that have fuelled and can theoretically fuel violent conflict. In terms of inequality in access among cultural groups, the literature suggests that it can be a source of ethnic tensions and can ultimately contribute to ethnic

conflict. Bush and Saltarelli (2000) include educational inequalities as part of the 'negative face' of education (see Section 3.3.1). Similarly, Stewart depicts this as part of HIs (see Section 4.2.2). Furthermore, case studies such as Rwanda, Burundi, Nigeria, and South Africa have cited them as one of the ways in which education contributed to conflict there (see Section 3.5.2). As has been stressed throughout this thesis, Stewart's theories provide the most refined idea about the relevance of educational inequalities to the risk of violent conflict. In short, when education has social significance in the society and when there is educational inequality among cultural groups, educational inequality can become relevant with regard to the risk of conflict. The risk can become higher when the educational inequalities are coupled with other inequalities, particularly political ones. Therefore, educational inequalities among individuals are not relevant, according to Stewart, and what matters is inequality in access to the kind and level of education that has (and is perceived to have) social significance across the society in question. However, it should again be pointed out that there are some ambiguities in Stewart's idea (see Section 4.2.2). To reiterate, in pre-war Sierra Leone, the 'ethnic' lines did not become salient in the last war despite the fact that there was stark inequality in access to schooling at all levels among regions (a demarcation closely related to ethnic divisions); why this was the case is not explainable by Stewart's idea. Another ambiguity is the relationship between actual and perceived inequalities. On the one hand, Stewart assumes that the perception of inequalities reflects actual inequalities, but on the other she recognises that the perception can potentially differ from the reality of inequality due to political manoeuvres.

In addition to inequalities in access among cultural groups, the literature suggests that a generic insufficiency in educational access can also be relevant to violent conflict. Collier et al. explain that, theoretically speaking, education raises the opportunity cost of rebellion

(i.e. the income foregone by enlisting as rebels), thereby reducing the risk of conflict (see Section 4.3.2). The flip side of this argument is that the risk of conflict increases when people lack access to education because the opportunity cost of rebellion becomes low. Empirically, Collier et al. and studies that apply the youth bulge theory have found that a higher rate of secondary schooling is relevant to reducing the risk of conflict. In other studies reviewed in the thesis, too, general insufficiency of access to education is suggested to have been relevant to violence in the case of Sierra Leone (see sections 2.5 and 4.3) and in Rwanda (see Section 3.5.2). However, there are some caveats with respect to the relevance of secondary schooling to the risk of civil war (see Section 4.3.2). To summarise, the empirical finding by Collier and Hoeffler (2000; 2004) on the connection between a higher secondary school enrolment rate (of males) and a reduction in the risk of civil war has statistical problems. In addition, conflicting evidence on this was found by other qualitative studies; for example, Middle Eastern countries with higher access rates have been involved in conflicts (Sambanis, 2005). Furthermore, Collier et al.'s explanation that secondary schooling reduces the risk of conflict partially because *in reality* it increases the income foregone (by enlisting as rebels) for those who received the secondary schooling leaves some doubts. This is because, as also discussed above, there are many studies that show how in many developing countries young people who are highly educated are without employment.

Another important aspect of the structure of education is the extent to which different cultural groups are kept apart. Bush and Saltarelli (2000) include this as an element of the 'negative face' of education and segregation by ethnicity is argued to have fuelled the conflict in the cases of South Africa, Northern Ireland and Bosnia and Herzegovina, to name a few (see Section 3.5.2). The idea that segregation increases suspicion among

different groups reflects a more generic psychological theory, which is known as the contact hypothesis (see Allport, 1954). Simply put, it argues that frequent interaction among different groups that are experiencing tensions will help reduce prejudice and tensions among them. As a flipside of this hypothesis, Bush and Saltarelli (2000) and Johnson and Stewart (2007) argue that infrequent interaction among groups that are in tension can actually maintain, or worse heighten, prejudice and tensions among them. However, it should be noted that some argue against this idea. Gallagher (2004) argues that 'no specific structural arrangement provides a guaranteed outcome' (p. 142). For him, the important principle is equality; either separated or together, the key is that the minority group is given an equal educational opportunity. If not, the tension is exacerbated. Similarly, Nolan (2007) and Arlow (2004) argue that the evidence is inconclusive in regard to the contention that lack of contact fuelled the conflict in Northern Ireland.

5.5.3 Curriculum and quality

The curriculum of the educational system broadly refers to the subjects and topics that are formally or informally taught and how it is taught in the educational system. The curriculum (both the formal one and the informal one, i.e. the school ethos) and the quality of the teaching are an area in education that are considered, mainly in the educational literature, to contain elements that can fuel violent conflict.

In synthesising educational literature reviewed in Chapter Three in relation to this, seven components in the formal curriculum appear to be features that are associated with violent conflict. The first is the political unfairness of the curriculum. In this, Bush and Saltarelli (2000) delineate several ways in which a curriculum can be politically unfair to minority ethnic group(s) or to the external 'enemy': restriction in the language of instruction as a way to repress culture; the manipulation of textbooks for political purposes, particularly in

the areas of history and geography; and the inculcation of low self-worth and hatred towards 'others' (which Harber (2004) and Davies (2004) refer to as a 'hate curriculum') (see sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.2). All these aspects serve to incite hatred towards the 'enemy' or a sense of the inferiority of a minority group while boosting the sense of superiority and righteousness of the dominant group. These tactics are shown to have been used in the cases of ethnic conflict and the Second World War; policies that suppressed the languages of minority groups were employed in cases such as Sudan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Kosovo and distorted versions of history and geography were taught in cases such as Rwanda, Burundi, Japan, and Kosovo (see sections 3.4 and 3.5).

The second and third are interrelated: lack of relevance and poor quality. 'Relevance' refers to the extent to which a curriculum is suitable to the economic, social or political development of the beneficiaries and of the society. The GMR (UNESCO, 2011) argues that weak alignment between what is taught in school, job availabilities, and the skills demanded by employers can lead to high levels of unemployment among educated young people and leave them open to mobilisation for conflict. In the context of Sierra Leone, SLTRC (2004c) and Krech and Maclure (2003) suggest that the 'bookish' British style of education provided by the colonial master contributed to the frustration of young people and ultimately to the civil war (see Section 2.6). This is because schooling did not provide useful skills for the majority of Sierra Leoneans to gain jobs nor provided the essential labour for the country to develop, i.e. middle-level skilled labour. In addition to the weak relevance of the curriculum, the GMR (UNESCO, 2011) similarly argues that poor-quality education can also fuel unemployment and poverty among educated young people, thereby leaving them resentful and open for military mobilisation.

The fourth to sixth features in the formal curriculum are also interrelated: examination-focused pedagogy, the failure of the curriculum to cultivate critical thinking and the authoritarian pedagogy. Harber (2004) and Davies (e.g. 2004) are concerned about excessive examination-focused pedagogy (see Section 3.3.2), for two main reasons. One is that the examination-centred curriculum promotes excessive competition and is a form of violence; it can harm the pupils emotionally and physically by arousing unnecessary stress and anxiety. The other is that this examination focus promotes the authoritarian teaching style, focusing on the rote memorisation of facts (so that pupils can pass examinations) and neglecting the cultivation of critical thinking. On a related note, therefore, Davies in particular is also concerned about the absence of elements in a curriculum that cultivate critical abilities, such as so-called political education or critical pedagogy (c.f. Freire, 1970) (e.g. Davies, 2004; 2005). She argues that critical thinking helps pupils identify distorted political messages and, as a result, be resilient against them. Lastly, Harber's (2004) argument centres on how the authoritarian pedagogy and schooling underlies 'violent' schooling (see Section 3.3.2), and the relevance of authoritarian pedagogy to genocide in Rwanda has been also argued (see Section 3.5.2).

The seventh feature in the formal curriculum is the normalisation of violence and war. This includes military training as part of the curriculum in schools (sometimes under the label of the 'defence curriculum' in Eastern Europe and the Balkans) (Harber, 2004; Davies, 2005) and history teaching that legitimises or romanticises violence, war and military activities (Davies, 2005). Such normalisation of violence and war has been illustrated in the cases reviewed in Chapter Three.

Besides the formal curriculum, there are features in the school ethos that are also considered in the educational literature as potentially fuelling violent conflict. This is mainly through three ways: by promoting 'violence,' reinforcing divisions or hatred (or prejudice) among cultural groups, and by tolerating the teacher's daily corrupt practices in relation to pupils. The promotion of 'violence' through the school ethos here includes physical violence such as the use of corporal punishment (Harber, 2004; UNESCO, 2011) and tolerance of sexual abuse (Harber, 2004), but it also include non-physical violence too. In this vein, Davies (2005) discusses how the symbolic violence through which students are labelled and humiliated is part of a violent culture in school. Secondly, Bush and Saltarelli (2000) suggest that hatred or intolerance of minority ethnic groups can be fostered less tangibly, by teachers' treatment of pupils according to their cultural origins. They can treat pupils unequally depending on their cultural origins or segregate them informally within the system even if the system officially claims to provide equal access to every child and not to be segregational. Lastly, as I will elaborate this further in the section below with regards to features in the governance, corruption based on patronage may be interpreted as a risk feature based on the explanations by Bates and Reno. Corruption based on patronage is one of the symptoms when state institutions are weak and ruling elites become predatory. The kind of corruption seen in the school ethos refers to the minor corruptions that are practiced by teachers against pupils directly.

It should be noted that the theoretical or empirical relevance of many of the features in the curriculum to violent conflict mentioned above remain to be rigorously examined. It is chiefly the educational literature that suggests most of them and, as pointed out at the end of Chapter Three, the theoretical groundwork is yet to be properly established. Further, it is well recognised (including by some of the authors referred to frequently here, such as

Davies, 2004; Harber, 2004) that most of the features mentioned above, perhaps with the exception of military training, are not unique features of education in countries affected by conflict. Therefore, a question remains as to why some countries with these features have experienced conflict while others have not.

5.5.4 Governance

Governance is defined in the terms of the study as the '[i]nstitutions, rules and norms through which policies are developed and implemented – and through which accountability is enforced' (UNESCO, 2008, p.128). From the explanations of Bates and Reno on the role of ruling elites in state collapse and subsequent emergence of civil war (see Section 4.4), four 'symptoms' or features of governance of a state and state institutions (including education) where the ruling elites can manipulate the state for their political conveniences can be identified. The first is that decision-making power is centralised. Recall that, according to Bates, one of the primary tactics of the ruling elites that made them turn from 'guardian' to 'predator' (and ultimately led to state collapse and civil war) was to make the state authoritarian. By doing so, the decision-making power was centralised to the rulers themselves, who were then able to concentrate state resources in their hands. The second symptom is that accountability is absent or weak, as there is no or little mechanism for stakeholders to assess the performances of the state and its institutions (c.f. World Bank, 2000, cited in World Bank, 2007). The transformation of a state into an authoritarian one means that nobody can oppose what the ruling elites are doing, which means that mechanisms to check and balance their power are not allowed. The third symptom is that the capacity of state institutions is weak, meaning the provision of public services is poor and/or neglected. Bates and Reno suggest that the ruling elites came to undermine their own state institutions and the provision of public services, including those of education, and thus the institutions are rendered weak and public

services are poorly provided. The last symptom is that corruption, principally the use of public office for private benefits (Hallak and Poisson, 2006) and particularly those that are based on systematic patronage, is tolerated. Bates and Reno show that where there are no checks and balances and no need to 'please' the general populace, the ruling elites distribute the resources as they like.

These four symptoms were certainly apparent in educational systems in the cases reviewed, not least in Sierra Leone (see Chapter Two). President Stevens centralised education as well as other state institutions under him, and expenditure on education reduced in the 1980s such that the system overall became dysfunctional by the early 1990s. He intimidated those who opposed him while providing generous patronage to his 'insiders.' As such, corruption became rampant, including in the education system where teachers' salaries were delayed for many months. In addition, the centralisation of power in the state has also been observed in cases reviewed in Chapter Three, such as Japan, Germany, and Rwanda. The states centralised the power in order to manipulate the educational system for political purposes, be they the promotion of war and ultra-nationalism or the control of the country by one ethnic group.

* * * * *

The chapter has established the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study, synthesising the literature reviewed so far. As mentioned at the beginning, the elements and constituents depicted in the framework will be examined empirically in the educational realities of post-conflict Sierra Leone. Before I turn to the findings, however, I will first describe the methodological approach that the study employed in the investigation. That is the task of the next chapter.

Chapter Six: Methodology

6.1 Introduction to the chapter

In the previous chapter, I laid out the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study. This chapter, in turn, presents the methodological approach the study has taken to empirically investigate the case of Sierra Leone. This consists of the overall research strategy, methods of data collection, methods of data analysis, and the methodological and ethical issues associated with the empirical investigation.

6.2 Overview of the research strategy

Overall, I have adopted the qualitative case study design (see Figure 4 below). More specifically, the kind of case study I have employed can be described as a two-levelled embedded case study. Corresponding to the two levels depicted in the framework, the case study is envisaged at two levels: Sierra Leone, as a case of a low-income and weak state at the macro level, and the city of Makeni as the micro level. Why Sierra Leone was chosen as a case was already described in Chapter Two. The reasons behind the selection of Makeni are described in Section 6.3 below. It is an embedded case study (Yin, 2003) because the case and units of analyses are different. While Sierra Leone and Makeni are the cases, there are two kinds of units of analysis embedded in them: the three groups of beneficiaries of education (see Section 6.3 below) and the four elements of education depicted in the theoretical and conceptual framework (see Section 5.5).

My fieldwork lasted, in total, for seven months across two separate visits. The first visit lasted one month, in order to familiarise myself with the case before I fixed the research strategy. In the second visit, I conducted the pilot study in the first two months and the

main study over the rest of the time. Between the two levels, the case study at the micro level is the centre of my study. The main participants were in total 40 young men and women with different educational experiences – those in senior secondary school (SSS), in a TVET institute, and those out of school. Interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) and task-based participatory methods (writing and drawing) were conducted with them regularly over three months. In addition, 49 interviews with key adult informants in Makeni and Freetown were conducted, with Bo School being visited as a referential case. Having the overall strategy in mind, in the following sections I will describe the research strategy and the rationale behind it in detail.

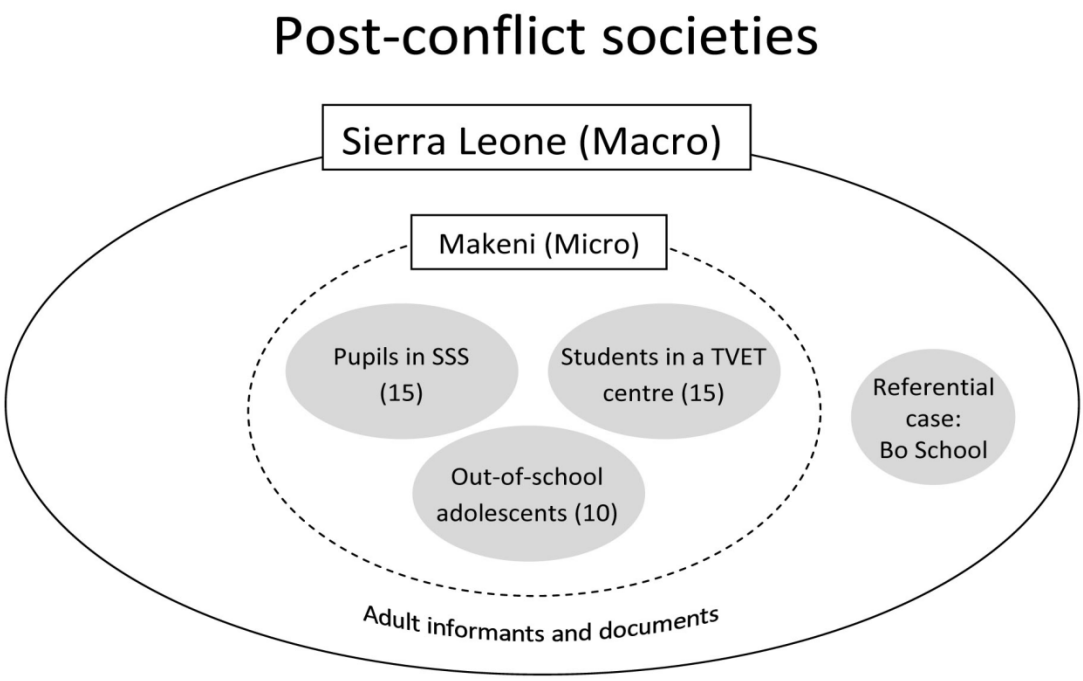

Figure 4: Overview of the research strategy

6.2.1 Case study research design

Most of the studies in the field of education and conflict (see Chapter Two) adopt a case study as an overall research strategy. Yin (2003) defines case study research as 'an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident'

(p. 13, original emphasis removed). In the case of this study it was selected as the research strategy for two primary reasons. First, the study considers that 'context matters' (Crossley, 2001). Like most of the existing studies in the field of education and conflict, the study takes a case study approach to give due respect to the context as an important element in understanding the role of education in conflict. By using case studies, the existing studies have already demonstrated the importance of context; they have depicted complex and contextualised accounts of how education is considered to have fuelled conflict and how educational systems are reformed or transformed (or not) in the post-conflict phase (see Chapter Three). Furthermore, the context is particularly important to the study as it emphasises the importance of investigating the relationships between education and society in understanding the role of education in violent conflict as depicted in the theoretical and conceptual framework. The second reason is due to the aim of the study in deepening a theoretical or more general understanding of the role of education in violent conflict in low-income and weak states. Therefore, an empirical investigation of Sierra Leone is envisaged as an *instrumental case* (Stake, 1995), an instrument to achieve the aim.

6.3 Settings and participants

6.3.1 Makeni

Makeni, the primary location for the study, is in the Northern Region of Sierra Leone. It is the capital of Bombali District and has a population of about 82,840 (Sessay, Kamara and Ngobeh, 2006). As previously discussed (see Section 2.2), the Northern Region has historically been a deprived area, including in terms of the provision of educational services. After the conflict, many children who were deeply affected by the conflict, especially ex-combatants, remained in Makeni and its surrounding towns. These were important criteria for the selection of a site, as I anticipated that the experiences of young people in relatively deprived positions would illuminate the role that education plays in the

lives of those likely be denied it. In addition, as it is the largest city in the Northern Region and the fifth largest city in Sierra Leone, young people from rural areas came to Makeni seeking education and other opportunities before the conflict and continue to do so in the present. I anticipated, therefore, that I could encounter in Makeni young people who have or have had educational opportunities as well as those who have not had such opportunities.

In addition to this, researching education in Makeni or in Northern Region in its own light was expected to be interesting and important as not much educational research has been done there. Previous educational research has focused on Bo and Freetown, the historical centres of education in Sierra Leone (e.g. Corby, 1990; Bledsoe, 1992; Paracka, 2003). The trend has not changed much even after the war (e.g. Sharkey, 2008; Betancourt et al., 2008). This is despite the significant changes in the educational arena in the Northern Region after the war, with some international and local NGOs now being present in Makeni and working with children, especially those who are disadvantaged or deeply affected by the conflict. The government has also ploughed resources for improvement into this region, including in the area of educational provision (Interview, Alpha Wurie, the former Minister of Education, 16 February 2009). In addition, research in Makeni is expected to contribute to new perspectives because the ethnic composition in Makeni is different from Bo; Bo is dominantly occupied by the Mende ethnic group while the population in Makeni is ethnically more diverse, with the largest ethnic groups being Temne and Limba.

6.3.2 Young people in Makeni

As depicted in the framework, the study focuses on the educational perceptions and experiences of beneficiaries and, among them, the main participants I have selected to empirically study were young people. In the context of my research, youth is treated as a

stage in life rather than an age; in African societies, an age boundary of youth is considered to be wider and elastic as it is defined more by social status, such as being unmarried or lacking a steady income to support his or her own family (e.g. Eyber and Ager, 2004). Among the beneficiaries of education, the current young people's cohort a generation earlier were the ones who dropped out of the school system, in particular at the secondary school level, and became involved in the civil war (see Chapter Two). Therefore, I presumed that today's young people would be a key group within the broader population for ensuring the long-term stability of society after the war; in essence, if they are not satisfied with the education they are (or are not) receiving, they might be easily mobilised like the ones before them. Furthermore, young males and the secondary schooling for them are considered by the theory as being relevant to a risk of conflict, as reviewed in Chapter Three.

Three groups of young men and women with different educational experiences became the unit of study. Considering the great importance attached to education due to its (perceived or actual) role in determining socioeconomic mobility in Sierra Leone, I anticipated differences in these young people's socioeconomic profile and future prospects (perceived and actual), and their views of other groups who have different educational profiles. The three groups are: (1) a group of students in a 'typical' secondary school; (2) a group of students in alternative education (i.e. TVET); and (3) a group of young people who are out of school.

I decided to study all the three groups in Makeni. As discussed, I was interested in not only looking at schooling as an independent institution but at how it interacts with society and what role it plays in the lives of beneficiaries. Therefore, it was essential for the study to

see the lives and perceptions of groups of young men and women who are in the same context and examine how the differences in their educational experiences are related to them. At the same time, I recognised the potential that I may get a biased understanding from just basing in one city. Therefore, in order to triangulate data I set up to study a referential case, Bo School (see Section 6.3.4), and I also sought some perspectives on key findings from some adult informants in Freetown (See Section 6.3.3).

In the search for participants in a secondary school, Makeni Christian Secondary School (MCSS),[8] founded in 1940, was approached and agreed to conduct my study. MCSS fits many criteria of a 'typical' school (Stake, 1995). Most of the secondary schools in Makeni are mission-based, either Islamic or Christian missions. Similarly, it is a mixed school and has both Junior Secondary School (JSS) and SSS, although it did not run a double-shift like the majority. In addition to being a 'typical' school, MCSS was also accessible. I solicited participants from among pupils at SSS level. I decided to focus on SSS pupils in the main study rather than the JSS pupils I had selected for the pilot study. As I will show in Chapter Seven, SSS is the level where the enrolment figure becomes very small; many adolescents found it difficult to attend, not to mention to graduate. Therefore, I had anticipated that the differences (discussed earlier such as in terms of future prospects) would be more pronounced between those who had the opportunity to get to the SSS level and those who did not. With the help of the senior prefect and the teachers at MCSS, an open solicitation of volunteer participants was taken. There were 13 participants initially and two more joined later.

[8] For ethical reasons, I use pseudonym for institutions I worked with as well as for names of participants (see Section 6.7.3).

I also selected a group of students in alternative education, i.e. TVET, from the Technical and Vocational Institute of Makeni (TVIM). There are three TVET centres in Makeni. TVIM, opened in 1990, is the largest one and was functioning more efficiently as a TVET institute than other two (see Section 8.3.2). As in MCSS, I solicited participants with the help of the teachers.

For the selection of out-of-school young men and women, the main approach I took was to work with an organisation involved with this group of people. I chose one initiated and organised by disadvantaged children and young people and supported by an international NGO: the Forum for Empowerment of Children and Young People (FECYP). Most of the group members were those who stopped schooling before completing the SSS or had completed the SSS (with or without the qualification) and did not have a chance to further their education. After a meeting with the group leader, who himself is out of school, we came to an agreement that the group would select 10 participants for my study. However, the concern that I may be getting a biased understanding from just interacting with the FECYP participants grew as I perceived that they were a particular group of young people, who, despite little or less education than others, were trying to engage with the community and society constructively in their own ways. Furthermore, the male participants were perceived to be intelligent because they have been able to speak English better than some of the students at the SSS level. Therefore, I searched for other out-of-school participants in order to get other views, eventually recruiting two so-called *Okada* bike-taxi riders as participants. These young men provide an essential transportation service in Makeni (see more details in Section 8.2). Many of the riders were considered to be ex-combatants in the period immediately after the war (e.g. Peters, 2007), and many of them were characterised as ‘dropouts’ or were pupils at secondary schools (MCSS teacher, informal interview, 6

July 2009). The two *Okada* riders, Mohamed and Amadu, joined the study but in a different manner from the others, only having one-off individual interviews.

In summary, the young participants were 15 SSS pupils in a Christian school, MCSS, 15 students in the largest TVET institute in Makeni, TVIM, and 10 out of school (see Table 1 below). 22 of them were male while 18 were female, and among the girls at least three of them had children. They were in the age range between 16 and 30, the students at TVIM being slightly older than other groups as the institute only accepts those above 17 years old. The previous educational background of those in the training centre and those out of school vary greatly from no schooling at all to completing SSS.

Table 1: Young People who participated in the study by group and gender

		Girl	boy	Total
Students in formal schooling (MCSS)	JSS students (**PILOT)**	3 (6)	2 (6)	5 (12)
	SSS pupils	6	9	15
Students in TVET (TVIM)	Masonry	1	6	7
	Home Management	8	NA	8
Out of school	FECYP[9]	3 (5)	5	8 (10)
	Bike riders	NA	2 (8)	2 (8)
Total participants (Excluding pilot students and those who did not participate completely)		18 (19)	22 (28)	40 (47)

Note: The number in bracket indicates the number of participants including those who participated in the research but not completely.

The participants were diverse in terms of their ethnic and geographical origins. Most students at the TVIM came from other parts of Sierra Leone, including the south (i.e. Bo, Kailahun, and Kenema), as well as from other parts in the north (i.e. Kabala, Kamakwei, and Kambia). On the other hand, the majority of SSS pupils and out-of-school participants were from Makeni, although some of them were originally from different places, such as villages near Makeni, other districts in the north, and even from Guinea. In terms of ethnicity or 'tribe' (the term Sierra Leoneans normally use) although the two main

[9] Among the 10 participants FECYP chose, one girl never participated in the study while another did not complete her participation.

ethnicities identified were Temne and Limba as they are the major ethnic groups in the north, others belonged to the Foolah, Mandingo, Koranko, Lonka, Susu, Loko, Sherbro and Mende. The Mende and Sherbro groups are predominant in the south.

6.3.3 Key adult informants in Makeni and in Freetown

The interviews with 49 adult informants were conducted to gain essential information on the four elements of education (the units of analysis) both at the national level and in Makeni and also as a way to triangulate the key findings from young people in Makeni (see Appendix B for the full list of informants interviewed). I sought to have interviews under three categories.

The first category was key informants for understanding the relationship between the educational system and society before and after the war at the national level. I interviewed previous and present Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) officials, officers at international organisations that work on educational provision or on issues related to young people, researchers in relevant areas (i.e. educational studies, history, and peace studies), and representatives from the Sierra Leone Teachers Union (SLTU) and Principals Conference. I also interviewed journalists who follow issues in education and a police officer as there were robbery issues which out-of-school young people were suspected of being involved in. The second group of informants in Makeni were those who work closely with young people or in education. This included workers at various NGOs in Makeni, teachers and administrators from MCSS and TVIM, parents, local journalists, a local policeman, the District of Education officer, district representatives for SLTU and Principals Conference and community leaders, i.e. a Paramount Chief. The third group of informants were three young adults who experienced secondary schooling immediately

before the war, so as to have some base of comparison to the present educational conditions.

6.3.4 A referential case

Bo Government Secondary School in the city of Bo, in the Southern Province, was selected as a referential case, chiefly to triangulate my main results from findings in Makeni. As mentioned in Section 2.3, Bo School is a unique and important elite school in Sierra Leone. I was interested in understanding how those who are in the Southern Region and in an 'elite school' perceive some of the contested issues, particularly related to politics or political awareness. This was because I was afraid that my understanding from findings in Makeni may have been biased by only looking at a city in the Northern Region and also by dealing with groups of rather disadvantaged young men and women. Given that my main fieldwork was only six months, I made the investigation concise, staying there for only a few days.

6.4 Data collection

6.4.1 Overall approach to data collection process

Overall, I took a very different approach to investigating the young participants and the adult informants. The data collection for the latter was mostly through one-time interviews. On the other hand, I met with every young participant on numerous occasions, sometimes individually or sometimes in groups, i.e. once a week over three months, and used various qualitative methods (see Appendix C-1 and C-2 for the list of questions or themes that were explored with the informants). Therefore, in the sub-sections below I will discuss each method used with young participants. Before I do so, however, I wish to briefly discuss my overall approach to collecting data from young people, who are the main participants in the study.

All the methods I employed were qualitative. This is mainly because of the elasticity they allow, as a qualitative approach can evolve, develop and 'unfold' as the research proceeds (Robson, 2002). I expected that it would allow development of context-appropriate methods in which participants' own views and experiences can be elicited so as to better capture the complexity of the phenomena. Furthermore, given the context of Sierra Leone as a post-conflict country, it was considered important that various sensitivities are taken into account in the selection of and development of research tools. It is anticipated that many of those participants – due to their experience during conflict or as a consequence of the responsibilities they have been obliged to take on – will have developed particular social and cognitive skills to an extent perhaps greater than their peers elsewhere. At the same time, the deficiency and paucity of service provision in conflict-affected areas may hinder their cognitive and social development (Hart and Tyrer, 2006). Ethnographic studies have clearly demonstrated that children and young people in conflict-affected areas can and do reflect on their own experiences (Boyden and de Berry, 2004), but they suggest that their competencies might be different from adults and emphasise the importance of understanding these competencies and finding appropriate ways to research their experiences and perspectives (Punch, 2002). Due to the reasons mentioned above, it was considered important to use various methods and I used a mix of traditional methods, i.e. interviews, and a few innovative participatory methods, following suggestions in the ethnographic studies involving children and young people in conflict-affected areas (e.g. Hart and Tyrer, 2006; Boyden and Ennew, 1997).

A series of themes to be covered was predetermined although, of course, it evolved as the research progressed. I attempted to start with a discussion about actual experience or

stories related to their lives at school, then moving on to more conceptual discussion, as suggested by the ethnographic studies (Boyden and Enew, 1997; Hart and Tyrer, 2006).

Table 2: Themes covered and methods used in researching young people's perspectives and experiences

Themes	Methods
Basic information about informants	Individual interviews
Role of education in their lives	Individual interviews with visual or written aids
Implications of being educated	Individual interviews with visual or written aids
Education and aspirations	Individual interviews
Structure of education	Individual interviews
Curriculum of education	FGDs or individual interviews
Ideal education	FGDs
Follow-up questions	FGDs or Individual interviews

In the following sections, I will discuss the main methods I employed in my study. I discuss participant observation first as it underlies the main data collection process by building a rapport with participants as well as building contextual understanding.

6.4.2 Participant observation

Participant observation was employed in my study not as a direct source of data but as an underlying method. This approach was chosen for three reasons. One is that, as Fife (2005) states, participant observation allows the researcher to gain 'the native's point of view' by both 'participating in behaviour from within and observing it from without' (p. 71). Such points of view were expected to help develop relevant research tools and questions to be asked to participants. Secondly, participant observation was expected to help build a trustful relationship with informants (Burgess, 1997). The literature suggests that it takes time and effort to build 'trust,' especially in fragile socio-political settings such as Sierra Leone (Hart and Tyrer, 2006; Utas, 2004; Boyden and de Berry, 2004). I will come back to this issue in Section 6.6. Thirdly, participant observation was considered to be an effective way to create an opportunity to encounter 'rich, untapped sources of data' that cannot necessarily be mapped out in the research design (Fetterman, 1989).

Therefore, participant observation was conducted throughout my fieldwork and with a slightly different focus as the research progressed. At the beginning of my fieldwork, it was a source of building the contextual understanding of Sierra Leone, Makeni, the educational system, and the lives of children and young people there. At that point, I also visited TVIM frequently, observing classes and engaging with students during the break times. As research progressed to the main data collection phase, I focused on observing the lives of the young participants, visiting some at their houses. I also visited places where they went often, such as the market. I also joined the radio programmes that the FECYP hosts to get to know them better.

6.4.3 Interviews and FGDs

Interviewing was the main data collection method. The types of interviewing included in the study were individual interviews (in various degrees of formality and structuredness) and FGDs with young people, as well as semi-structured interviews with key adult informants.

Individual interviews with young men and women were conducted informally or in a semi-structured format. Mainly, semi-structured interviews were used following a preliminary set of questions that I had developed based on the themes that I wanted to cover with every participant. I sometimes combined semi-structured interviews with a task-based method, i.e. writing or visual method, as I was aware that a use of visual stimuli could be useful in breaking the ice and helping to stimulate reflection on particular themes (see Boyden and Ennew, 1997). As well as semi-structured interviews, individual interviews with young people took the form of informal conversational interviews (Burgess, 1997). These conversations were considered less as a direct source of data and more as laying groundwork for the more structured interviews in the later stage.

In addition to individual interviews, FGDs were conducted with young people. While individual interviews are useful in collecting in-depth data on the individual (Boyden and Ennew, 1997), FGDs as a collective method were expected to be useful for finding out people's general perceptions, opinions or experiences regarding particular issues (Armstrong et al., 2004). As expected, they were found to be useful, particularly in the pilot study phase and in a discussion on the possibility of whether young people would again be mobilised in Sierra Leone, as contested positions and debates were presented.

A few notes should be made about the use of interviews as a method. First, given that the study involved socially disadvantaged young people, it was important to regard interview data as a form of discourse or 'a joint product of what interviewees and interviewers talk about together and how they talk with each other' (Mishler, 1986, p. vii). This was because answers could be determined by fear or the prospect of benefit. It also necessitated the triangulation of interview data by collecting data on essentially the same question in different ways or from other sources. Secondly, I conducted interviews mainly in English. Although all the adult informants and some young people did not have problems with this, some others did. Although English is the official language taught in schools and used in government administrations, a lingua franca in Sierra Leone is Krio, which is an English-based Creole language. In the early period of fieldwork, I asked another participant in the group for translation. In the later period, when my knowledge of the language had improved, I conducted interviews in Krio with some participants.

6.4.4 Participatory task-based methods

On the whole, I did not use participatory methods as diverse as or as frequently as I had anticipated, although I was prepared with a range of methods and tools (Hart and Tyrer, 2006; Boyden and Ennew, 1997; Armstrong et al., 2004; Chambers, 1997; Schutzman and

Cohen-Cruz, 1994; Veale, 2005; Swartz, 2007). In the end, I only employed simple written and visual methods with the main participants (see Table 2 above). Participatory methods are considered to be useful essentially because they allow collection of data from informants who are less verbally articulate or less powerful than researchers (Boyden and Ennew, 1997), which fitted well to my participants. In terms of written methods, I asked for simple writing about their daily activities in school, before and after going to school and about their aspirations after schooling. I also asked them to make a list along with a drawing, for instance, on the habits of an 'educated person' and an 'uneducated person.' The main limitation of writing as a method is that it depends on the participants' literacy levels and English abilities. For those who did not feel comfortable in writing (even in the form of making lists), I asked the same questions orally.

On the other hand, visual methods were considered to be useful in collecting data from a greater cross-section of young people regardless of their literacy skills (Hart and Tyrer, 2006; Boyden and Ennew, 1997; Veale, 2005). They were particularly useful in approaching an abstract concept, such as the conception of education, functioning as stimuli for individual interviews. There were two considerations that I had taken into account in using visual methods. One was the participants' level of comfort with drawing. This was particularly observed to be related to the educational level of participants, as females who were out of school or in TVIM yet with little schooling expressed their discomfort with the method. The second consideration was with regards to the analysis and interpretation of the visual representations, which I discuss below.

6.5 Data analysis

As a qualitative study, the analysis of data in the study has been an iterative process (Dey, 1993). Nevertheless, it can be roughly divided into three stages. The first is the early

process of reflection on data as I gathered them in the field. The second is the categorisation of findings and the analysis by categories, which resulted ultimately in the *descriptive* claims made in chapters Seven and Eight. Lastly, the findings were analysed in light of theories reviewed in the study, which resulted in the *explanatory* claims made in the analysis chapter (Chapter Nine).

As a general principle throughout the whole analysis process, a 'categorical aggregation' approach was employed (Stake, 1995, p. 72). On the one hand, as I had the basic form of the framework in place from before the data collection, data were collected, categorised and accumulated based on it, centring on the four elements of education: structure, curriculum and quality, governance, and conception (see Figure 3 above). In addition to these fixed categories, of course, new categories and themes emerged as data were gathered and analysed.

I started analysing data as I collected them in the field. This can be seen as the preliminary stage of analysis. Separate from the field notes and interview notes that I took during the day, I recorded my reflections on the research process and data collected of the day as well as the main incidents. I also started typing up written data and listening to the interview or FGD tapes while I was in the field to see if themes or areas emerged as essential and required more data to be collected. Principally, I was assessing whether the kind of data I was collecting were relevant to the research question. Through this stage of analysis, some *pattern*s, which indicate consistency (Stake, 1995) or a form of reliability in qualitative studies (Fetterman, 1989), were identified, particularly among interview data from adult informants about the educational conditions of post-conflict Sierra Leone. Through this first stage of analysis, I was confident by the time I left the field site that I had solid

patterns in place that could be made into *descriptive claims* about elements in and around education depicted in the framework.

When I returned from the fieldwork, I started the second, more formal and longer stage of analysis. As the data I collected were vast both in terms of amount and type, I had to make them manageable as a doctoral study. Some written data were already typed up and, for visual data, I have used the corresponding interview data as the primary source for the analysis (see Section 6.4.4). In terms of interview data from key adult informants, I selected 34 out of the 49 adult interviews to be typed up and further analysed. This selection was made based on the data's relevance to the research question, authenticity, the insights provided, and also to ensure the representation of a variety of professional positions in the sample (see the list of adult interviewees in Appendix B, which also shows which informants' data were analysed). Finally, as the analysis broadened and deepened, the full account started to emerge and was finalised in the form of the chapters Seven and Eight.

The distinctions between the second and third stages are particularly blurry. Before I had a full account of descriptive claims in a written form, I started the third stage by analysing what the findings mean in addressing the research question and in light of the relevant theories. However, I believe it is useful to consider them distinct 'stages' as this separation corresponds to Walford's (2001) assertion that, 'All *explanatory* or *prescriptive* claims made about the case or cases must be based on *descriptive* claims first, and these must be drawn from the data' (p. 150, emphasis added). Moreover, according to this distinction, the descriptive claims and the explanatory ones are presented separately in the thesis; the

descriptive claims about the case are made in chapters Seven and Eight while it is in the analysis chapter (Chapter Nine) that I make explanatory claims.

6.6 Methodological caveats

In the following, I will discuss some of the overall methodological caveats to the study, i.e. access issues and issues related to empirical investigation of governance of education. They will need to be borne in mind in proceeding to the presentation and discussion of the findings in the following chapters.

6.6.1 Access

In a post-conflict setting like Sierra Leone, access issues, i.e. *gaining* and *maintaining* access, are key in conducting research there. This is due to the sensitivity and fragility of the condition. For instance, Utas (2004) shows how *fluid* access can be in a country affected by conflict. Having conducted an ethnographic study with a group of ex-combatants in Liberia, it was indeed difficult to (and took time to) *gain* access in the sense of gaining the trust of informants who were in sensitive positions having been involved in the war and acquiring genuine accounts from them. On the other hand, the access he acquired was not something long-lasting; eventually, the ex-combatants turned on him and threatened his life for money. Although my research did not have such a striking episode, I did have difficulty in gaining an access to one particular group of participants, i.e. those who are out of school, and the expectations held by the participants that I have accessed need to be taken into account as they affect the nature of the data I received from them.

Accessing participants and actually having them participate was not generally difficult, but there were some exceptions. The major exception was out-of-school young people. Although the vast majority of out-of-school children and young people do not belong to

any institution, I had to solicit the participants primarily from those who were in some kind of institutional structures as, partially to protect my safety, I was not advised to go around houses finding participants (for more on the researcher's safety, see Section 6.7 below). Because of this, the majority came from FECYP, which suggests they are a particular group of young people interested in engaging with social actions. In relation to this probably 'atypical' interest, the males had more experience of schooling than average out-of-school young males in Makeni. Furthermore, the fact that only three out-of-school young females participated in the study is considered to be largely due to the cultural and religious notions that girls should stay home and help the family if they were not attending school. Such a custom is considered particularly strong in the north where my study was conducted (e.g. Regional Director, NGO, Interview, 26 November 2009; Professor of History, Interview, 14 December 2009).

In terms of those who participated in the study, whether I actually *gained* access to them, i.e. gaining trust and collecting authentic accounts from them, is considered to largely depend on whether I was able to overcome the negative implications in terms of quality of data —if there were any—from the participants' expectations and assumptions towards me. In general, informants 'classified' me in two ways and those classifications contributed to certain expectations regarding participating in the study. One is the classification of me as a doctoral student from Oxford, one of the most well-known universities among Sierra Leoneans. This worked mostly as an advantage. The majority of the informants (except some officials at the MEST and the District Education Office (DEO)) were pleased to take the time to talk with me and to be part of the study. The young people were particularly pleased when I gave each of them a certificate recording his or her participation in the study at the end (see Section 6.7 for more details about rewards).

Another 'classification' of me was being a 'white' foreigner. Sierra Leoneans consider Asians to be 'white' people and perceive 'white' foreigners as affluent and with a high social status. On the one hand, this classification worked as an advantage with adult informants; I believe that largely because I was a foreign researcher no adult interviewee asked for direct rewards, i.e. money; they considered that research in the 'North' does not encourage 'petty corruption' and have respected this norm. In contrast, a primary school teacher told me that, if it was a Sierra Leonean conducting research, it would be common to give money to or pay for lunch for interviewees before interviewing them and that she in fact had to do so for her final project for her Higher Teaching Certificate (HTC) which qualification will allow her to teach at secondary schools (Field note, 30 October 2009). On the other hand, I am not too certain to what extent the adult informants provided me with genuine accounts on a sensitive matter, namely tensions among ethnic groups, although this did not affect my research greatly as the issue was not central to it. In terms of the young people who participated in the study, the fact that I was a foreigner created extra expectations for benefits even though I emphasised from the beginning no direct benefit could be expected (see Section 6.7 below). This manifested itself in conversations with out-of-school participants, in which they emphasised their difficulties and their desire to go back to school. Although the expectations for benefits did not cease entirely, I believe I was able to obtain more genuine accounts having spent more time with them, exemplified in some girls' accounts of their commercial sex engagements in the past or about who was in fact paying their fees (see Section 8.2).

In terms of *maintenance* of access in my research, this was most challenging in terms of securing the young people's commitment to the study. The turnout of the pilot group towards the end of research became particularly poor and some of the out-of-school

participants did not turn up regularly to my research sessions. As a result, for those who missed some research sessions, I had to use a different format to the other participants, i.e. a simple individual interview or FGD.

6.6.2 Governance of education

Although governance issues are theoretically and conceptually essential in considering the potential link between education and the risk of violent conflict, methodologically they were outside the study's scope. As has been outlined, the empirical focus of my study lies in the experiences and perceptions of beneficiaries of education, i.e. young people, and this meant that the data I collected from them are mainly on their experiences and perceptions of content and structure, not on the management of the educational system. It is considered that studying management and governance would have required another empirical study different in nature from mine. At the same time, recognising the importance of governance in addressing the research question, together with some peripheral data, two additional sources enrich the sections on governance in chapters Seven and Eight. The first is a doctoral study on decentralisation and ethnic diversity in Sierra Leone by Henry Mbawa at the University of Leeds, who also used Makeni as one of his case sites and who conducted fieldwork at the same time as myself. We have shared, not data, but some insights and writings. The other is a consultancy work conducted by Erika Boak specifically on governance issues in the education sector in Sierra Leone (Boak, 2010).

6.7 Ethical considerations and issues

This study was designed in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2004) and the Association for Social Anthropologists (1998). I gained ethical clearance from the Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC), University of Oxford prior to the beginning of my major

fieldwork. I paid particular attention to ethical issues mostly because of the social sensitivity and vulnerability of Sierra Leone as a post-conflict society, as touched upon already. The cultural differences were also taken into consideration. It was essential that this study was conducted 'ethically' from the viewpoint of the participants as well as adhering to the research ethics practiced in the United Kingdom. A brief discussion of the ethical issues that were particularly relevant to my study follows.

6.7.1 Informed consent

I anticipated that one of the major ethical issues of my study was informed consent (see the consent form and information sheet given to participants in Appendix A). It is defined by BERA as 'the condition in which participants understand and agree to their participation without any duress, prior to the research getting underway' (BERA, 2004, p. 5). According to BERA, it is considered ethical to obtain written informed consent from guardians if the research involves minors, as in my study. There were two concerns about this practice. One was about obtaining *written* informed consent. I anticipated that it may be inadvisable or unwelcome to seek written consent from some because of the sensitivities of Sierra Leone as a post-conflict society, cultural differences and the individual literacy levels of participants. Therefore, I was prepared to seek written informed consent where appropriate and, if not, verbal consent. The second concern was with the practice of getting consent from guardians instead of or as well as from the participants. There were two elements to consider: young informants' intellectual and social competence and social permissibility. From the perspective of intellectual competence to give such consent, it was anticipated that many of them were likely to have developed the cognitive and social skills to give such consent due to their experience during conflict or as a consequence of the responsibilities they have been obliged to take on. On the other hand, in terms of social permissibility, I was mindful of the potential unease that parents may feel where the

children under their control get involved in research activities without their knowledge or consent. In practice, however, no participant had difficulty in or problematised signing the written consent regardless of their age or background.

In addition, I was mindful that consent should be 'continually negotiated and reaffirmed' (Mills, 2002, p. 17), not a one-off practice (Hart and Tyrer, 2006). Therefore, I provided participants with the option to pull out at any point of the research process, although most of them remained to the end of the main data collection.

6.7.2 Selection of participants and research tools

I paid particular attention to the ways in which I selected the participants as I anticipated that recruitment could potentially entail problems or risks affecting the study's success. Hart and Tyrer (2006) urge researchers to be careful to ensure involvement in a study does not contribute to creating or strengthening hierarchies among children or young people; this can happen potentially through the way the participants are selected and the kinds of benefits that are received by the participants but unreachable by those who do not participate in the study. In my study, therefore, I decided on different selection processes appropriate to each group's circumstances after careful consideration and consultations with teachers. As a result, the selection process did not create a major problem.

The expectation of benefits had great effects on the study, however. Because I was aware of the possibility that the performing of research activities in itself raise hopes of direct reward or of some immediate institutional response (Hart and Tyrer, 2006), I was transparent from the beginning about the nature and aim of the research and the benefits and rewards as I sought consent from each participant. In the main study, I made it clear from the beginning about some gifts that I would give at the end of the research process,

i.e. a certificate, a notebook and a pen, as well as clarifying the limitations in the benefits otherwise.

I also paid ethical considerations in the selection of research tools, principally to minimise potential emotional harm to participants. Ennew and Plateau (2004) state that:

> It is not ethical to ask children direct questions about painful experiences, using poorly-designed research tools (particularly questionnaire and interviews) and without their informed consent…Indirect data-collection methods allow children the option of withholding information, or provide them with the possibility of responding in ways that do not dredge up painful experiences and cause further harm (pp. 17–18).

In my research, I did not ask questions directly about their experiences during the war partly for this reason and partly because it was not central to my research. At the same time, I was well aware of the possibility that the conversation may stray away from the topic of education, given the fact that these participants may well have experienced trauma. In fact, it did; some told me their experiences during the war, like Alexis, whose father was killed in front of him and who himself was kidnapped by the rebels. Therefore, I first established the appropriate and accessible sources of support, i.e. guidance counsellors in the school or TVIM or NGOs that provided some kind of counselling, in case they wanted to talk to or needed follow-up consultations afterwards.

6.7.3 Anonymity and confidentiality

Maintenance of anonymity and confidentiality in this research was and still is anticipated to present some challenges. On the one hand, preserving the anonymity of participants during the fieldwork was challenging because the study involved communities and young people very closely. Taking into consideration the sensitivity of the post-conflict setting, I made efforts so that participants would not be placed in danger or in a difficult position in

their community by consulting with professionals who work there. On the other hand, there is another challenge to preserve anonymity in my writings and records. For young participants, I have changed names and/or identifying details in all materials that will be seen by other people. Original identities are obscured by codes and pseudonyms that only I and my supervisor had access to. In terms of adult informants, I did not use their names but kept their professional titles. However, I cannot guarantee anonymity; after all, it is easy to find the names of informants through the internet based on these professional titles. For people in Makeni, too, especially those who were involved in MCSS, TVIM, and FECYP, it would be easy to find out who I am quoting or describing from my writings. In terms of confidentiality, the use of interpreters carries some risks. Though I tried not to use interpreters as much as possible, occasionally I found it necessary, especially when I interacted with out-of-school young women or certain students at TVIM who had low English competency. Before I used an interpreter (who was often their group member), I explained thoroughly the commitment to maintaining the confidentiality and anonymity of participants before I initiated the research activities. I also told the participant that the group member who translated would adhere to the principles.

6.7.4 Dissemination of results

When I disseminate the results from this research, there may be some potential ethical problems that need to be taken into consideration. A major potential risk is that the dissemination of results may put some people in difficult positions. Young people voicing their views and opinions may be considered a threat in areas affected by conflict like Sierra Leone (Hart and Tyrer, 2006). In addition to strictly adhering to anonymity and confidentiality, I have therefore paid careful attention to the way I present the views and experiences expressed by the participants, in order to avoid potential risks to their safety.

6.7.5 Safety of the researcher

As well as all the considerations for participants, I also ensured my safety as a researcher (Lee-Treweek and Linkogle, 2000). All precautions were taken although it was anticipated to be relatively stable and safe in Sierra Leone. I affiliated myself with the University of Sierra Leone, maintaining a regular contact with a professor there, and I registered with a Japanese embassy in Ghana, as there was no representative in Sierra Leone. All proposed locations for research activities were discussed in advance with local people who were aware of local security issues, including NGO workers and teachers. I also maintained regular contact with my supervisor through email.

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Having shown how the study has collected and analysed data in order to approach the research question, the next two chapters present the outcomes from the case study. While the institutional analysis at the national level is done in the next chapter, Chapter Seven, the findings from the micro level, Makeni, will be presented in Chapter Eight.

Chapter Seven:
Plans and Implementations of the Educational System in Sierra Leone at the National Level

7.1 Introduction to the chapter

As indicated above, the case study of Sierra Leone has been conducted at two conceptual levels of the educational system. The first is at the institutional level and the second at the level of recipients or beneficiaries of the educational system. In this chapter, I present the plans and implementations of the educational system: here, national strategies for educational delivery, educational policies and plans for their implementation in post-conflict Sierra Leone are discussed. The following chapter, in contrast, presents the findings at the level of beneficiaries: there, the experiences and perceptions of young people within the educational system and indeed those who have dropped out of it are portrayed.

This chapter begins by situating the educational reform in the overall reconstruction, reform, and development strategies of post-conflict Sierra Leone. The chapter then turns to presenting the educational system, first in the plans and next in implementations. Both plans and implementations are organised by the framework (Chapter Five), which has guided the elements in and around education to be investigated. In particular, the presentation is centred on and organised by the four elements of education, i.e. goals and expectations, structure, curriculum and quality, and governance.

The chapter will reveal the gaps between national-level educational plans and the extent to which they have been implemented. There is no doubting the considerable broadness and depth of the reform plans, particularly as outlined in the new 6-3-3-4 system. The emphasis on policies for the expansion of access, increased relevance, and decentralised governance, among others, show the political willingness to improve educational service delivery. However, the plans are found to be implemented inefficiently overall and the actual conditions of education are also revealed to be dire, characterised particularly by poor quality and continuing access issues at the higher level. The inefficient implementations of the reform plans are largely due to the weak capacity of the education sector and of the state.

The reader's attention is drawn to two points. First, the analysis of the national context of education and perceptions of its delivery at the local level (chapters Seven and Eight) are mainly descriptive. The implications of this for the assessment of whether education contains features that put a society at risk of conflict are discussed in light of the literature in Chapter Nine. In other words, the outcomes are there used to make *explanatory claims* (see Section 6.5 for details). Secondly, the purpose of the chapter does not lie in generically evaluating the post-conflict education reform and reconstruction, but in presenting elements that are relevant to address the research question later.

7.2 Background to the educational reform in post-conflict Sierra Leone

As a result of the devastating civil war, various strategies from the short term to the longer term were drawn up and implemented, including in the area of education. The account in this section provides the background to the key long-term educational reform and re-development after the war, the 6-3-3-4 system, which the chapter focuses on.

The decade-long civil war, ended with a declaration by President Kabbah on 18 January 2002, has had catastrophic effects. The country's social, economic and physical infrastructure was mostly destroyed, including at the local community level in terms of stores, markets, rice mills and farms. The educational infrastructure was no exception; indeed, it has been damaged to such an extent that some claim educational institutions were purposefully attacked by the rebels (e.g. Richards, 1996; also see Chapter Two). MEST[10] reports that the two rebel incursions in Freetown resulted in the destruction of 70% of local schools and 55% of schools in the country were 'destroyed and in need of total reconstruction' according to a survey by the District Recovery Committee in 2003 (cited in Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2004).

Due to the enormous damage that the war has brought to the country, the Sierra Leonean government has a broad range of strategies for both the short term and the long term. The immediate priority after the war was ensuring security and order in the state. The priority focused on disarmament and demobilisation of combatants (through the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programme) and resettlement of refugees and internally displaced persons. At the same time, mechanisms were set up to alleviate anguish from the conflict so that a recurrence of conflict can be prevented. These are the SLTRC and the Special Court for Sierra Leone. While the SLTRC was set up in 2002 as an alternative to judicial persecutions, given that the Lome Peace Accord in 1999 granted a pardon and amnesty to combatants (see Section 2.4), the Special Court was established in 2002 to try those who have greatest responsibility for crimes against humanity, war crimes, and other serious violations of international law. The longer-term development strategies

[10] The Ministry of Education has gone through some changes after the war; it was part of the Ministry of Youth, Education and Sport (MYES), reorganised as Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MEYS), and it is, as of 2011, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST). Therefore, in the chapter I will use MEST throughout unless the other names are used in quoted documents.

were drawn in several steps. The first strategy paper, the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper of 2001 was endorsed by the IMF and World Bank for the period 2001 to 2005, while medium-term strategy was laid down in the National Recovery Strategy (NRS) in 2002 in collaboration with the UN Mission in Sierra Leone and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). A key long-term strategy Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) was then laid out in 2005, aligning with the MDGs. Currently, the second PRSP (2008–2012) is being implemented.

In the arena of education too, various initiatives and strategies were undertaken for the short to the longer term. As an immediate and temporary measure, the major priority was to provide education to ex-combatants and other young people who missed out on their educational opportunities during the war. Initiatives included: the Reintegration Opportunity Programme, where former combatants could learn skills through vocational training and formal education (Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Resource Centre, 2010); the Complementary Rapid Education for Primary Schools programme, which compressed six years of primary into three years and served youth aged 16 and over; the Rapid Response Education Programme, which provided children with six months of intensive schooling to prepare them for their reinsertion into the regular system; and the Community Education Investment Programme, which waived school fees for former child combatants by providing teaching, learning, or recreation materials to schools that admitted them (Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2002). In addition, peace education programmes were employed by some NGOs in order to help the reintegration of former child combatants into communities (Wessells, 2005). Medium-term priorities were addressed through the Rehabilitation of Basic Education Project (later renamed as SABABU Education Project) in 2003, funded by the World Bank, the African

Development Bank, and the Government of Sierra Leone. This focused on reconstruction and construction of schools, provision of teaching and learning materials, and teacher education over a seven-year period (MEST, 2007).

The key post-conflict change for the long term was the launch of the 6-3-3-4 system. The 6-3-3-4 system refers to six years in primary school, three years in JSS, three years in SSS, and four years at the tertiary level. This replaced the previous 7-5-2-4 system (seven years in primary, five years in secondary, two years in sixth form (optional), and four years in tertiary). It should be noted that the original move towards the 6-3-3-4 educational system was already prepared and implemented to some extent before the war. First proposed by the 1989 Taskforce Report (World Bank, 2007), the 6-3-3-4 gained renewed momentum after the Jometien Conference on EFA in 1990 due to its being in accordance with the EFA goal. In 1993, the National Commission for Basic Education was established, and the 6-3-3-4 system was adopted in the same year. In 1995, the New Education Policy for Sierra Leone was adopted, and the Education Master Plan in 1997 was laid. However, the full implementation was delayed until after the war. It was also after the war that the 6-3-3-4 system was legalised by the Education Act of 2004, repealing the previous Education Act of 1964. Against this background, I will below present the 6-3-3-4 system in plans (Section 7.3) and in actual implementations (Section 7.4) at the national level, broken down by the four elements in education: conception (aims and expectations of policymakers); structure; curriculum and quality; and governance.

7.3 The 6-3-3-4 system in plan

7.3.1 Aims and expectations for the 6-3-3-4 system

The reform and re-development of education after the war seems to be driven by three kinds of imperatives (or expectations): to reform the features in education considered to

have fuelled the war, to provide education to all children, and to further employ education as a tool for peacebuilding and stability. Reflecting the imperatives, the focus of the 6-3-3-4 system appears to be on the expansion of access to basic education and increasing relevance of the curriculum.

The educational sector has been one of the focal areas in the longer-term development strategies of post-conflict Sierra Leone. This can be observed in the increased allocation of the budget to the education sector. The share of total current expenditure on education made a considerable increase to about 20% since 2000, reaching 21% in 2009 compared to 14% in 1996 (MEYS, 2009 cited in Boak, 2010; World Bank, 2007). It makes up the largest share in the Sierra Leonean budget along with general public services (excluding debt payments) (World Bank, 2007). In addition, education is one of the key sectors in Sierra Leone's poverty reduction strategies (IMF, 2001; 2005; 2008). For example, PRSP (IMF, 2005) depicts the expansion of basic education and training as one of the four key sectors in promoting human development.

There seem to be three imperatives (or expectations) behind education in post-conflict Sierra Leone. The first is to reconstruct and reform education due to the experience of the conflict. On the one hand, a great deal of attention was paid to reforming the educational system, recognising its role in the war. The SLTRC, having identified education, being elitist and unequal in nature, as one of the key 'historical antecedents to conflict' (SLTRC, 2004c; see also Section 2.6), made a series of recommendations. This includes criminalisation of not sending a child to primary school, outlawing of the use of corporal punishment in schools, and provision of free primary education. On the other hand, the destruction of educational institutions by the war, as described above, required enormous

reconstruction efforts, which have been addressed through initiatives such as the SABABU project by the World Bank, in which US$ 15 million was invested.

The second imperative sees education as a key tool for peacebuilding efforts. The idea that the reestablishment and reoperation of the educational system will help restore normalcy, thereby promoting consolidation of peace, is a strong rationale behind the SABABU project (World Bank, 2003). In the long term, education is seen as a tool to transform society and bring about development. For instance, the PRSP (IMF, 2005), which, as mentioned above, aligns the country's development goals with the MDGs, depicts basic education as an essential means to 'support manpower development in key sectors with the greatest impact on economic growth and poverty reduction' (p. 96). In terms of education as a transformative tool, SLTRC's recommendation for compulsory human rights education in schools, army, police and judicial services seems to demonstrate that. Similarly, the NRS (2002) includes the promotion of civic education in schools as one of the key interventions.

The third imperative appears to be the rights discourse. For instance, the NRS (2002) cites primary education as one of the basic needs and services to be restored immediately. That education, particularly primary schooling, is a basic human right has become a prominent international discourse since 1990 after the ratification of the EFA goals. The fact that the Sierra Leonean government increased the share of its budget for education to around 20% after the war may be seen as a reflection of the EFA aims too. Sierra Leone is one of the first 'fragile states' to receive endorsement from the EFA Fast Track Initiative (FTI) (Boak, 2010), and FTI recommends a benchmark of 20% of the budget share for education (EFA FTI Secretariat, 2008).

It should be noted that two of the imperatives are related to the international discourse (education as a tool for peacebuilding and the rights discourse) and these two discourses penetrate conflict-affected countries, as shown in section 1.2.1, and are related to the fact that Sierra Leone depends on donor support, just as other conflict-affected countries do. Almost 40% of the total governmental budget comes from external support (World Bank, 2007), the major donors being the World Bank, African Development Fund, and the UK, Germany and Norway among bilateral actors. It goes without saying that the donors have an influence on education strategies. For instance, the donors' focus is on the primary level of education, following the EFA and the MDGs and, as such, the majority of donor funding is aimed at basic education (primary and JSS): more than 90% of the 2002–03 commitments and 75% of those for 2004 (World Bank, 2007).

Against this background, the focus of the 6-3-3-4 system can be seen in the expansion of access of basic education and increasing the relevance of the curriculum. The 2004 Education Act commits the government to making basic education (primary and JSS) compulsory and free (Education Act, 2004, Section 3 (2)). With regards to relevance, the World Bank's report entitled *Education in Sierra Leone: Present Challenges, Future Opportunities* (2007) states that the 6-3-3-4 system is intended 'to move the country away from a predominantly grammar school type of education, which takes neither the varied talents of the pupils nor the socioeconomic needs of the country into account' (p. 34). The basic purposes of the system stated in the Education Act 2004 also focus on access and relevance:

> (a) Rapidly enhance literacy in Sierra Leone and improve the educational opportunities for women and girls, rural areas dwellers and those disadvantaged in the acquiring of formal education;
> (b) Make possible the acquisition of knowledge and skills valuable and relevant for employment and self-employment;

> (c) Improve and expand the teaching of English language, French, Mathematics, the natural sciences and technology;
> (d) Vastly expand facilities and programmes to teach technical and vocational subjects;
> (e) Introduce into the curriculum new subjects such as indigenous languages and Sierra Leone Studies which shall give and enhance a proper and positive understanding of Sierra Leone;
> (f) Introduce new and more appropriate methods of examining students to complement or replace the present methods; and
> (g) Bring about the education of the whole student instead of concentration on only the cognitive education of students.
>
> (Education Act 2004, Section 2 (2))

Expansion of access is especially targeted to groups of children who previously had greater difficulty in accessing education (see (a) above). The system attempts to be relevant to the employment prospects of the individual, the development of the nation (see (b), (c), (d) above), to pupils' lives as a whole (see (g) above) and also by aiming to foster the pupils' identities as Sierra Leoneans (see (e) above). These objectives have not changed greatly compared to the Education Policy of 1995; a potentially major difference is that there is no reference to the improvement of quality in 2004, but this is not considered to be a major difference as quality is emphasised as part of the post-conflict education policy objectives elsewhere (World Bank, 2007).[11]

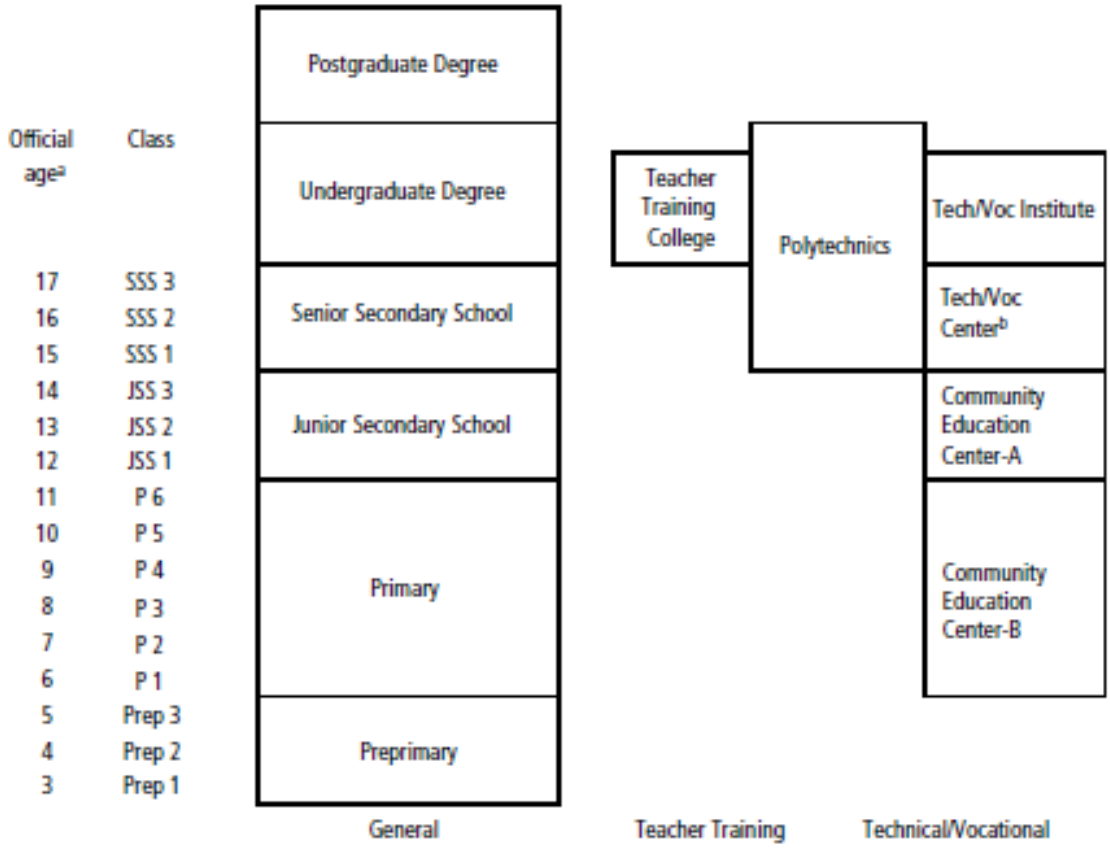
In addition, I want to draw particular attention to a new vision for the sector incorporated in the Education Sector Plan 2007–2015 (MEST, 2007): the vision of equilibrium. Equilibrium is about aiming for a balanced education system within and with other sectors, such as the economy, health, agriculture, and infrastructure, and in order to achieve this vision, MEST (2007) states that the ministry will seek inter-sectoral partnerships with other entities such as the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Youth and Sports. It is yet

[11] Other minor differences are the emphasis on the new methods of examination of students and the elaboration of the concepts of 'relevance' and 'equity of access' in the 2004 Education Act.

to be seen, however, to what extent this vision plays a part in actual planning or in implementations.

7.3.2 Structure

A key structural feature of the 6-3-3-4 was the creation of an equivalent TVET track (see Figure 5 below). It also created various schemes to expand access to historically disadvantaged groups and to meet the expected expansion in the pupil population. The academic track, as mentioned already, is composed of six years of primary, three years of JSS, three years of SSS, and four years of tertiary education. The vocational track consists of Community Education Centre B (equivalent to non-formal and formal primary education); Community Education Centre A (equivalent to JSS), Technical and Vocational Centre (equivalent to SSS), Technical and Vocational Institute (equivalent to post SSS below tertiary) and Polytechnics (SSS to tertiary). In order to further enhance the TVET track, teacher-training colleges are to be merged with the polytechnics based on an enactment of Polytechnics Act in 2001 (MEST Deputy Minister, email exchange, 16 July 2010); the five teachers colleges that had previously trained teachers are eventually to be transformed (except Bo Teachers College) into polytechnics.



Source: Staff of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.
a. This is the official age for general education. However, there is a wide range of ages currently enrolled at the different levels of general education. These ages are not applicable to TVET programs.
b. The Vocational Trade Center is part of the Technical Vocational Center.

(Cited from the World Bank, 2007, p. 35)

Figure 5: Overview of the structure of the 6-3-3-4 system

Based on the government's commitment to expanding access to basic education are various schemes. One is the attempt to ensure that every chiefdom has at least one JSS (Government of Sierra Leone, 2004b). This should be seen against the background that schools had been extremely urban-centred, particularly in Freetown, in pre-war Sierra Leone (see Section 2.3). The second is the setting up of the Girl Child Support Programme in 2003, which aims to facilitate the access of female pupils to JSS in the Northern and Eastern regions, where fewer girls had been enrolled historically (World Bank, 2007). It waives the school fees for girls who are qualified to enter JSS level. The government has a plan to further extend it to the whole country in a modified form; for JSS1, the government

pays the school fee for the whole year whilst for JSS2 for two terms, and for one term for JSS3 (Deputy Minister, Interview, 14 December 2009). Thirdly, the government pledges to pay for the first sitting of the public exams (see Section 7.3.3 for details about the exams), so that the cost of examinations is not a reason for pupils not to take them or to leave the schooling without certificates (World Bank, 2007).

To accommodate the rapid increase in enrolments after the war resulting from the interventions mentioned above, the government has come up with an introduction of a double-shift system in urban areas. For example, some schools function in the morning (e.g. from 8am to 1pm) as JSS while they become SSS in the afternoon shift (e.g. from 1pm to 6pm). It should be noted that this system implies a shorter instruction time. For example, at secondary level, the double-shift provides eight daily periods of 30 minutes whereas in the single-shift there are eight daily periods of 35 minutes (World Bank, 2007).

7.3.3 Curriculum

Curriculum reform centres on increased relevance and incorporation of elements that are expected to promote peacebuilding in the country. That said, the curriculum continues to be standardised and guided by the public examinations to be taken at the end of each level of schooling, as it was in the pre-war system.

Overall, the curriculum is standardised nationally and examination centred. In the academic stream, the curriculum is set in conjunction with the subjects covered at the external examinations held at the end of each level of schooling. The curriculum of primary schools emphasises communication competence and understanding of and manipulation of numbers. In order to progress to JSS, pupils are required to take and get a pass score (presently 230) at the National Primary School Examination (NPSE) in five

subjects (English, mathematics, verbal aptitude, quantitative aptitude and general studies). At the JSS level, the curriculum covers a wide range of knowledge, attitudes, and skills in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains, with four compulsory courses (mathematics, language arts, social studies and integrated science). In order to complete JSS and proceed to SSS level, pupils are required to take Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) in eight subjects, including the four core subjects, and to achieve passes in four or more subjects including language arts (i.e. English) and mathematics. At SSS, pupils proceed to one of the three streams – arts, commercial and science – and study different subjects according to the selected stream, as well as the core compulsory subjects of mathematics and English. At the end of SSS, pupils take West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASCCE) and need to achieve credits in four subjects – if he or she wants to proceed to polytechnics – or in five subjects – if he or she wants to enter a university – including one of the core subjects, English or mathematics (World Bank, 2007). On the other hand, in the TVET track, programmes are standardised by the national qualifications that can be acquired at the end of the training. For instance, programmes such as Masonry, Carpentry and Joinery, and Catering are available towards the qualification of National Vocational Certificate (NVC) (World Bank, 2007; see more details in NCTVA, 2009).

The curriculum in the academic track – in addition to the creation of a parallel TVET track – reflects the system's overall emphasis on relevance: relevance to the lives of Sierra Leonean children and to the development of the country. The external examinations are intended to be more relevant than the 7-5-2-4 system from the pre-war and are designed and conducted by the West African Examination Council (WAEC). The WASSCE is designed by the regional board of WAEC while the NPSE and BECE are designed by the

country board of WAEC. This can be seen in contrast to the predominant examinations before the war, i.e. the British GCE system. The subjects covered in the curriculum are also designed to be more relevant. At all levels of schooling, vocational and technical subjects are incorporated in the curriculum as optional subjects. Learning of national languages, i.e. Limba, Krio, Mende and Temne, is available at primary and JSS levels. The subjects related to social studies, geography and history, centre on development of pupils' understanding of their relationships as Sierra Leoneans, unlike the pre-war curriculum and especially the colonial period, where it focused on teaching the history and geography of England (see Section 2.3). The aim of social studies at JSS level, for instance, is stated as '[t]o study man, his relationship with his physical, social, cultural, economic environment and to develop population awareness and responsible attitudes and skills to personal, national and global problems and issues' (National Curriculum Research Centre, 2003, p. 7). At SSS level, history and geography are designed to be taught separately and are centred on Sierra Leone. There is also an optional subject, 'Sierra Leone studies,' which centres on Sierra Leone's 'history, culture and collective aspiration', including contemporary issues such as the civil war and post-war politics and economy (WAEC, 2004, p. 460).

The curriculum also incorporates the expectation on the system to promote peacebuilding. One attempt is the inclusion of peace education as part of formal schooling. The SABABU project supports the development of a peace education toolkit for teachers to be taught at primary and JSS levels (World Bank, 2003) and the toolkit was developed in 2002 by international consultants working in collaboration with MEST, teachers and World Bank (Bretherton, Weston and Zbar, 2005; 2003; 2002). At tertiary level, the course of peace studies is actively being considered to be introduced as one of the emerging issues (Deputy

Minister, email exchange, 16 July 2010). Nevertheless, the recommendation by SLTRC to implement human rights education in the curriculum and the plan stated in the NPS to implement civic education in schools do not appear to be part of an actual plan in the curriculum. Another attempt appears to lie in the plan to teach the history of the civil war in the system. The SLTRC considers an understanding of the conflict as crucial for peacebuilding of the country because '[k]nowledge and understanding are the most powerful forces against the repetition of conflict' (SLTRC, 2004b, p. 204). One of the SLTRC recommendations was to '[i]ncorporate contents of the Report into the education curricula of schools, colleges and universities (Serious Consideration)' (SLTRC, 2004b, p. 224). As a result, a child-friendly version of the SLTRC report was created with the support of UNICEF (Paulson, 2006). The SLTRC Working Group, an NGO, produced a secondary school version of the report (Truth and Reconciliation Working Group, 2005). The versions of the report focus on the collective history of the civil war that came out as the SLTRC's findings, i.e. what led to the civil war and what happened during it. They have been planned to be distributed to schools around the country. The SLTRC report is an important source of material for pupils to learn the history of the war as it is not part of the curriculum otherwise. At primary and JSS level, the history of Sierra Leone is only incorporated as part of the social studies and the syllabus does not cover contemporary history. At SSS level, history is compulsory only for pupils in the art stream and even there the examination coverage of history only goes up to 1985, i.e. before the emergence of the war or the Momoh regime. Another compulsory subject in the art stream, Government, covers teaching of different types of political systems, i.e. one-party, two-party and multi-party, but it is not required to be taught in the context of Sierra Leone (WAEC, 2004).

In consistent with the expectation on education to promote peacebuilding, no feature that is politically unfair was found in textbooks or syllabuses on the subjects of government, history and social studies.

7.3.4 Governance

The governance of the education sector underwent substantial reform after the war, particularly by the promotion of decentralisation and accountability. The major feature of the governance reform incorporated in the 6-3-3-4 system is this decentralisation of the system. The 1995 Education Policy already included the re-organisation of the structure towards a more decentralised one, but this was enhanced in the course of the overall governance reform after the war. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the centralisation of political and economic power in the central government and in Freetown is recognised as one of the major contributing factors to the war (SLTRC, 2004b). Therefore, decentralisation and the reestablishment of local councils have been key political and administrative reforms in Sierra Leone after the war (World Bank, 2007). Ex-President Kabba stated:

> An important element of my government's programme is to move away from the highly centralised system of government that we inherited.... and to restore democratic governance at the local levels. The new local councils will have enough authority in decision-making as service providers to the people in their localities. The decentralised administration will encourage and promote grassroot participation in decision-making and in the development objectives of the communities (Cited in Boak, 2010, p. 27).

As a result, the Local Government Act (LGA) (Government of Sierra Leone, 2004c) was passed and the local councils were re-established. They are in charge of delivering basic social services, including education, after not having done so for more than 30 years.

In terms of education, the LGA stipulates the transfer of the management and control of basic education from the central government to the local levels. Together with the LGA, the Education Act 2004 prescribes the devolvement in management and control of basic education. In essence, local councils are to be in charge of the management of basic education – in government and government-assisted primary schools and JSS – while the DEO is to monitor and provide technical assistance (sections 27 and 28, Government of Sierra Leone, 2004c). The Education Act further delegates the task of school management to the Board of Governors at JSS level and School Management Committee (SMC) at primary level, involving some of the members from the local communities and authorities.[12] In the devolved system, MEST is mandated to monitoring and policymaking for all sectors and remains responsible for the management of SSS and tertiary institution (World Bank, 2007).

Some ambiguities and contradictions found in the legislation on the governance and management of basic education should be noted here. The main two legislations, the LGA and Education Act 2004, and the Devolution Guide lack coherence with regard to the governance and management of basic education (World Bank, 2007; Boak, 2010). For instance, the Education Act states that primary schools are to be controlled and inspected by Minister (Section 6(3)) while the LGA states that all functions regarding primary education (and JSS) are to be devolved to local councils (Section 20). In relation to this, there are ambiguities in the delineation of responsibilities among MEST, the DEO, local councils and school managers (SMC/Board of Governors) (World Bank, 2007; Boak,

[12] The Board of Governors consists of a chairman and five representatives of the Minister, four members nominated by the proprietor of the school, one member by the local authority, one member of the Ex-Pupil Association, and the Principal as Secretary of the Board. The SMC is comprised of the head teacher, the inspector of schools, the proprietor's representative, the chairman of the Community Teachers Association, the traditional ruler of the area concerned, a female member or representative of the Chiefdom Education Committee and a prominent educationalist (Government of Sierra Leone, 2004b, pp. 32–33).

2010). For instance, exactly what specific roles SMCs and Boards of Governors have in the decentralised system is not mentioned in any document on decentralisation (World Bank, 2007).

In addition to the devolution of basic education to the local levels, decision-making authority is to be delegated to different bodies. The National Council for Technical, Vocational, and other Academic Awards (NCTVA) Act (2001a) created the NCTVA as an independent body in charge of TVET and teacher trainings. In tertiary education, the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) Act (2001c) enacts the establishment of TEC in charge of overall development of tertiary education. For the control and supervision of polytechnics, the establishment of the polytechnic councils is endorsed in the Polytechnics Act (2001b). For universities, the University Act (2004a) permits university autonomy and the creation of private universities in addition to the two public universities that exist: Njala University and the University of Sierra Leone. In addition, the authority for curriculum development is separated from the central government. An autonomous National Curriculum Research and Development Centre is responsible for the various curriculum matters, including the preparation of the curriculum, production of teaching syllabuses and textbooks, and research and evaluation of the curriculum (Government of Sierra Leone, 1995; 2004b).

Increase of accountability is another area of governance reform. One mechanism is the establishment and strengthening of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC). The ACC is an independent body primarily for investigating and reporting of alleged instances of corruption across the public sector, including education. The Anti-Corruption Commission Act (2008) gave the ACC further prosecutional powers. With regards to public finances,

the government has taken several steps to improve management and transparency in order to increase the accountability of MEST and local councils. These include the passing of various acts, such as the Public Procurement Act (2004a) and the Budgeting and Accountability Act (2005), the creation of new planning mechanisms such as the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), the development of sector strategies including the Education Sector Strategy (MEST, 2007), the establishment of District Budget Oversight Committees (DBOCs) and the realisation of Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS) in core poverty reducing sectors, including the education sector (see Boak, 2010, for more details).

The role of donors in governance matters is significant and should be noted here. Many of the mechanisms for managing public finances mentioned above are recommended by them. For instance, the realisation of PETS in the education sector as well as in health was a condition given within the multi-donor budget support framework (Boak, 2010). In particular, attention should be drawn to the conditionality of the budget ceiling that the government agreed with the IMF as part of the MTEF. This includes limits on the proportion of the budget that can be spent on wages of civil servants, entailing, in the education sector, a restriction in the number of teachers who can be on the government's payroll. Such conditionality by the IMF is causing concern inside and outside Sierra Leone as contributing to lowering the quality of the educational system (see Fedelino, Schwartz and Verhoeven, 2006; Action Aid, 2007; McDonald, 2007).

7.3.5 Summary and reflections on the 6-3-3-4 system

The 6-3-3-4 educational system is planned to substantially alter pre-war education in the areas of structure, curriculum and governance. The 6-3-3-4 system attempts to be accessible to all Sierra Leoneans, by targeting the provision of basic education to

historically disadvantaged groups, such as girls in the north and the east. It also aims to reduce drop-out levels by strengthening the TVET track. The curriculum is designed to be more relevant and governance structures are decentralised and intended to increase accountability. Additionally, it seems that the system and the state more generally may be attempting to smooth the transition from education (and training) to employment. This may be partly seen in MEST's vision to make the education sector more balanced, such as through potential partnerships with the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Nevertheless, no concrete plan seems to have been drawn up in this regard. Moreover, the plan for the new system is not entirely different from the old system. For instance, the curriculum continues to be centred on passing external examinations, although the examinations have become more relevant.

Overall, it appears that all the three imperatives behind post-conflict education are reflected in the actual planning. On the one hand, the plan seems to be attempting to overcome the problematic aspects in pre-war education by increasing relevance, making schooling more accessible (especially at the primary and JSS levels), and decentralising it. The imperative to employ education as a key tool for peacebuilding is reflected in the plan to include peace education classes and the teaching of the history of war. The provision of primary education as free and compulsory and the opening of JSS to historically disadvantaged groups can be seen as a reflection of the rights discourse as well.

7.4 Actual implementations and conditions of the 6-3-3-4 system at the national level

7.4.1 Structure

In the structure, I mainly present access issues as they are most relevant to addressing the research question later. Among them, I will first examine access on its own, i.e. general

(in)accessibility and the extent of (in)equality in access. Then, in the second sub-section, a few issues in access to education in view of its relationship to other dimensions of society are presented.

Unequal and scarce access at a higher level of education

Although access has expanded greatly on the whole, it continues to be unequal and scarce at the higher levels of education, i.e. SSS and tertiary education. The accessibility of education, particularly at the primary level, has grown rapidly since the war (see Table 3 below). The 'free' primary education was introduced from classes 1 to 3 in 1999 and extended to classes 4 to 6 in 2001. As a result, the gross enrolment rate (GER) for primary schools rose to 104%[13] by the 2003–04 academic year from 89% in 2001. Secondary schooling enrolment also rose somewhat: JSS enrolment to 41% and SSS enrolment to 22% (Dupigny, Kargbo and Yallancy, 2006). The enrolment to tertiary institutions achieved about a 160% increase to 16,625 students in the 2004–05 academic year, compared to 6,429 students in the 1998–99 academic year (World Bank, 2007). The total number of schools (primary and secondary) also almost doubled to 5,482 in 2007 since the end of the war (World Bank, 2007; MYES, 2001). World Bank (2007) commends the rapid reconstruction and expansion of access as a 'remarkable recovery' (p. 2).

Table 3: GER in 1985, 2001, and 2004

	1985[14]	**2001**	**2004**
Primary school	33%	89%	104 %
JSS	42%	23%	41%
SSS (From Form 4 in the old system)	13%	7%	22%

(Population Census in 1985 and in 2004; World Bank, 2007)

[13] This number surpasses 100% because children older than the official age group of children tend to be enrolled in schools in African countries including Sierra Leone and GER is calculated as the ratio of total enrolment *regardless of age* to the population of *the age group* that officially corresponds to the level of education.

[14] As mentioned in Chapter Two, the figure in 1985 may not be reliable as it was the height of President Steven's regime.

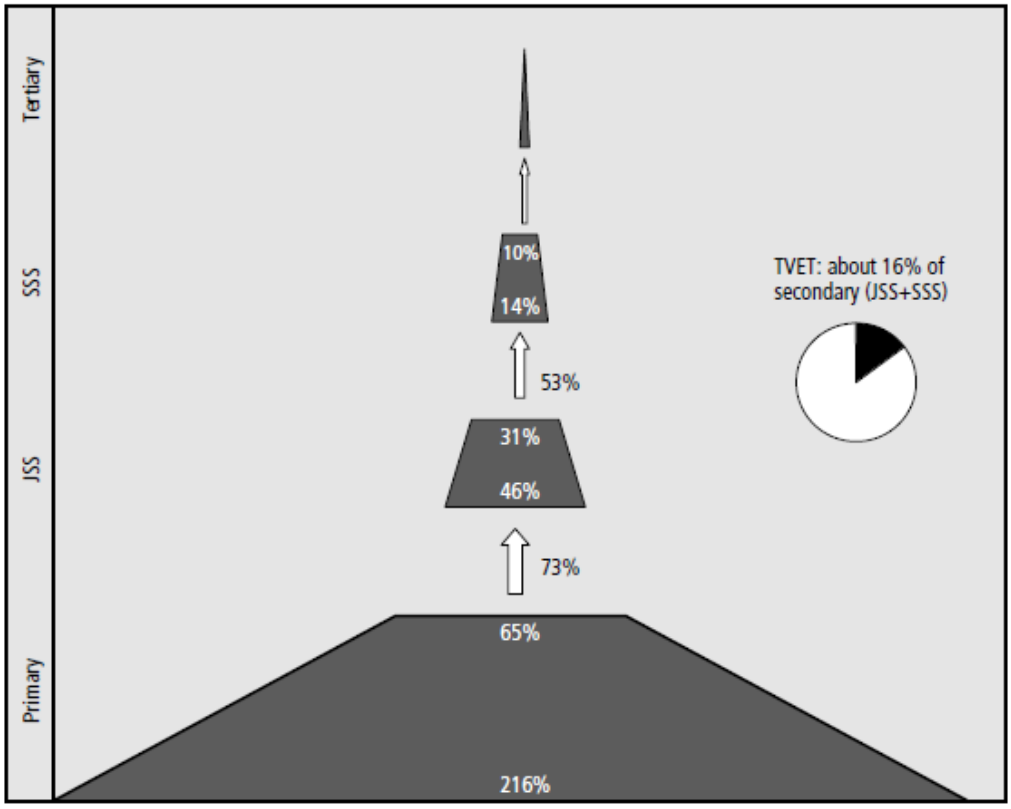
Table 4: Number of primary and secondary schools in 1989, 2001 and 2007

	1989	**2001**	**2007**
Primary	2240[15]	2704	5016
Secondary		251	466

(World Bank, 2007; MEYS, 2001)

However, the retention figures are grim. Figure 6 shows the steep pyramid of student flow to the tertiary enrolment rate with a broad base of the primary school enrolment rate; only half of Class 1 pupils are expected to reach Class 6 and only 22 % of those who enter JSS1 are expected to reach SSS3 (World Bank, 2007). This means that there are variations in access to schooling at different levels; on the one hand, primary schooling is widely available to the population, but on the other hand, completing SSS or tertiary education is out of reach for the majority of young people in Sierra Leone. Although the enrolment rate for SSS was 22% in 2004 as above, the completion rate was 10% in 2004 (World Bank, 2007), and if we consider the completion of the SSS as passing of the WASSCE this fell to approximately 3% in 2009 (see Table 10 below). In terms of tertiary education, the GER for tertiary institutions was merely 2.1% in 2006 (Development Assistance Coordination Office, 2008).

[15] Similarly, this figure may also not be reliable.



(World Bank, 2007, p. 61)

Figure 6: Sierra Leone Student Flow Pyramid, 2004–05

Not only is access scarce at the higher level of education, but also inequalities in access appear to persist. Table 5 below shows the parity index of enrolment (GER) by the level of schooling. The parity index is the 'ratio of the GER of the lagging subgroup to that of the more favoured subgroup' (World Bank, 2007, p. 118). Thus, a parity index of 1 indicates the two groups have the same GERs; the lower the index gets, the wider the gap of GER between the favoured and the lagging groups. From Table 5, we can see that great disparities are visible, particularly at SSS: 1) between rural and urban; 2) by region; 3) by the financial status of the family; and 4) by gender and locality. There is not much disparity between genders per se, but there is a great disparity when it is mixed with locality – that is, rural girls versus urban boys. While all these gaps are most notable at SSS level, these different subgroups are close to equal at primary level.

Table 5: Parity Index of GER by Gender, Locality, Region and Household Expenditure Quintile (2003/04)

Parity Index	**Primary**	**JSS**	**SSS**
By Gender (Girls/Boys)	0.97	0.74	0.81
By Locality (Rural/Urban)	0.80	0.36	**0.21**
By Locality/Gender (Rural Girls/ Urban Boys)	0.79	**0.20**	**0.15**
By Region (Northern/Western)	0.83	0.44	**0.14**
By Household Expenditure Quintile (Poorest/Richest)	0.84	**0.30**	**0.11**

(Adapted from World Bank, 2007, p. 120)

Although the index above was based on data collected in 2004, adult informants in the study believed these inequalities still existed (e.g. President of Principals Conference, Interview, 26 October 2009; Deputy Minister of MEST, Interview, 14 December 2009; Professor of history, Interview, 14 December 2009; Professor of education, Interview, 15 December 2009). However, they also believed that the situation has improved due to various initiatives, such as the Girl Child Support Programme (see Section 7.3.2 above). It should be noted, however, that this programme has been significantly delayed in its implementation; the last group of pupils to receive assistance was in 2006–07 (Deputy Minister, Interview, 14 December 2009). Towards the end of the fieldwork (in December 2009), the principal of MCSS, the school I was attached to, commented to me that the government was going to resume the programme soon, asking schools to present the names of female pupils who had passed the NPSE in that year (Interview, 2 December 2009). The Deputy Minister of MEST also confirmed the intention of not only resuming the programme but also extending it to all regions in the 2010–11 academic year (Interview, 14 December 2009).

Among the various disparities, disparities by region are most relevant to the research question and so I further discuss them here. The study finds considerable regional disparities at the higher levels of education in various ways. I have already shown the greater regional disparities (Northern/Western) at SSS level by the enrolment rate (Table 5

above); the enrolment rate at SSS level in Northern Region is 14% of that in Western Region (which includes the capital Freetown). In addition, substantial disparities in the completion of SSS by region are observed. There are – as well as the overall poor results which I will come back to later – significant differences in WASSCE results in English and mathematics (the core subjects) by region (see Table 6 below). More specifically, the Western Region has the best result both in terms of the number of candidates who passed (137 candidates) and the pass rate (1.08%), particularly compared to the Eastern Region with the worst results among all the regions (13 candidates passed with 0.4 % pass rate).

Table 6: Results in English Language and Mathematics in WASSCE by Region (2008)

SUBJECTS		MALE	FEMALE		TOTAL	
	NO. SAT.	NO. & % of PASS	NO. SAT	NO. & % of PASS	NO. SAT	NO. & % of PASS
Eastern Region	2,486	13 (0.52)	7668	0 (0.00)	3,254	13 (0.40)
Northern Region	3,255	27 (0.83)	965	0 (0.00)	4,220	27 (0.64)
Southern Region	2,674	23 (0.86)	1,120	6 (0.54)	3,794	29 (0.76)
Western Region	8,087	101 (1.25)	4,592	36 (0.78)	12,679	137 (1.08)
Total	16,502	164 (0.99)	7,445	42 (0.56)	23,947	206 (0.86)

Note: Pass in this table indicates having 'credits' in five subjects or more.

(Source: WAEC cited in Gbamanja, 2010)

Similarly, there are great regional disparities in the enrolment to tertiary institutions. The disparity is most significant between the Western and Eastern regions: the proportion of population enrolled in tertiary institutions is 0.85% in the Western Region while it is only 0.12 % in the Eastern Region (see Table 7 below).

Table 7: Number and percentage of enrolment in tertiary institutions by region (2004)

	Eastern	Northern	Southern	Western	Total
Teacher Training	758	1704	819	1639	4920
Technical	140	150	192	1212	1694
Nursing	90	97	101	370	658
Tertiary Certificate	161	253	259	2434	3107
Tertiary Degree	177	173	189	2075	2614
Tertiary Post Graduate	28	38	34	248	348
TOTAL	1354	2415	1594	7978	13341
Percentage of students who are enrolled in tertiary institutions compared to the provincial population	**0.12 %**	**0.14%**	**0.15%**	**0.85%**	**0.27%**

(Source: Population Census in 2004)

Educational access in relation to the political and economic conditions of Sierra Leone

So far, I have presented the conditions of access to schooling itself in Sierra Leone. As depicted in the theoretical and conceptual framework, the study attempts to analyse the relationship of the educational system to society. Here, I present three issues by examining access to education in connection to wider contextual issues. They are: the scarcity of meaningful opportunities for dropouts; the unemployment of the educated; and alignment of regional educational inequalities with political divisions and other inequalities in society.

Dropouts continue to not be provided with productive opportunities in Sierra Leone. Although it is difficult to measure the unemployment rate due to the existence of a significant informal market, the youth unemployment rate is estimated to be as high as 65% (Humanitarian News and Analysis (IRIN), 2007). In a society where unemployment prevails and where, as I have shown earlier, the higher level of education is largely inaccessible, in theory the 6-3-3-4 system provides TVET for those who do not want to or cannot remain in the academic stream. Unfortunately, however, its implementation is found to be ineffective. The number of existing TVET centres that are equivalent to SSS are much fewer than the number of secondary schools; there are only 70 TVET centres in total compared to 466 secondary schools in the country and no TVET centres that are equivalent to the academic track (SSS) exist in Makeni, a regional headquarters (MEST, 2007; see also Section 8.3.2. for details about TVET institutes in Makeni). A number of adult informants have shared concerns about young people who have not achieved sufficient qualifications and thus have limited employment prospects, some connecting this to potential political instability (e.g. President of the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ), Interview, 15 December 2009; Director of Peace and Conflict Studies, Interview, 15 December 2009). For instance, the President of SLAJ commented:

> One thing it does is that it makes people not too qualified or not too skilled to be employed at offices where they would love to work, but then they are left to labour or manual jobs, which they don't earn much or not even much available. It leaves them disgruntled. It turns them to thieves. And if there is a slightest opportunity of civil unrest they capitalise on it and vandalise (Interview, 15 December 2009).

The dropouts continue to be seen as a source of concern in society, 'opportunists' who will take advantage of civil unrest to vandalise.

Secondly, those who are highly schooled still have bleak employment possibilities in Sierra Leone. The 2004 Census suggests that 'educated' youth, particularly those who enter the labour force for the first time after their education, are 'at risk' of unemployment (Braima et al., 2006). A number of adult interviewees stated that the gap between access to education and access to employment – meaning the unemployment or underemployment of the highly schooled and educated – has not changed since the war and might even be widening. The contributing factors raised are poor economic conditions on the one hand and the rapid increase in the number of college graduates on the other, meaning that the economy cannot absorb the educated youth (e.g. Interview, Professor of Education, 15 December 2009; Principal of a SSS, 2 December 2009); a decrease in the presence of NGOs (and the jobs associated with them) as Sierra Leone has moved away from a period of intense humanitarian intervention towards a development stage (Interview, SLAJ President, 15 December 2009); and the 'ceiling system' favoured by the IMF that places great restrictions on the number of teachers who can be newly put on the government payroll (e.g. Interview, SLTU President, 25 October 2009). Some of the comments do reflect the reality; the government hired only 2,000 new teachers in 2007 (Action Aid, 2007), and the number of enrolment to tertiary institutions more than doubled in 2004 compared to the figure in 1998 as shown above. Nonetheless, the President of the Principals Conference shared a more optimistic view that the gap is being reduced due to

the development of the financial sector, and that he believed students are responsible for unemployment by being 'picky' in selecting a job through the fields that they choose to study (Interview, 26 October 2009).

Thirdly, the inequality in access to education by region (and thereby among ethnic groups) found at SSS and tertiary level somewhat aligns with political divisions and other inequalities by region. The competition for power in national politics is divided by region and ethnicity; primarily between the SLPP – supported by Southerners and Easterners (i.e. Mende) – and the APC – supported by Northerners and Westerners (i.e. Temne and Limba) – and there is concern that it is becoming more polarised by ethnic divisions (see Section 4.2.3). Furthermore, other social divisions also exist by region. Table 8 below shows the levels of access to social services, i.e. water, health, and electricity, and employment ratio by region. The Western Region exceeds other regions in access to all the three areas of social services, in sharp contrast to the Northern Region which has the lowest access. However, in terms of the employed population ratio, the disparity is not so sharp. It should also be noted that, although it is consistent that the inequalities and divisions exist by region in social, economic and political dimensions, the way there are divided or unequal is not so consistent. That is, the major line of political division in Sierra Leone is Northerners (and Westerners) versus Southerners and Easterners. Educational inequalities were found to be particularly evident between Western and Eastern regions according to the statistics and disparities in social services were found to be greatest between the west and the north. This raises questions about the validity of such statistical data, particularly given the weak institutional capacity of the state. Nevertheless, it is beyond the present study's scope to examine this. Furthermore, the political division was not found to be an *inequality*; different parties are given fair opportunities to compete, and

indeed while President Kabbah from the SLPP (supported by south and east) won the elections in 1996 and in 2002, President Koroma from the APC (supported by the north and west) won in 2007.

Table 8: Access to social services and employment ratio by region

	Northern Region	Southern Region	Western Region	Eastern Region
Household's access to pipe-borne water sources	**8%**	13%	**71%**	23%
Household's access to electricity for light	**< 1%**	4%	**10%**	4%
Household's access to health facilities in less than half a mile (0.8km)	**25%**	28%	**59%**	31%
Employment-to-population ratio of population 15-64 years	**71%**	68%	**54%**	66%

(Source: Population Census in 2004)

Putting aside the differences among dimensions of regional inequalities, the alignment of political division and educational inequality particularly deserves attention. This is because when political inequalities and educational inequalities correspond, according to Stewart's theory, educational inequality is more likely to be politicised and be relevant to a risk of conflict. Although political division is not found to be an inequality, education is already politicised in some ways in Sierra Leone. At the tertiary level, student politics is strongly aligned with national politics, which is epitomised by the rivalry between the Black camp and the White camp at FBC. The Black camp is roughly associated with Mende and with supporters of the SLPP and the White camp is predominated by Northerners and supporters of the APC, although this is not clear-cut, with some Northerners being in the Black camp and vice versa.[16] The Director of Peace and Conflict Studies at FBC told me that recently camp members were even going into SSS to recruit future student supporters into their camps (Interview, 15 December 2009). Furthermore, the two secondary governmental boarding schools for boys are also seen to be associated with national

[16] The politics in education at the tertiary level, in particular at FBC, is currently being researched by Clementina Amankwaah at University College of London.

politics. One of them is in Bo, the heart of SLPP support, while the other is Magburaka, a town in the north where the majority of APC supporters reside. Many of the SLPP politicians come from Bo School historically (Corby, 1990) and presently, too, albeit to a lesser extent, while many APC politicians come from Magburaka, including the current President Koroma (Informal interviews, FBC students).

7.4.2 Curriculum and quality

Overall, the curriculum reform, increasing relevance and incorporating elements that promote peacebuilding, has not been implemented efficiently and the quality of teaching is low. Although, in theory, increasing the relevance of education to the lives of Sierra Leonean children appears as one of the major goals behind the change to the 6-3-3-4 system (see Section 7.3.1), many adult informants commented that it is not functioning as intended because of poor implementation, particularly of the TVET track (e.g. Deputy Minister of MEST, Interview, 14 December 2009; Professor of Education, Interview, 15 December 2009). The comment below by the President of the SLTU resonates with and summarises what adult informants told me on the whole:

> It is [relevant], if only it is fully allowed to operate according to the merits it deserves. But…much of the properties are lacking. Textbooks are not available. Teachers are not there… About JSS 3, they are allowed to go into different careers. We have a good number of carpenters, masons, but they don't have tools again (Interview, 25 September 2009).

At least partially reflecting the poor implementation of the TVET track, the number of candidates who sat technical and vocational subjects in WASSCE in 2008 is considerably low, taking into account that the total number of candidates was 23,947 (see Table 9 below).

Table 9: Number of candidates sat in Technical and Vocational Subjects in 2008 WASSCE

	Male	Female	Total
Home Management	13	1259	1,272
Management-in-Living	167	707	874
Foods and Nutrition	26	463	489
Engineering Science	369	8	377
Clothing and Textiles	6	253	259
Technical Drawing	179	3	182
Woodwork	35	0	35
Applied Electricity	33	0	33
Metal Work	29	0	29
Visual Art	1	24	25
Building Construction	13	1	14
Electronics	20	2	22

(Source: WAEC cited in Gbamanaja, 2010, p. 23)

Not only is the intended reform poorly implemented, but also the low quality of the educational system is attested by an 'alarmingly high' failure rate (Gbamanja, 2010) in public examinations (see Table 10 below). The examination pass rate for NPSE has lowered but not considerably compared to BECE or WASSCE, taking into account that the pass score for the NPSE has risen since 2005. However, the drop in the pass rate for WASSCE is severe, being less than 5% in 2009. Similarly, the BECE pass rate has dropped by 15%, albeit not as significantly as WASSCE. It should be noted that, as mentioned before, the examination content for NPSE and BECE is created in Sierra Leone while the one for WASSCE is created at the regional level and is the same among all the English-speaking West African countries. This may well explain, at least partially, the severe drop in the pass rate for WASSCE; even if the quality of teaching has dropped at all levels in Sierra Leone, NPSE and BECE examination content might be adjustable to the condition of education as it is created in the Sierra Leonean office of WAEC, while the examination content of WASSCE is not adjustable as such as the content is determined by the regional office.

Table 10: Pass rate for NPSE, BECE, and WASSCE in 2000, 2005, and 2009

	NPSE pass (%)		BECE pass (%)		WASSCE pass (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	female
2000	92.9	92.0	73.3	52.5	26.9	10.6
2005	74.2	68.8	54.9	42.3	5.2	3.3
2009	76.0	72.6	58.7	44.5	3.8	2.9

(Source: WAEC, Freetown)

Note 1: The NPSE pass score was 200 or higher in the year 2000, but since 2005 it has been 230 or higher.
Note 2: The BECE pass rate indicates passes in four or more subjects.
Note 3: The WASSCE pass rate in this table indicates credits in four or more subjects.

Furthermore, the poor quality of teaching is attested to by WAEC's analysis of candidates' academic abilities demonstrated in the examinations. The WAEC Chief Examiners' Report in 2008 shows that pupils lack basic academic skills, such as that the candidates 'displayed poor command of the English Language' and 'did not understand the requirements of the questions' (The WAEC Chief Examiners' Report, 2008, cited in Gbamanja, 2010, p. xii).

This poor performance in public examinations, particularly at BECE and WASSCE, brought great concern in the country and, in response, President Koroma established a review commission, *The Commission of Inquiry into the 2008 Basic Education Certification Examination and West African School Certificate Examination*, to investigate its causes (Government of Sierra Leone, 2009). Meanwhile, the MEST set up a separate commission of inquiry into the effectiveness of the 6-3-3-4 system in the same year.[17] The review commission set up by the president, as a result, recognises 'interrelated and complex' factors for the poor performance of pupils at public examinations, such as home, school, society (community, public) and the Government/MEST, and yet considerable attention is paid to the responsibility of teachers. Teachers are considered to be held responsible because of their low professional standards, including low moral discipline and

[17]Although I have interviewed a member of the review commission on the effectiveness of 6-3-3-4 set up by MEST, I was not able to get a final report as it was not yet completed at the time of fieldwork. I remain unsure whether it has been published or even completed.

limited subject knowledge. The rapid introduction of a mass educational system, despite the weak institutional capacity after the war, is also seen as a contributing factor (see Gbamanja, 2010)

In addition to the overall poor implementation of the relevant curriculum and the low quality, the intention to promote peacebuilding through the system is not fully implemented either. Peace education has not been implemented at primary and secondary school levels nor has the course of peace studies become a compulsory 'Emergent Issues' course at tertiary level (Deputy Minister of MEST, email exchange, 16 July 2010). Another key feature in the system to promote peacebuilding, the history of war and the political economy of pre-war Sierra Leone, is not taught to the majority of pupils up to SSS level. Paulson (2006) found that the child-friendly and secondary school versions of SLTRC reports – that are supposedly for the teaching of the civil war history – have not been received by many schools in Freetown. The result is that schooling does not provide an opportunity formally at all for pupils to learn the history and the causes of the war in the system, except for SSS pupils in the art stream. The history professor who I interviewed and has been involved in textbook writing recognised the challenge to include the teaching of the war while he also recognised the problem and the importance of the teaching. That is, social studies at JSS level is composed of many important subjects and thus it is somewhat difficult to devote much time to one element, i.e. the contemporary history of Sierra Leone (Interview, 14 December 2009).

7.4.3 Governance

The main reform area of governance, the devolution and decentralisation of power, is not implemented effectively. Institutional capacity continues to be weak, most observable in

poor remuneration for teachers and the tolerance of corruption in the system. However, accountability may be increasing.

As a result of the passing of the LGA in 2004, the first local government elections took place in the same year (World Bank, 2007). This resulted in the reestablishment of 19 local councils all over the country. Makeni Town Council is one of them, while the rest of the Bombali district is governed by Bombali District Council. However, the implementation of devolution of functions to the local government in the education sector appears to be significantly delayed, such as in the area of distribution of school fee subsidies. Although this was planned to be devolved in 2005 (LGA 2004, Statutory Instrument no. 13, cited in World Bank, 2007, p. 137), it finally materialised in November 2009 (Boak, 2010). Some functions – such as the procurement of textbooks and teaching material, as well as payment of the examinations fees – have not yet been devolved, although they have been suggested as such (Boak, 2010). Similarly, despite the plan that an autonomous National Curriculum Research and Development Centre is to be in charge of curriculum development, it continues to be centralised (President of Principals Conference, Interview, 26 October 2009).

There are several factors behind the delayed (or non-) implementation of devolution or decentralisation. One of the foremost reasons is, as discussed earlier, the lack of coherence among policy documents (i.e. the Education Act 2004; Local Government Act 2004; and the Devolution Guide) regarding responsibility (see Section 7.3.4). This seems to have slowed the devolution process in the education sector, even when compared to other sectors such as health (Boak, 2010). The second issue is the weak institutional capacity of the local councils. Local councils were only re-established in the LGA and still possess

low technical capacity. Boak (2010), in her report on education financing, governance and accountability, notes that some staff who were sent by the national institution to the local councils were not aware of the responsibilities they held. Mbawa, a doctoral student investigating decentralisation and ethnic diversity in Sierra Leone, commented to me that few technical changes have occurred due to the reintroduction of local councils; the people who used to work at the ministries were now working at the councils, but continued to work under the direction of ministries. This made him shift the focus of his study from the role of local councils to that of the chieftaincy, as the chieftaincy appeared to be having a larger impact on local governance than the local councils. The third reason for the delayed devolution seems to be that MEST lacks adequate planning and incentives to devolve the power and authority (Boak, 2010). Boak (2010) notes that many of the officials in the MEST and DEOs poorly understand the rationale behind devolution. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED) – in charge of budget planning and financial management on the part of MEST – seems to recognise the need to devolve the service delivery responsibility for basic education to local levels (Boak, 2010).

In addition, the involvement of communities prescribed in policy documents is poorly implemented as well. A key device for community involvement in school management, the SMC in primary schools, is reported to be ineffective in various reports, such as Boak (2010), ACC (2009), and Kpaka and Wadegu (2009). Boak (2010) notes that, although in theory the withdrawal and the expenditure of fee subsidies should be monitored by SMCs, in practice this is often solely done by a head teacher. She also comments on that the link between SMCs and local councils is weak under the current arrangements. Kpaka and Wadegu (2009), in their survey of 1,069 households conducted on behalf of Transparency International on transparency and accountability in primary education, report that SMC

meetings are often held only when the 'need arises' and that SMC members are not well informed on financial flows.

The poor implementations of structural, curricular or governing reform plans discussed so far are fundamentally related to the weak institutional capacity of the educational system in Sierra Leone. World Bank (2007) states that the capacity issues – human capacity as well as planning and management capacity – are 'one of the most critical challenges facing Sierra Leone today' (p. 9). Highly skilled professionals and managers are not sufficient in the education sector like in other sectors (World Bank, 2007), and an education sector review for RPSP stated that planning and management capacity are 'weak at all levels of the education sector – schools, district, and ministry headquarters' (Bennell, Harding, and Rogers-Wright, 2004, p. 101, cited in World Bank, 2007, p. 141). The financial capacity of the government is similarly weak. In the education sector, this is most apparent in, among others, the poor remuneration for on-payroll teachers and their limited numbers. The wages of teachers are low (on average, 180,000 Leones in primary schools and 270,000 Leones at JSS and SSS levels per month in 2004, equivalent to US$ 73 to US$ 110 in 2004) (World Bank, 2007). Nevertheless, they are higher compared to other civil servants with a similar level of qualifications, e.g. police officers (Interview, SLTU President, 25 October 2009). In addition, since the government introduced the 'budget ceiling' mentioned earlier (see Section 7.3.4 above), the number of teachers on the payroll that the government approved has significantly reduced.

It should be noted that the poor implementation of the new educational system is not solely attributable to the weak institutional capacity of the Sierra Leonean state per se. As mentioned, Sierra Leone is dependent on donor support (see sections 7.2 and 7.3.4 above).

As a result, its implementation capacity is also affected by donors' commitment, which is not always unswerving. For example, implementation of the SABABU project was impeded due to the delay of funds. Another example is a delay in the transfer of a pool fund called the Education Sector Support Fund (ESSF), created by major donors such as the World Bank, DFID, and the Swedish International Development Cooperation, in order to support the educational system in Sierra Leone. The transfer of ESSF was delayed for 15 months; the first US$ 3 million was transferred in the last quarter of 2009 out of US$ 13.9 million that was pledged for the period between 2007 and 2009 (Boak, 2010).

In relation to the weak institutional capacity of the state and its educational system, corruption appears to be tolerated in the system. There is a great degree of corruption observed in the flow of finance and goods from the MEST to schools. For instance, discrepancies in the flow have been detected in the PETS conducted annually in core poverty reducing sectors, including education. In the academic year 2003–04, there were negative discrepancies in school furniture (46% between the MEST and the schools nationwide, rising to 52% if the transfer had gone through regional Deputy Directors), textbooks (12% between the DEOs and schools), and school fee subsidies (8% between the government and the schools through the private audit firm KPMG) (PETS Task Team MoFED, 2005 and PETS Task Team MoFED, 2006, cited in Boak, 2010). In addition to the 'major corruption' above, petty corruption by teachers is reported to be common too. For instance, it is reported as common practice of teachers that they sell 'pamphlets' (i.e. print-outs of lecture points that teachers have summarised) to and collect money from pupils (i.e. Gbamanja, 2010). Furthermore, absenteeism of teachers from the classroom when they are obliged to be there has been reported as a 'rampant' issue (ACC, 2009;

Gbamanja, 2010). This is because many teachers have another job besides their teaching to cover their poor, if they are paid, salaries.

Whether major or petty, corruption in the educational system has become a source of great concern in society. Evidence for this is that two reports on the education sector were published by the ACC so far: *Report: Payroll verification exercise in the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports* (2008) and *From the abyss back to the Athens of West Africa: A report on systems review of Ministry of Education* (2009). This can be seen as a sign of concern because the ACC responds to people's reports on alleged instances of corruption. The two reports were conducted precisely because the ACC had received many complaints from the public domain (Commissioner of ACC, Interview, 26 October 2009). Another sign of concern about corruption in the education sector is the creation of *The Code of Conduct for Teachers and Other Education Personnel in Sierra Leone* (SLTU, 2009). This was endorsed by international agencies (UNICEF and United Nations Population Fund) and approved by the government because of the low moral standards of teachers (President of the Teachers' Union, Interview, 25 October 2009). For both the ACC reports and the code of conduct for teachers, however, actual effects in terms of 'disciplining' teachers and other personnel in the education sector are yet to be seen.

Despite the problems in the governance of education raised above, however, accountability may be increasing. One indication for this could be the fact that the ACC is actually functioning as an accountability mechanism, as seen in the publication of the reports. Improvement of district accountability has also been observed. The DBOCs are recently formally established and local councils are more open to collaborating with DBOCs and civil society organisations than in the past (Boak, 2010). Upward accountability, or social

accountability, may be growing as well with the emergence of civil society organisations with good capacity, particularly outside Freetown (Boak, 2010). However, this is not to say that it is sufficient. The ACC (2009) does not profile specific cases identifying individuals (Boak, 2010) and the Commission does not have the autonomy it should have, in that it remains the president who appoints the Commissioner (Government of Sierra Leone, 2008). Furthermore, with regards to devolution, a lack of consistency in legislation and policies about devolution is considered to be resulting in confused accountability lines (Boak, 2010; World Bank, 2007).

7.5 Summary and reflections on the post-conflict educational system at national level

Overall, although the 6-3-3-4 is buttressed by many reform plans in all areas, including structure, curriculum and governance, the implementations of it are poor and actual conditions at the national level are found to be grim. The overall level of retention is small and the SSS and tertiary levels remain inaccessible to ordinary Sierra Leoneans. Disparities in access to schooling are also stark at SSS and tertiary levels, particularly across regions. Further, the rapid expansion in spite of the weak institutional capacity seems to have had an effect on the quality of teaching, as was apparent in the low standard of public examination results. Nevertheless, some more positive signs are found too. The level of accountability, including social accountability, may be increasing. Furthermore, access has not only expanded but also the affirmative policy that encourages access for historically disadvantaged girls has been realised, albeit with some delays.

In addition, some issues were found in view of access to education in its wider context. First, meaningful opportunities, i.e. TVET or employment, appear to be still insufficient for those who drop out from the formal schooling. Second, the gap between education and

employment, i.e. employment of educated youth, continues to exist. Third, regional inequalities in education align somewhat with political divisions as well as inequalities in access to social services, which is a concern in relation to possible politicisation of education. It is yet to be seen in the next chapter, however, how these issues are perceived by young people. It is also yet to be seen in the next chapter which level of schooling is most relevant to the socioeconomic mobility of the young people in reality and in perception. These examinations will be essential in addressing the research question, as pointed out in the framework (see Section 5.3).

Seeing the actual conditions of education in present-day Sierra Leone, the rights discourse may be having a greater influence than the other two imperatives regarding what is to be implemented through the limited resources of the educational system and the Sierra Leonean state. On the one hand, the components that are associated with the rights discourse (i.e. the expansion of access, especially at the primary level and in the affirmative policy to send female children to JSS) are actually implemented, perhaps in relation to the fact that the external donors and agencies who provide a great degree of support to the system are the ones behind this. On the other hand, the implementation of other imperatives, particularly the imperative to reform those negative factors in education considered to have fuelled the war or that which envisions education as a tool for the promotion of peacebuilding, do not appear to be of utmost priority. This is apparent in that provision of the higher level of education, i.e. SSS and tertiary education, remains both scarce and unequal, and their links with access to employment have not been tackled much (despite this gap being seen as key in how education fuelled the conflict), with the teaching

of civil war history, peace education, human rights education or civic education recommended by SLTRC and NRS not being implemented efficiently.[18]

Having shown the overall picture of the educational reform plan and its implementation conditions at the national level in this chapter, in the next chapter I shall present findings on the educational experiences and perceptions of beneficiaries in the form of young people themselves, as well as of adult key informants in Makeni.

[18] See Paulson (2006) for a detailed analysis of the SLTRC's recommendations on the education sector and its limited impact on educational system planning and implementation.

Chapter Eight: Experiences and Perceptions of Beneficiaries of Schooling in Makeni

8.1 Introduction to the chapter

Having presented the educational system in Sierra Leone at the level of institution in the previous chapter, in this chapter I will present findings at the level of beneficiaries, outlining the experiences and perceptions of education by young people and key adult informants in Makeni. As in the previous chapter, the findings here are presented following the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study, centring on the four core elements in education: 1) structure; 2) curriculum and quality; 3) governance; and 4) representations and expectations (see Chapter Five). In doing this, I will elaborate upon the elements and relationships that are relevant to the research question. I will also give a more detailed account of findings that have been little discussed in existing literature and yet are considered relevant to advancing theoretical understanding of the role of education in the (in)stability of the society in question. On the other hand, I have chosen to describe in less detail associated findings that are already discussed extensively in existing literature or that are not relevant to the research question. It should be also stressed that, as in the previous chapter, I will only make *descriptive claims* about educational realities in Makeni in this chapter.

Before I present these main findings, I shall first provide an overview of the lives of the young people who were the main participants in the study as a background to those findings.

8.2 Background: Young people in Makeni and their schooling in context

The basic profile of the young people from which the data were collected has already been mentioned; they are in total 40 in number – both male and female, aged between 16 and 30, and from diverse ethnic and geographical origins – who were, at the moment of the fieldwork, either in SSS, in a TVET institute, or out of school (see Section 6.3.2). The account below will show their family background, ordinary activities outside school, and their financial struggles to pay school-related fees.

Most of the informants belonged to large families with little education. Many of them had four to six brothers and sisters, while some had more. For instance, Mohammed, one of the bike-taxi riders, had 14 brothers and sisters. Many lived with some of their family members, i.e. their parent(s), sisters or brothers, husband, uncles or aunts, or grandparents, while some lived with friends or friends' parents. Most belonged to the first generation to receive formal schooling. Even among their brothers and sisters, some were not attending school, having dropped out of the system or have not been enrolled at all. In the case of Mohammed, three sisters and one brother – all younger than him – were in school at the time of fieldwork, while other older brothers and a sister had left school at primary or JSS levels, except for one older sister who went to college. A similar case is Musu whose parents made a deliberate choice to focus their resources on sending their eldest son to FBC, while the education of their other children, including her, was neglected. Thus, Musu had to stop schooling at Class 6 as her mother told her there was no more money for her education. Lamin, a friend of Musu who stopped schooling at SSS1, told me that it is a common strategy for large families whose resources are constrained.

All the informants had some familial responsibilities as well as some time for leisure. Among those attending the SSS or the TVET institute, most of them did some domestic work earlier in the day – such as washing dishes, sweeping, and fetching water (there was no running water or electricity in Makeni at the time of the fieldwork) – while some of them went out afterwards to do or find a part-time job to earn some money or just to be able to eat something that day. Among the out-of-school informants, some grew vegetables in their gardens or on farms, some sold goods at markets, and some females were in charge of getting ingredients at market and cooking for the family. For their leisure time, the young people spent time playing or watching football, going to the cinema, meeting with others at an 'Ataya-base' (rough shelters where young people, many unemployed, sit around and drink Chinese herbal tea known as 'Ataya'), or spending time at a friend's house. For many, religious activities such as going to church or to the mosque appeared to be a significant part of their lives.

All the participants in the study who attended the SSS or the TVET institute were struggling to pay the fees, particularly the 'extra' or 'hidden' ones. The official tuition for SSS is 75,000 Leones (equivalent to US$ 19 in 2009) per year, while the fee for the vocational centre is 52,000 Leones (equivalent to US$ 13 in 2009). For the majority of the informants, the official fees were paid by others, such as their parent(s), other family members, or NGOs who sponsor them. However, in addition to the official fees there are indirect costs, as well as the aforementioned 'extra' or 'hidden' fees. Indirect costs include those of the uniform, the textbooks, and materials for practical arts. Extra fees are charged by teachers such as for extra lessons, submission of assignments (to be marked), and for buying 'pamphlets.' Pupils are often forced to purchase these pamphlets if they wish to get a high mark or to simply pass an in-class examination. Each of them may cost up to 15,000

Leones (equivalent to US$ 3.5 in 2009). As textbooks are too costly for pupils to obtain, costing from around 20,000 to 30,000 Leones (equivalent of US$ 5 to US$ 7.5 in 2009), pamphlets are the main source of knowledge. On the whole, indirect costs and extra fees are estimated to be as high as US$ 39.15 per year at the primary level (UNICEF, 2009). At the secondary level, there are school fees[19] plus higher indirect costs and extra fees. For those in the TVET institute, a group of informants in Home Management said that for the 'catering practical' they were responsible for bringing all the ingredients, which sometimes cost 30,000 or 60,000 Leones (equivalent to US$ 8 to US$ 15 in 2009) for one class. These 'extra' fees are often paid by the pupils with money they have earned through (obtaining and) selling goods in the markets, e.g. rice and soap, or laundering clothes for someone.

Some others struggled to find ways to pay both the official and the extra fees. Two out-of-school informants, Mohammed and Amadu, who completed the SSS but failed in WASSCE, were so-called *Okada* bike-taxi riders. Mohammed had been working as such in the afternoons ever since he entered JSS in order to fund his continuation of schooling in the mornings. Some others earned money by operating a push-cart (*Omolanke*) (Ali, SSS2, art stream), working in building and construction (Jamal, Masonry course) or assisting with satellite installations (Henry, SSS2, commercial stream). On the other hand, findings reveal that girls had two distinct strategies for them to find money to attend school or gain training. One was, as a few girls in SSS told me in a later stage of the fieldwork, to have boyfriends – often older than them – who paid for them (i.e. Binta, Zainabu, Isata in SSS2, commercial stream). The other strategy, as Josephine at the TVET institute told me, was to work as commercial sex workers. These two strategies, while enabling them to attend schools or gain training, also contributed to one of the major reasons why girls drop

[19] For JSS, the official fee is 60,000 Leones (equivalent to US$ 15 in 2009).

out of the school system, namely pregnancy. Indeed, a few of the female participants confided in me, also at a later stage of the fieldwork, that they have children (i.e. Josephine at the TVET institute, Binta in SSS2, commercial stream, and Jalikatu in SSS3, commercial stream). I will come back to issues related to bike-taxi riding and pregnancy in various sections as they are deeply connected to the educational experiences of the young people in Makeni.

Against this background, in the following sections I will present the main findings by the four elements of the educational system.

8.3 Structure of education in Makeni

I will present findings in two main themes regarding the structure: first, issues related to access to schooling and, second, the extent to which different cultural groups are integrated or separated in schools. Between the two themes, I will elaborate on issues related to access in much more detail, as they are relevant to the research question both empirically, in examining the case of Sierra Leone, and theoretically, in deepening understanding of the role of education in violent conflict.

As at the national level, I analysed educational access both on its own (accessibility in general and the disparities thereof) and in the context of the economic and political conditions of Makeni. In the first sub-section, I present findings regarding educational access on its own while in the next sub-section, the wider context and its relations with education are examined. The findings below reveal that education in Makeni is inaccessible and unequally distributed at the levels of education that are relevant to substantial socioeconomic mobility, i.e. SSS and tertiary levels. The findings will also highlight the complex perceptions and expectations of young people in regard to access

issues, particularly about the gap between educational access and access to employment. At the end of the section, I will briefly note how the pupils from the various cultural groups are found to be integrated in Makeni.

8.3.1 Educational access in Makeni

At the national level, the higher level of education, i.e. SSS and tertiary levels, is both scarce and unequally distributed while the lower level of education has become more accessible. The key question here concerns accessibility at the level of education that is (and is perceived to be) relevant to socioeconomic mobility (or has or is perceived to have social significance, in Stewart's term). The first step in exploring access issues is to examine what level of education is and is perceived to be relevant to the socioeconomic mobility of the beneficiaries in Makeni. From my analysis, this appears to be completion of SSS, i.e. passing the WASSCE. This is because the completion of the SSS appears to be crucial in order to obtain a job with a stable and somewhat sufficient salary, e.g. a teaching job at secondary level. The two bike-taxi riders Mohammed and Amadu exemplify the tough employment situation affecting those that do not complete SSS. Both of them, failing the WASSCE twice, told me that passing the WASSCE was essential for getting employment and proceeding to a higher level of education. In fact both of them wanted to pursue the HTC in order to be able to teach in secondary schools. However, having not been able to get good results from WASSCE, they do not have any option but to ride bike-taxis to make money and live day to day.

In perception, however, young people believe that the qualifications from tertiary institutions are essential in order to be recognised as an 'educated person' or to access 'employment,' i.e. a job with a stable and sufficient salary (see Section 8.6 below). This is partly because even the completion of SSS with good WASSCE results is not sufficient in

many cases to obtain 'employment.' In the case of Alexis, although he had completed SSS with good results,[20] he had not been able to find a job in the NGO sector as he had wished to do for two years; instead, he was continuously volunteering for various NGOs.

Having examined that completion of SSS and tertiary education as the levels that are relevant to the socioeconomic mobility of beneficiaries in reality or in perception, now I consider the accessibility of SSS and tertiary education in reality and in perception. My findings reveal that the majority of people in Makeni are not able to access SSS or tertiary education, nor do people perceive themselves as able to. At the national level, the SSS completion rate, i.e. passing WASSCE, was very low at around 3 % (see Table 10) and the enrolment rate at tertiary level is even lower at 2.1% (see Section 7.4.1). The access conditions in Makeni (or Bombali District more broadly) seem to reflect the national conditions; the Net Enrolment Rate to SSS is only 7% in Makeni and is even lower, i.e. 1 %, in the suburbs of Bombali (Dupigny, Kargbo and Yallancy, 2006). This is despite the expansion of the lower level of education, as at the national level, with primary schools in more of the remote areas as community schools and JSS throughout every chiefdom in Bombali (Officer from Bombali DEO, Interview, 4 December 2009).

These insights suggest that, in Makeni, the levels of education, i.e. SSS or tertiary education, that have social significance in reality or in perception are both largely inaccessible. Young people's perceptions reflect such reality. Their comments reveal that accessing SSS, not to mention the completion of it, is perceived to be out of reach to the majority. Many informants responded that not everyone has access to education. Ishaka from Kabala, who is studying Masonry at TVIM with assistance from an international

[20] Alexis got enough credits at WASSCE to enter a polytechnic. He had got six passes and two credits in the first instance, and in the second attempt, he got two credits, thereby getting in total four credits.

NGO, said 'Most of the poor people don't have access to education. Without money you can't educate [can't be educated].' This was a common answer. When I further asked what level of education was accessible to many people in Sierra Leone, a common answer was: for boys up to JSS 3 (the final year of JSS), but for girls only up to Class 6 (the final year in primary schooling when they have to take the NPSE). The greater hurdle for girls to pass the NPSE or to start the JSS was often suggested as being due to *belle* [pregnancy] (e.g. Jacob, a student in Masonry from Kabala).

Accessing tertiary education is particularly difficult. For example, Alexis, who had completed the SSS with good results from the WASSCE as mentioned above, did not have the prospect of going to college. He stated that unless people have money or a connection with an influential person in society, called *Sababu* in Sierra Leone, they cannot continue their education. His father was killed during the war in front of him while he himself was abducted when he was at a boarding school. Furthermore, he fought for the RUF for six months. He was able to get a scholarship from a school and able to complete the SSS due to his good academic performance. However, he could not find a sponsor for tertiary education, which is much more expensive even compared to SSS, amounting to 500,000 Leones (equivalent to US$ 125 in 2009) for a polytechnic there according to a student there (Field note, 4 July 2009).

In terms of educational inequalities found at the national level, what needs to be examined at the level of beneficiaries, as discussed in the framework, is people's perceptions of inequalities. My findings reveal that although young people and adult informants' perceptions on disparities largely match those found in reality, young people's perceptions with regards to regional ones differed from the reality, in that they did not perceive

regional differences to be a source of disparities in access. Young people acknowledged overall the persistent disparities in access to schooling. The list below shows factors that they raised for some children not to have access to school (and to drop out):

- Poverty
- Lack of parental support
- No contact with influential people in society
- Distance (those who are in remote villages)
- Pregnancy/ marriage (female dropouts)
- Those whose 'brain is weak'
- Those who don't like school
- Peer pressure

As Ishaka above also has pointed out, poverty (including the lack of parental support) was raised most frequently by young people. Many of them as well as adult informants told me that education is not 'free' even at primary level due to the indirect cost and 'extra' fees mentioned above. Lack of connection with someone influential in society (or *Sababu*) as a factor for not accessing school can also be seen as a lack of economic support. I will not discuss other factors in detail as these factors are similar to and have been well studied in another study, albeit at the primary school level (e.g. UNICEF, 2009). I believe it is sufficient here to say that many of the factors reflect actual disparities. Some of the factors raised by young people mirror the parity index (see Table 5 above): 'distance' (the locality disparity (rural/urban)), poverty (household expenditure quintile) and pregnancy and marriage (gender disparity). The pupils whose 'brain is weak'' raised by the informants may be consistent with the fact that a large number of the pupils fail at external examinations (e.g. BECE and WASSCE) and are not able to proceed to the next level. Some of the informants stated that the subject areas to be covered in the BECE become greater in JSS2 and that some students start to feel it is difficult to follow the course. Therefore, some are even afraid to try the BECE (e.g. Abdul, an SSS2 pupil in the commercial stream).

What deserves attention here, however, is that the informants did not refer to disparities among cultural groups, i.e. regional disparities. Ethnicity is related to regions in Sierra Leone, as mentioned earlier, and therefore regional disparities imply ethnic differences. Despite the acute actual disparities by region, regional differences or differences by ethnic groups in access to schooling did not come up in discussions with the young people at all. For instance, none of them mentioned that people in the north had less access to schooling. This may be partly because I did not ask directly about 'disparities' but asked who did not have access to schooling or what the factors that made people not access schooling were. However, considering that ethnic preferences were pointed out in terms of accessing employment (as will be discussed later in the section), I believe we can say that regional disparities are not a great concern for the young informants.

On the other hand, adult informants in Makeni recognised the regional disparities. For instance, a teacher at MCSS, who is Mende by ethnicity and had taught in the south before the war, commented:

> The gap [between north and south] is still maintained… The competition is still higher, the rate of passes and rate of rolls [enrolment] between boys and girls are higher in south and east than here because they were the first people who embraced formal education during the colonial time. It was only in the latter part of the 19th century that people were able to enter here [the north]… It was not easy for education to penetrate in the north as it penetrated in the south and east. That is the main reason why they [the north] are still behind today… [I]f you are looking at the benefits of education, here the focus is on commercial aspects, the focus is money. They are not thinking much about education. Even now the most of children we have here … after school… they go to market. Here their focus is more on commercial basis while the south and east is focused on agriculture and education (Interview, 2 December 2009).

His view that the disparities in access across region are not the fault of the government but are rather a result of the lesser value attached to education by people in the north should be noted for later analysis.

8.3.2 Educational access in context

At the national level, I highlighted three contextual issues in educational access: scarcity of meaningful opportunities for dropouts; unemployment of the highly educated; and the potential politicisation of education and educational inequalities. The micro-level findings from Makeni reveal the complex face of the issues found at the national level. For one, although the 6-3-3-4 is not providing opportunities for so-called dropouts, there are a few, albeit limited, opportunities available to them. Second, young people have both idealistic expectations in regard to the power of education and realistic insights as to the pervasive unemployment affecting the educated. Third, although educational inequalities and political divisions match in reality, they are perceived to be two distinct issues both by adults and young people.

The first issue to consider in regard to educational access in its context is the meaningful opportunities for dropouts. The findings reveal that there are a few opportunities for them in Makeni, principally just TVET and *Okada* bike-taxis. To some extent, the vocational training is an apparent alternative; there are three TVET institutes in Makeni, including the one that I was attached to, although they are not Tech/Voc Centres that are equivalent to SSS.[21] The Training Manager (equivalent to principals in schools) of TVIM said that they received 900 applications for 200 places (Interview, 1 December 2009). Many of the students who are enrolled there are dropouts or those who have never been to school (Dean of TVIM, Interview, 14 October 2009). For instance, Kadiatu, a student in Home Management, is originally from Bo (Mende by ethnicity) and had never been to school. She commented to me that her parents did not support her going to school. She decided to

[21] The three TVET institutes in Makeni are not for those who went through the basic education to JSS and were recommended for the vocational track at senior secondary level for three years' training. These three existing institutes provide young adults with one to two years' training.

attend the institute because she wanted to 'know how to write and do something.' TVIM offers literacy classes for one hour (9am to 10am) every day before the training. When I observed Home Management classes, Kadiatu was trying hard to copy what the instructor had written on the board although it took her longer than other students who were more schooled. She told me that she wanted to open a restaurant after she finished her training. Another example is Jamal in Masonry at the institute. He had gone through SSS in the areas of building and construction (in the vocational track) in Kamakwie and sat the WASSCE, but he came to the institute because he did not have the money to pursue a tertiary education.

In addition, many ex-combatants and ex-commercial sex workers are said to be enrolled at TVIM. They are trying to become self-reliant and constructively engage with society (Dean of TVIM, Interview, 14 October 2009; Training Manager of TVIM, Interview, 1 December 2009). This is attested to by one of my informants, Josephine, in Home Management, who told me that she used to be a commercial sex worker. She told me that she had quit 'the dirty game' when she got a scholarship to continue her training at TVIM. Later on, she had also received another scholarship from an international agency to attend a workshop abroad, and was the only girl selected.

However, the problem is that not all young people want to go to TVET. Partly, this is because of the lower status that is associated with it in Sierra Leonean society (see Section 8.6.2 below). The two other TVET institutes in Makeni did not have enough applicants and were even attempting to make a part of the institutes into secondary schools (two teachers from MCSS, Field note, 7 July 2009). Another associated problem with the limited interest in TVET is that many have an excessive expectation that one day they will be able to get

the higher level of education that they perceive as necessary for employment. This was observed in the lack of planning by young people in alternatives to not getting the higher level of education, despite the very limited access to tertiary institutions in the country. When asked about alternatives, young people's most frequent responses were that they would work as a teacher or find another job and save the money to be able to go to college later on. Most pupils did not give 'creative' answers, looking beyond educational credentials into such options as starting a business. Out-of-school young people as well, except for one female, expressed a desire to go back to formal schooling or proceed to college.[22] The only 'realistic' answers that I received came from students in TVIM, where several mentioned that they wanted to start a business or find a job with the skills they had learned. Yet, as I will discuss later (see Section 8.6.2), others wanted to go back to the formal schooling or proceed to a college if opportunities became available.

One perhaps 'attractive' alternative to education or training for young men in Makeni after the war is the *Okada* bike-taxi business. The business provides essential transport outside Freetown; there are no four-wheeled taxis or *poda poda* (minibuses) for short-distance trips outside Freetown and there are many small villages only motorbikes can get to because of poor and narrow roads. In Makeni, they had a powerful presence and the business seems to be giving meaningful opportunities to young men who might otherwise possibly be involved in criminal activities. For instance, Musa who is out of school told me:

> Let me say those who play *Okada*, the *Okada* riders, these bikes have been in our country and in our township right now, they help many young men not to become thieves in the society because the first time we experienced that many young men who became thieves. But for now they are able to manage themselves through *Okada* riding they can handle little money they earn and they can settle little things. So it is better.

[22] Isata, who does not want formal schooling, wants to receive skills training if the opportunity arises.

Nevertheless, some stigma is found to be attached to the bike-taxi business. For instance, Northern Region Chair of SLAJ said 'when we look at streets we found these dropouts doing odd jobs. These *Okada* guys are dropouts' (Interview, 19 September 2009). This shows the stigma attached to both the notion of being a 'dropout' (see more details in Section 8.6.2 below) and the bike-taxi business to some extent. Furthermore, *Okada* riders also referred to the issue of pregnancy among school girls. I have heard many times that girls who commute a long distance from villages have a high risk of being impregnated by *Okada* riders after being seduced into exchanging sex for a ride (e.g. Alexis, out of school). For those *Okada* riders who are in school, too, adult informants commented to me on their negative influences on their peers, as they do not take schooling seriously (see details in Section 8.4.1 below). However, no informants connected *Okada* riders in Makeni to being ex-combatants as in Freetown or as suggested in literature. The informants did not use the term 'ex-combatants' in my interviews (except a Paramount Chief). As mentioned before, immediately after the war many of the *Okada* riders were considered to be ex-combatants. This phenomenon appears to continue to some extent, especially in Freetown. There, four-wheeled 'taxis' are available as well as bike-taxis, and some people avoid using the bike-taxis partly because they consider their drivers are ex-combatants and are afraid of them (Students at FBC, Informal interviews). The fact that my informants did not use the term 'ex-combatants' might also be related to the president's call to stop using the term 'ex-combatants' in order to promote their reintegration into society (two teachers at MCSS, Field note, 7 July 2009).

Although the existing TVET institutes and *Okada* bike-taxi business are found to function as alternatives to some extent, opportunities for dropouts are still limited. I identified no

substantial employment opportunities for young people who had dropped out from schooling beyond the bike-taxis. Even the *Okada* business is limited, Mohammed told me, to those who can find a sponsor who can rent his bike to them. Otherwise, it is difficult to find work or the means to earn some money, which out-of-school young people in the study attested to. For instance, Musu told me that even though she wants to sell produce at the markets, it is often even difficult to have or make something to sell. Lamin looks after the garden behind his house where he grows vegetables which are later sold at markets. Mabinty, who stopped going to school at JSS1 due to the war, does not work but only stays at home, cooking, cleaning and taking care of her younger brothers and sisters who do go to school.

The second issue to consider with regard to the wider context of educational access is about how young people perceive the gap between education and employment, particularly the reality of the high unemployment rate even for those who are educated. The findings reveal that they have conflicting perceptions about it. Despite the bleak employment opportunities, many informants' perceptions of the employment prospects of the educated were found to be overly hopeful. When I asked if they were worried about unemployment or were confident of finding a job, many informants stated that they were not worried and believed they would be able to get a job. The types of jobs that SSS pupils are confident of are typical well-respected jobs, e.g. a bank manager or a lawyer, with high salaries. They are convinced that they can get this type of job, so long as they attend college (see Section 8.6.1 below). These answers appear to be based on the assumption that good graduates from college should be able to find a job. Good students are those with a 'blessing' as well as having good results. A 'blessing' is a religious or cultural concept gained by obeying teachers and the principal, as well as by serving parents and the elderly in the community.

Gladys, a student in Home Management who stopped schooling at JSS 2 when the war started, commented:

> People say when you are learning you should have [a] blessing... You should obey your teacher, instructor, principal…so that at the end of the day your results will be blessed…Anywhere you present your certificate or result they will take you for the job.

Therefore, those who cannot get a job are understood by the young informants to be people without a blessing, i.e. those who did not perform well or those who did not get the certificate legally but through bribes.

Nonetheless, by and large the young people did seem to have a sensible grasp of the reality they face. The majority acknowledged that the job availability for college graduates was limited. Some of them also demonstrated to me that they did have some alternative plans if they did not find a job immediately after graduation; a common strategy was classroom teaching as a temporary alternative (or 'as a waiting room' in their words) until they find a more preferable job (e.g. Zainabu, in SSS2, commercial stream). Furthermore, when I asked the informants why they thought many university graduates were not getting jobs, some realistic insights came through. *Sababu* came up a number of times as a determining factor in employment. Only those who have good *Sababu* (i.e. having somebody who knows you well in the office to which you are applying) will get hired, even if they have a lower qualification than someone with qualifications but without *Sabubu*. Josephine, a student at TVIM, who had worked as a commercial sex worker in the past and has a son, said: 'sometimes you may be well educated but if you don't have strong relationship they won't consider you. In fact somebody in the office will tear up and throw away your application.' Many informants consider that the economic decline experienced during the fieldwork period was heightening the role of *Sababu* in job opportunities. The more

limited the jobs, the more office workers want to bring in their family members or those they are strongly connected to.

Ethnicity also came up as a factor that determines access to employment. For example, Alpha, a student in Masonry and a Limba by ethnicity from Kabala, commented to me:

> If the head there [of the office] is Mende, and if you can't speak Mende, they won't give the job to you even if you qualify for the job. Even if you know the job they won't give it to you unless you come and speak Mende. If Limba is there they will do the same thing. It is tribalism.

These ethnic ties are a part of *Sababu* as well. The young informants raised ethnic connection as one of the three most importance sources of *Sababu* in Sierra Leone, together with family and schooling (see Section 8.6 below for more details). Among various ethnic groups in Sierra Leone, Mende and Limba were the ethnic groups that were mentioned most (i.e. Jamal, and Alpha, and Paul in Masonry and Musu, out of school). On the other hand, Krio did not come up in the informants' comments although in Sierra Leone it was Krios who occupied privileged positions during and after the colonial occupations (see Section 2.3). Limba and Mende being mentioned the most by the informants may point to the competitive nature of the relations between ethnic groups in the north (Limba) and the south (Mende).

Despite the importance of *Sababu* in getting employment, it was not suggested that *Sababu* was an alternative to education as a key to achieve success. Rather, success is achieved, not purely by credentials, but in combination with *Sababu*. For example, Jamal, a student in Masonry who came to TVIM after taking WASSCE and a Limba by ethnicity, told me that even if a particular office does not take him due to a lack of *Sababu*, he believes that he can get employment in other places based on the knowledge and certificate. This is

because, he mentioned, education is 'inside' him, meaning that he has knowledge that nobody can take away from him and that is not dependent on circumstantial issues, i.e. relationships with other people, like *Sababu*. He also raised a point that if somebody gets hired due to *Sababu* but lacking the appropriate skills or education then he or she will not be able to do the job and hold it, like teaching. In addition, as I will discuss later (see Section 8.6 below), many informants suggested schooling as a way, often as a superior way to family or ethnicity, to acquire 'good' *Sababu*. This also points to the connections between education and *Sababu* and that both are perceived to be important in regard to the socioeconomic mobility of young people.

The finding that people are aware that education does not equate to employment but needs to be coupled with *Sababu* may suggest that they will not be too disappointed even if they are not able to achieve success upon acquiring an education. It may also point to the reality of ordinary Sierra Leoneans that, even knowing that education alone is not sufficient to improve their lives in the way that they wish, education still remains as an acquirable tool (if they strive for it), particularly compared to *Sababu* which is often outside their efforts.

Interestingly, I did not encounter many responses that blamed the government excessively for not providing jobs. This was an interesting finding because, as discussed earlier (see Section 2.6), it is considered that educated young people in pre-war Sierra Leone attributed the lack of jobs upon graduation to the government not providing employment as civil servants (and also by favouring their patrons) as it 'promised' to do so. In contrast to this perception that the pre-war youth are considered to have had, many of the young people in the study attributed the small number of employment prospects for college graduates to

economic decline more than to the government or to the educational system. For example, Musa, who dropped out of school at SSS1, said:

> [Employment] depends on the country because our country is underdeveloped. Now we don't have enough institutions or…we don't have enough people to come invest in our country. If you find out some other countries that they have investors or factories…when you go to college after your academic work in college when you come down you can have a job easily because there are many jobs in the country. But for us here the jobs are little [fewer] than [the number of] the people who are educated. So most of the ones who go to college and come back with the qualification usually find themselves in teaching, but this teaching, they don't pay them enough money.

The government was held accountable to some extent, but for different reasons to the ones that are considered to have been relevant in pre-war Sierra Leone. That is, the government was held responsible for not doing enough to establish the foundation for the economic development of the county. More specifically, the informants pointed to the government not opening factories so that job opportunities would be provided for young people and for not having managed to provide electricity nationally so that foreign investors could come and open more factories and companies. Below are some comments that exemplify such points:

> If the government wants everyone to get job, they can bring so many things, companies, factories, so many things. If it brings a factory here it can employ 100 or 200 people, then that money will help the development of the country and educate some children (John in Masonry).

> One thing is that yes, the government is responsible because if we have electricity facilities enough in the country then investor will come, and they will invest. They don't have to bring their own power or generator to invest something. Maybe, the factories will be bigger... If we have electric facilities, like when we talk about the Bumbuna light,[23] when it is already completed maybe investor will come (Musa, out of school).

However, a few expressed frustrations with the government – from the past to the present – for not providing employment opportunities for young people:

[23] Bumbuna is the name of a dam that several past presidents of the country promised to construct and complete in order to provide electricity to all the population. It finally came into operation in 2009, albeit initially on a small scale.

> It is a rotation of something. It has been started before this time during our forefathers. Those who are coming only go into the same shoes doing the same thing. They say they are going to change. Now this government is talking about change of attitudes, and they are still saying that people are only a little bit changed. They are still doing what the previous government was doing. Though this government is trying, they are not doing things to the expectation, … expectation in a sense, they promised that in two years time they create employment for youth, and still in Makeni… youth are still unemployed. They have no mechanism put in place yet, up to this moment (Dauda, out of school).

On the whole, the relatively small amount of discontent with the government found in the study may be related to the fact that I was in the Northern Region, particularly in Makeni, where President Koroma is from. Therefore, people may support him and the government, whatever he (or it) does or does not achieve. There is also a possibility that they might be afraid of talking negatively about the government. However, I believe I did establish a sufficient rapport with the informants for them to talk comfortably with me and the perception of the government did not seem to be so different among young people in other regions; the pupils' perceptions of the government were found to be similar when I triangulated the data with pupils in Bo School in Bo, the central city of the rival party.

On a related note, I asked a few participants (both adults and young people) whether young people were alarmingly frustrated with present conditions. Although they pointed to the undeniable sense of frustration felt by young people due to the lack of opportunities, similar to the findings above they perceive that young people recognise that the lack of employment could not be excessively attributed to the government (e.g. Alexis, Abdul, and the Paramount Chief). More specifically, young people recognised the collective responsibility of society for the situation and the efforts being made by the government, particularly through attempts to create job opportunities, decentralise the governance structure and to involve youth in politics.

The third and last element to consider in examining educational access in context is the extent to which educational inequalities by region are politicised in Makeni in reality and in people's perceptions. The findings reveal that they were not politicised at the level of secondary schooling at the moment of my fieldwork. As presented above, young people were not concerned about regional disparities in educational access. Adult informants also commented in unison that educational inequalities and politics are separate issues and that the regional disparities in education were not alarming because of the separation. For example, a Bombali District Chairman of the Principals Conference responded:

> [Educational gaps by region are not alarming], except in politics. The regional gap is there in politics. And you know what politics normally means. It increases tensions. But, in education no. Because the university is open to everybody. As long as you meet the requirement, whether it is in Bo [the provincial headquarter of South], whether it is in Kenema [that of East], whether it is in Freetown, or in Makeni [that of North], as long as you are qualified, you can go. But in the politics tensions are there. North and West are on one side, and South and East are on the other (Interview, 29 September 2009).

As such, the Chairman emphasised the openness of the educational system to everyone as a reason why educational inequalities and politics are separate. These (non-)responses of young people and adults may suggest that regional inequalities in access to education are not highlighted in political campaigns at the moment. If they were, it is possible that informants may have connected the regional inequalities of education to the political problems in one way or another.

Two factors stand out in informants' comments as to why educational inequalities and politics are perceived to be separate despite the fact that the political competitions are associated with regions. One is the openness of the educational system in principle, as exemplified and elaborated by the comment above by the District Chairman of Principals Conference. This suggests that disparities do not exist because a group is oppressed or

prevented from attending school. On a related note, the second is that disparities in the Sierra Leonean educational system are not due to the recent government's political manoeuvring. Recall the comment on regional disparities by a teacher at the MCSS earlier. He pointed to a lack of motivations on the beneficiaries' side to send children to school in the north, not a problem on the provider's side. A professor of history at a university in Freetown also commented on the issue in similar terms, stating:

> [T]he gap between the north and the south is really not the fault of the educational system or the fault of the government. But it has some historical roots. It dates back to colonial days, which also have some relationship with the culture, the religion... North is largely Muslim and access to education particular among Muslim girls has not been strong. It is really not fault of the government (Interview, 14 December 2009).

The historical roots that the professor refers to are the fact that Christian missionaries built more schools in the south than in the north because many Mende and southerners converted to Christianity while the north had more Muslims (see Chapter Two). In addition to this, as I have also discussed in Chapter Two, the colonial government's policies are one of the factors behind the present problem, as it prioritised the building of schools in Freetown, then the colony, and focused on educating Krios. However, the governments after the war not only allowed educational access to everyone, but also are even attempting to expand educational access to historically disadvantaged groups, exemplified in the setting up and implementation of the Girl Education Support Programme in the north and east. People were found to recognise the government's efforts, as seen in Section 7.4.1. In accordance with this, young people similarly did not comment on any fault on the part of the government as a factor that discouraged children in Sierra Leone from going to school.

8.3.3 Integration of cultural groups in schools in Makeni

In addition to access issues, another issue in the structure of the educational system that I have examined is the extent to which different cultural groups are separated (or integrated) in secondary schools in Makeni. From my interviews and interactions with young people, pupils from various cultural groups were found to be integrated to a great extent in Makeni. Certainly, there are no particular schools meant for a specific ethnic group. I found pupils from various ethnic groups, including ones that are more predominant in the south such as Mende, in schools in Makeni, albeit fewer in number. Additionally, although most schools were established by missions (Christian, e.g. Catholic and Methodists, or Muslims, e.g. Al Hadi),[24] both Christian pupils and Muslim pupils were found in the same schools. There was a fair mixture of Christians and Muslims in my group of SSS pupils, too, although the group was drawn from a Christian school as mentioned. Furthermore, Makeni was and continues to be a gathering point for children from different parts of the north. A couple of Christian schools used to be boarding schools until the 1980s and children from more remote areas of the country used to go there to study (Director of a university in Makeni, Interview, 5 December 2009). Although they no longer function as boarding schools, the tradition continues; children from other areas come to Makeni to study or to get training, and this was exemplified in the demographic diversity of my participants. I will return to the extent of integration or separation at the level of interactions among cultural groups in the daily school experiences in Section 8.4.4.

8.4 Curriculum and quality of education in Makeni

Here I will present my findings on areas of the curriculum and the quality of the educational system. As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, the purpose of examining the curriculum and quality does not lie in evaluating it in a generic sense, but in

[24] There were only two secular schools out of nine senior secondary schools in Bombali District.

examining and presenting data that are relevant to address the research question guided by the framework presented in Chapter Five. Through such a lens, the findings at the level of beneficiaries in the curriculum and quality will be presented around the recurrent four themes: relevance and quality, the examination focused pedagogy, contemporary national history teaching, and the school ethos.

8.4.1 Relevance and quality

The dire quality and poor implementation of a supposedly relevant curriculum at the national level was reflected in schools in Makeni, but the young people seem to appreciate the quality and relevance of education to some extent. The poor implementation of what is supposed to be a more relevant curriculum was symbolised by the lack of support for the TVET track. As discussed, one of the main ways in which the 6-3-3-4 was planned to be more relevant to the lives of Sierra Leoneans and to the development of the country was through the strengthening of TVET, yet the plan has been poorly implemented (see sections 7.3.2 and 7.4.2). Indeed, the fact that there is no Tech/Voc centre equivalent to SSS in the regional capital, Makeni, already attests to this. The lack of support for existing TVET institutes in Makeni was also repeatedly commented upon by adult informants, particularly by the educationalists who were involved in TVET (Training Manager of TVIM, Interview, 1 December 2009; Dean of TVIM, Interview, 14 October 2009; District Chairman of SLTU, Interview, 7 October 2009). In particular, the sense of not being provided with sufficient support was so strong that the Training Manager of TVIM even denied that the move to the 6-3-3-4 was to strengthen the TVET track (Interview, 1 December 2009).

The poor quality found at the national level (see Section 7.4.2) was also reflected in classrooms in Makeni. A comment by the District Chairman of SLTU summarises well the

condition of the classrooms I also encountered in schools in Makeni, characterising it as non-conducive environment:

> In a very short period, the number of children increased over 50%... so there was a big expansion of the pupil population in schools. There isn't enough infrastructure, including the infrastructure to accommodate, not enough resources to meet with the needed teachers… Look at the scenario where a teacher has to teach a class, 80 in a class… A good teaching has to with good supervision, has to do with eye to eye contact, has to do with a lot of things but if you have 120 pupils how can you look at the notes children is taking? I have an experience in one area… Children have to sit on stones. That is definitely not a 'conducive environment.' Learning has to do with a conducive environment (Interview, 7 October 2009).

In addition, the essays I have collected from SSS pupils suggest the poor quality of the teaching they receive. For instance, the writing by Binta, in SSS2, commercial stream, demonstrates the lack of basic writing skills in English when I asked the informants to write about their future plans after completing SSS:

> I am *attidented* at [MCSS] in Makeni. My *mane poses* to writ*ing* this, just to tell about my plan after taking my WASC Examinations [WASSCE]. At first I want to go*ing* to the university…I *trie* all posible *min*s to *found* my self in a good way for me to taking *cair* of my family (emphasis added).

With regard to the poor performances of pupils, however, teachers and other educationalists often attributed the responsibility to pupils for not being serious about learning. Many of them commented that pupils are more interested in social activities, such as going to cinema, clubs, and football (i.e. Teacher at MCSS, Interview, 2 December 2009; Principal of MCSS, Interview, 2 December 2009; District Chairman of SLTU, Interview, 7 October 2009). In particular, the lack of interest in learning by pupils who were involved in the *Okada* bike-taxis was often commented on. A teacher at MCSS said students are more interested in motorbikes (*Okada*) than learning and that some of them are enrolled and come for the exams but not for classes (Informal interview, 6 July 2009).

Another teacher commented on what he sees as the reason behind this, which is that, because the bike-taxi riders can make money day by day, they lose interest in education, from which there are only long-term benefits they cannot be sure of anyway (Interview, 2 December 2009).

Despite what seems to be a daunting lack of quality in the education and the continuing lack of relevance in the curriculum as a whole, young people had mixed perceptions about the quality and relevance of their education. They were certainly concerned about the quality being poor with regard to whether their schooling was good enough for them to pass the public exams and to proceed to a higher level of education (e.g. Samuel, Abdul, Mahmood, Ibrahim, SSS2). Referring to the low quality in the current system, Ibrahim, a pupil in the commercial stream, said: 'Some pupils who were in Class 3 could write a letter in the old time, but now for SSS3 students to write a simple letter is difficult.' He also attributed the lower quality to the fact that the system changed to the 6-3-3-4 system, which was a common comment by informants. Yet many of them felt the schooling was relevant and, to some extent, of reasonable quality. Most SSS pupils said that all the subjects they were studying were useful.[25] For example, Abdul, an SSS student in the commercial stream, said that he thought he was learning subjects important for his future:

> All of [the subjects] are useful…[People in my village] just take stone to counting [rice in order to sell], perhaps more than four hours they will be there, but when I'm around when they tell me the amount of rice and the money I will just multiply it....when I started to do that in the first place they won't believe me, and so they just checked it. But now...they follow.

This comment seems to suggest a reasonable quality of education because he has learned to multiply correctly.

[25] JSS students in the pilot group pointed out that many of them thought that the teaching of indigenous languages, e.g. Temne and Mende, is not useful because they can only use them with a limited number of people in Sierra Leone. However, this did not come up in conversations with SSS pupils because, at least partly, indigenous languages are not part of their curriculum.

Regardless of their perceptions on the quality of education they are getting, there is a tough reality awaiting those who cannot pass the WASSCE. Mohammed, an *Okada* driver, failed the WASCCE twice. He wants to go to college to read for an HTC to be qualified to teach at secondary level, but this would only be possible by bribing a lecturer with 300,000 Leones (equivalent to US$ 75 in 2009). This is in addition to paying for the tuition fees, which he does not have. The only other options that are left to him are to continue riding his *Okada* or pay 314,000 Leones (equivalent to US$ 78.5 in 2009) to register for another private WASSCE fee and prepare for it again.

8.4.2 Examination focus

As mentioned earlier, the curriculum in Sierra Leone is centred on teaching subjects that are covered by the public examinations that mark the completion of one level leading to the next, i.e. NPSE, BECE, and WASSCE (see Section 7.3.3 for details). Reflecting the importance of the examinations in the curriculum and in determining pupils' chances of attaining the qualifications needed to move on to the next level, the pupils in the study showed great concern about the exams. The finding above that their chief concern with regards to the quality of schooling they are getting was centred on whether it enables them to pass the exams or not already shows this. Similarly, when I asked pupils whether they thought any element in their schooling should be changed, their only concern was with regard to how it could be improved in relation to passing the exams. For example, in an FGD with male SSS pupils, they said that three years in SSS were too short to prepare for the WASSCE because the teacher could not cover the whole syllabus; consequently, they felt that a return to the four years it had been under the old system would be better.

The examination-centred curriculum was found also to be promoting memorisation of facts in classes while cultivation of critical thinking was neglected. In order to cover the subject

areas for the exams, most classroom time was spent on explanation and memorisation of facts (e.g. Field note, 9 October 2009). Such a teaching style is also encouraged by the fact that many pupils did not have textbooks (e.g. Field note, 9 October 2009). At times, teachers posed questions to pupils but only for correct answers about a fact, not for their opinions. One extreme example I observed was a physical and health education (PHE) class at JSS level. The teacher asked pupils the size of the volleyball court, and several pupils were able to answer the size in unison (Field note, 3 February 2009). The finding that PHE, one of the subjects that should be practical, was in reality focused on memorisation appeared to symbolise the great extent to which rote memorisation penetrates Sierra Leonean education.

At the same time, the study recognises the relative or unavoidable benefit of public examinations as opposed to in-class examinations in the Sierra Leone context: credibility. The SLTU President commented that, 'it [external examination] is a sure[r] way to say who is qualified than internal' (Interview, 25 October 2009). From the young people' points of view, public examinations are a fairer and less corrupt way to be evaluated in their abilities than in-school exams because they are harder to cheat on or 'buy' the results. Abdul, from the commercial stream, said:

> [The external examination] is good because it reduces the rate of bribing. Because if you bribe when you are in Form 1 [JSS1], you bribe Form 3 [JSS3] too. [But] in Form 3 there if you don't pass it is very very costly to bribe unless people are able to bribe. It should limit the bribing. I know there are some bribing there, but it will be limited.

In addition, the study also recognises that the school curriculum not cultivating critical thinking in pupils does not actually mean they do not have or have not learned in other ways the ability to think critically. Indeed, this ability seems to be demonstrated by their critical understanding of why young people joined the war (see Section 8.4.3) and their

realistic insights into why many educated young people are not employed. In addition, some adult informants commented that the young people learned to critically think and judge through their experience of the war. That is, they would think more critically about whether involvement in another rebellion would be meaningful taking into account its costs that they had already learned or observed, rather than just buying into the lofty promises of benefits from rebel leaders (e.g. Director of a university in Makeni, Interview, 1 December 2009; Principal of MCSS, Interview, 2 December 2009).

8.4.3 Contemporary national history teaching

Teaching of contemporary national history was found to be lacking in the schooling system. The young people are consequently found to hold simplistic and naive views on the history of the war, although they also demonstrated critical understandings of why young people joined the war.

For most pupils, the history of the civil war or the period immediately before the war is not taught at all as part of the school system. There are only two courses in which national history is taught in the formal curriculum. One is history class. It has been already mentioned that it is only compulsory for art stream pupils at SSS level and only covers up to the year 1985 (see Section 7.3.3). The findings from Makeni reveal, furthermore, that contemporary history is not even taught in history classes in many cases. History is taught chronologically, which means that the most recent part of history (the 1980s) is to be taught at the very end of the curriculum. However, in reality, many teachers have difficulty in reaching the contemporary part of history in the official classroom hours. This is mainly because SSS pupils technically only have two years and two terms of education, not three years; SSS1 pupils only start their SSS1 in the second term due to the fact that the BECE

results that determine who is able to proceed to SSS come out late, i.e. after the first term when in theory the pupils should have already started SSS1. Therefore, it is very difficult for teachers to cover the complete syllabus in the official hours.[26] Furthermore, another possible contributing factor to this is that some of them may not want to cover the whole syllabus during official hours because they want extra money through teaching 'extra' lessons (see Section 8.2). Another course in which the contemporary history of the country is included as part of official curriculum is Sierra Leone studies, supposedly an optional course at SSS level. However, it does not seem to be widely available and a history teacher at MCSS was not even aware of the course (Informal interview, 18 September 2009). Moreover, the reports by the SLTRC on the history of war are not utilised efficiently even in schools which have received them; in fact, they are mainly stashed in school libraries. The Bombali District Chairman of the Principals Conference responded:

> [SLTRC's report] is a supplementary material. We have not started teaching because it has not come to conclusive end. So students can go and read [in the library] to avoid the situation like that in the future (Interview, 29 October 2009).

Consequently, pupils' knowledge about contemporary national history derives only from informal sources, such as family or community, and the version of history that young people learn in this way seems to be naive in regard to the factors that facilitated the emergence of the civil war. This was epitomised by their poor understandings of the key ex-presidents who laid the foundation for the state to collapse and thus facilitated the emergence of the war. When I asked for a description of Siaka Stevens – the ex-president who established the one-party system for the APC and personalised the state in Sierra

[26] The fact that teachers have been unable to cover the whole syllabus at SSS level and the resulting poor performances in WASSCE was recognised by the Review Commission and, in fact, since the 2010–2011 academic year SSS has been extended to four years.

Leone – many participants shared positive impressions about him. For example, Abdul in the commercial stream responded:

> [I hear that Stevens] was a good leader… an APC leader. They said he was coming with rice. He was going in to purchase rice and come with it and sell it at a minimum cost…But for you to get it, it is not easy. You stand in line because people are so many… He was a good leader because he tried very much just the country to have a good supply of these things that needed in the country.

This was a typical answer. Even among the adult informants, I occasionally encountered similar perspectives. A regional director for an international NGO in Makeni said to me:

> Siaka Stevens ruled this country for quite some time…Stevens was the man that people talked about a lot. Up till now, most of what he did people can see it. For me, I give my personal opinion, he made some remarkable [contribution to] development, in terms of the infrastructure, take for instance the National Stadium, the Miata Conference built in his days, so he left visible marks in the country. That is why you see people are talking about him. Take the Siaka Stevens Street, so every day people think of him and what he has done. Compared to other Presidents…, he had been there for quite some time. All these things make people to actually thinking of him.
>
> [Researcher: Do you think that is a general view on him or only people in the north admire him?]
>
> It is in general because Siaka Stevens was a man that cut across. He would tell you today, "I came from the south," and tomorrow he would tell you "I came from the north." A lot of people were confused where he was from. He was able to play a delicate balance in his administration. He tried to maintain equilibrium in terms of region, in terms of ethnicity… So people actually see a lot of nice things about him (Interview, 26 November 2009).

In order to verify the validity of such positive perspectives on Stevens that I found in Makeni, I asked the same question of several pupils in Bo School in the south. This includes one pupil who was a prefect, whose brothers had all been to Bo School and whose family is a strong supporter of the SLPP. Yet similar views were held there (Field note, 9 December 2009).

On the other hand, perceptions of Momoh, president at the time the rebellion broke out, were different. Some participants held reasonably negative impressions of him, like Abdul in the commercial stream who commented in an FGD:

> Whenever people tell him not to use the money, he would say, "wherever we tie the cow, that is the area that the cow would eat." That's what he said… That means…we put him as a president, and so he used to eat there. He is not a good leader, he was very bad.

Similar expressions to 'wherever we tie the cow that is the area that the cow would eat' were used frequently by various informants and indicated corruption; if you are in office and bribes are available, you take them (e.g. Director of Peace and Conflict Studies, Interview, 15 December 2009). Those who held a negative view of Momoh often explained the reason as being his corruptive practices. Others simply did not know much about Momoh and a few held good impressions of him but could not elaborate on the reason for this.

These young people's views on these ex-presidents in the pre-war Sierra Leone and the differences in the views between the two ex-presidents seem to suggest that they evaluate what facilitated the emergence of war in a simplistic and uncritical manner. They are evaluating Siaka Stevens positively based on the price of the staple food (rice) and establishment of visible infrastructure, such as roads, during his time and only attributing the wrongdoings that facilitated the war to the president who was in office when the war broke out, i.e. Momoh. It is understandable that people evaluate this way as what Stevens provided (and Momoh failed to provide) are the very things that directly affect their lives. However, it also shows that young people, who only go through schooling at most to the SSS level, continue to hold these views despite the fact that academic literature and grey literature, including the report by SLTRC, shows Siaka Stevens to have been a crucial part of the multiple factors in pre-war Sierra Leone that laid the foundation for the war. With

regard to this finding, the history professor attributed the young people's uncritical view partly to their lack of exposure to the literature:

> All the writings in Sierra Leone are highly critical of the Steven's regime… Unfortunately, young people do not have the direct experience of the regime… A lot of the younger generation only heard about but do not go through and do not experience it. Perhaps their exposure to literature on Siaka Stevens is rather limited and that may account (Interview, 14 December 2009).

At the same time, the finding above that young people have a simplistic understanding of past presidents does not mean that they lack critical understanding of the war as a whole. They do understand why young people joined the war. This was revealed when I asked whether they thought many young people would take up arms again if rebels were to come back. The question was posed in an FGD and became a lively debate. The reasons for taking up arms raised by the participants were: revenge (against those who had killed their family members in the past war or against those who had not treated them well in peaceful times) (e.g. Jalikatu, Isata and Abdul in SSS); money or poverty (to become rich by taking the opportunity to loot) (e.g. Ali and Mahmood in SSS); and security and forceful recruitment by rebels (the fear that they would be killed or raped if they did not join and the use of drugs in recruiting them) (e.g. Abdul, Jalikatu, and Isata in SSS). On the other hand, reasons for not taking up arms were mainly related to the experience of the bitterness of war (e.g. Mariama and Binta in SSS). These reasons, as discussed in Chapter Two, largely match the academic understandings of the reasons why young people joined the war.

8.4.4 School ethos

In terms of the school ethos, findings around three themes are considered relevant to address the research question and will be presented here: teachers' petty corruptions, their 'violent' practices, and discrimination in school. The findings reveal teachers' low

professional standards, including petty corruption and 'violence,' i.e. corporal punishment and 'sexual abuse,' and yet such practices are not leading to discriminatory treatment of pupils, particularly based on patronage or by ethnicity. Significant levels of discrimination among pupils were not found either.

The practice of petty corruption by teachers, i.e. teachers requesting and receiving extra money or items, such as soap and toothpaste, from pupils was repeatedly commented on by young people. It was commented on in various encounters as mentioned in the above sections, but most significantly when I asked about the 'habits' or image of teachers. I used the word 'habits' having realised that the word 'image' was difficult for the young informants to comprehend. Through that, various petty forms of corruption by teachers were revealed. I have already touched upon the fact that teachers charge for extra classes, marking assignments, and 'pamphlets' (see Section 8.2). In addition, teachers were seen as giving higher marks to and passing pupils in exchange for money. For example, Zainab in SSS2 in the commercial stream said, describing teachers as 'wicked':

> Now…, teachers love money. In exams time if you don't make it up they ask you [for] money. If you don't have money they fail you. When they give you assignment [and] when you submit, you give money. If your parents don't have money you suffer.

Young people also pointed out that teachers ask for 'hand work' or 'practical arts,' which in reality means items already made, such as soap and tooth paste (e.g. Fanta, who stayed in school to Form 5 (equivalent to SSS2 in the current system) and Dauda, who got to SSS3 after the war). Such regular petty corruption by teachers is also considered to be one of the contributing factors to the low performance of pupils in examinations (Gbamanaja, 2010).

The findings after enquiring about the 'bad habits' of teachers also reveal some 'violent' practices as part of school ethos. As framed in Chapter Five, this includes not only physical but also non-physical violence. One of the 'violent' practices mentioned frequently by young people is corporal punishment. Even though corporal punishment is officially banned, it was still commonly used. The informants commented that in some cases the excessive use of corporal punishment in schools had led to some of their friends being absent from or dropping out of school. Jalikatu, an SSS3 pupil in the commercial stream, told me:

> They [teachers] will say 'keep quiet' and they will flog you. They like flogging students without doing [who haven't done] anything. Abuse them, call you stupid, shouting at them. Students get ashamed, and that make them not to come to school, and that leave them out of school.

At the same time, some level of corporal punishment, such as moderate use of a cane, was accepted by students in general. When I asked if the use of a cane itself is 'bad,' most of them said that it was not. The reason for this is that children in Sierra Leone are not used to being taught without physical punishment. Therefore, if a teacher does not use a cane at all, he or she will not be able to 'discipline' students. Abdul, an SSS2 student in the commercial stream, made an illustrative point:

> It [a cane] is highly used. It is good. African children, if you don't flog them, don't know what you want to teach them. If you look at TV, look at games, if white parents say stop, then you stop. But African children, if you just tell them stop, it is just like telling them to 'continue;' that is why it [a cane] is good in Africa.

This is not to make a point for the use of the cane or to imply that the use of the cane is part of the distinct culture that can be justified in sub-Saharan Africa. In fact, Abdul himself made a comment elsewhere that the excessive use of the cane was not good; sometimes, the teacher would administer corporal punishment to all the pupils, including those who had done nothing wrong. However, it is important to understand the cultural

context in which children are brought up and the methods used to discipline them. On a related note, some adult informants including teachers complained to me that, with the introduction of the human rights discourse after the war, it had become difficult and even scared teachers and other adults to discipline children who are not their own. This is because, they commented, corporal punishment had been the way to discipline children and they had not yet learned an alternative way to do so without it (e.g. Director of a Muslim Mission Education Office, 26 November 2009; Dean of TVIM, Interview, 14 October 2009; a teacher at MCSS, Interview, 2 December 2009). Of course, this was not only because of the human rights discourse or the banning of corporal punishment. The other suspected reason is that adults came to be afraid of children and young people as it was young people who had taken up arms during the war. Nevertheless, this raises an issue for consideration regarding the importation of an 'international' discourse without laying down an adequate foundation for the transition from the traditional way of doing things, regardless of the positive associations of the change.

Another 'violent' practice revealed through enquiring about the 'bad habits' of teachers is their sexual affairs with female students and the consequence for the lives of both female and male pupils. The teachers' interest in female pupils were mentioned both by female and male pupils. For instance, Zainab told me that teachers 'fell in love' with students and that if they did not accept this they would be punished academically. An obvious long-term consequence is pregnancy. I have pointed this out as one of the frequently mentioned reasons for dropping out of the educational system for female pupils (see Section 8.3.1). It was commonly alleged, both by the young and adult informants, that teachers impregnate female students (as well as classmates and *Okada* bike-taxi riders); for instance, a professor of education told me of a case in which a teacher made four of his pupils

pregnant and ran away (Interview, 15 December 2009). On the other hand, male pupils also told me how they were affected by the fall-out from teachers' affairs with female pupils. Ishaka, a student in Masonry at TVIM told me:

> They [teachers] have girlfriends and love girls…I was waiting for my friend, and a teacher slapped me because I was waiting for a female friend. They get in love with students. As soon as they get home, they give a paper to show where to meet. They are used to punish boys because of funny relations.

In addition, teachers' 'sexual abuse' in school was also commented upon by a parent of four children. She told me of her experience of living with a teacher and how a number of female pupils came to visit the teacher before examination results were out. She believes that they visited the teacher in order to give 'something' which would mean the teacher would give a pass mark to them (Interview, 22 October 2009). Although I did not get to collect further data about this point, the episode resonates with the experience of Bledsoe (1992) living next to teachers in the south of Sierra Leone and may suggest that it is not a rare practice.

However, although some 'violent' features were found to be part of school ethos, such as corporal punishment and some degree of 'sexual abuse,' significant violent incidents in schools (or in TVET institutions) were not found in the study. Although I heard about some significant fighting incidents during inter-school sports competitions in which the police became involved that had happened before the start of my fieldwork, nothing like this occurred during my fieldwork. Only minor cases of violent incidents were commented by adult informants; for instance, Dean of TVIM told me that there were cases of fighting among the students at the institute to which he intervened (Interview, 14 October 2009).

On the whole, teachers' low professionalism is consistent with another finding of the study that only five young people singled out their teachers as their role models. The rest (35 participants) listed other people, most often their family members who supported them. Some actively rejected the idea that teachers were role models when asked this directly. This was suggested by some adult informants as a significant shift in the representation of teachers in Sierra Leonean society, as they considered teachers to have traditionally been the main role models in Sierra Leone (e.g. President of SLTU, Interview, 25 October 2009; District Chairman of Principal's Conference, Interview, 29 September 2009; Director of Peace and Conflict Studies at a university in Freetown, Interview, 15 December 2009; Director of a university in Makeni, Interview, 5 September 2009). This was attributed partly to the reign of Stevens, in which corrupt practices permeated to the teaching profession (e.g. Director of Peace and Conflict Studies at a university in Freetown, Interview, 15 December 2009). It was also commented on that this state of affairs was accentuated by the experience of conflict; moral sensibilities were degenerated by the conflict, including those of the teachers (e.g. Interview, Director of a university in Makeni, 5 September 2009).

In spite of young people's frequent comments on teachers' 'bad habits' as presented above, their views on whether teachers discriminate against pupils were varied. The majority of the participants did not consider 'discrimination' by teachers to be an issue (e.g. SSS male pupils in an FGD; Isatu, Jacob and John in Masonry). Some even refused the idea that teachers would discriminate, making comments such as 'they [teachers] teach us in a right way' (Ishaka on the Masonry course). On the other hand, female pupils considered that teachers 'differentiated' pupils (by financial status or academic brightness) but did not consider this to be a kind of 'discrimination.' Similarly, Alexis, an out-of-school

participant stated that, although teachers accepted bribes, this was not a form of discrimination. However, when 'discrimination' did happen, the factors for discrimination were raised as money (e.g. Hawa in Home Management), family connections – distributing more materials, i.e. books, to his or her brothers or sisters – (e.g. Peter, SSS2, and Jalikatu, SSS3, in the commercial stream), a 'secret interest' or love for a student (Alexis, out of school).

In retrospect, the finding that many young people did not feel teachers discriminate may be because the word 'discrimination' sounded too strong for them to describe teachers' behaviour. The results may have been different if I phrased it such as 'favour' or 'differentiation,' but it did not occur to me to do so during the fieldwork. At the same time, this finding may also imply that the degree of discrimination or 'differentiation' by teachers was not severe, if it is the case that 'discrimination' was felt to be too strong a term.

In contrast to the young people' responses, a mother of four children did think that teachers discriminate against pupils quite commonly. She thinks that her eldest son in JSS2 was discriminated against and that money is affecting her son's results:

> [My son] came from a poor family. He can't do anything, even if the teacher says come with this, but he doesn't have strength to that. But some others have money. They come from a rich family. Even if they don't pay attention, during the time to give results or whatever they came to the teacher, the teacher knows the family, then they don't fail…he [my son] said, "I understand more than those children but they take money to the teacher, [and I come below them]."

What is important here about discrimination or 'differentiation' by teachers is that young people (or the parent) did not cite ethnic groups or 'tribes' as a factor. As mentioned above, the initial responses of the young informants, for those who acknowledged discrimination

or 'differentiation' by teachers, indicated financial backgrounds, family connections, academic brightness, or romantic feelings by teachers, but not 'tribes.' I asked a follow-up question directly regarding whether discrimination or differentiation involved tribes as a factor to those who said there was some. In that, while some simply responded negatively, some others acknowledged discrimination by ethnicity, such as a few students in the masonry course at TVIM (i.e. Jamal, Alpha, and Paul). Jamal, a Limba by ethnicity, commented:

> If you are Mende and try to call some of us to practical, you consider Mende first for the practical instead of Limba. In terms of post, [if] I am in a position and Limba I will look for Limba. This is what is happening.

Here, 'practical' means the programme of apprenticeship or job training at TVIM, whereby students who have completed the training are sent to a company to gain work experience. In many cases, the Training Manager of TVIM said that training lead to subsequent employment (Interview, 1 December 2009). The acknowledgement of discrimination by ethnicity when it comes to a component of training that has employment prospect aligns with the finding earlier that young people recognised some influence of ethnic groups on employment opportunities (see Section 8.3.2). However, even those who admitted the discriminations based on ethnic connections did not consider them as too serious or too frequent to become a source of concern (e.g. Jamal, Alpha, and Paul in Masonry).

In terms of discrimination *among pupils*, young people's responses were found to be similar to the findings above on discrimination by teachers. That is, they did not recognise serious instances of discrimination among pupils, but when it did occur they were mostly due to the financial background of the family, not due to ethnic groups. As to whether different ethnic groups of pupils mingle in schools, many answered that they did. Quite a

few said that there was no problem: 'Once we are in school [there is] no problem' (John in Masonry); 'They can even get married' (Aisha, out of school, dropped out at Class 3), or 'They make friends, they talk, they go to different houses' (Mabinty, out of school, dropped out from JSS during the war). On the other hand, young people, particularly female informants, commented that children from rich families rarely make friends with children from a poor background. Jalikatu on another occasion said, 'some don't [mingle with me] because they know that I come from a poor family. Because they say I have a poor family background, they choose someone who is richer [than me].' In terms of male informants, some of them said that the financial background of the family mattered while others said it did not. For example, Ishaka who had gone to Form 4 immediately before the war (equivalent to SSS1 in the present system) and was now at TVET said, 'The only discrimination is for now… I don't have *crepes* [black shoes for school], but another one has *crepe*s. If I don't have money to buy one I will get into trouble [among companions].' On the other hand, Abdul said that even though he came from a poor family he had friends who were from rich families. However, he noted that only rich boys could mingle with girls. Girls came to him only when they wanted help preparing for examinations.

Discrimination based on ethnicity did come up in some young people's responses but appears to be trivial. That it is not a severe problem in Makeni is already clear from the fact that, in most cases, ethnicity did not come up as a factor for discrimination in the informants' initial responses, and many actively refused to countenance the existence of discrimination by ethnicity (e.g. Isatu and John in Masonry). Some did have examples when I enquired about the subject directly but only minor or 'temporary' cases. For example:

> If you and me, we are talking in the same language, but the two of them are talking in a different language. When we are talking our language, they will

> say that we like to talk, boss [show off] our language. They become jealous and discrimination comes in (Gladys in Home and Management).
>
> There are Limbas, even in my class here. There are [also] Temnes. [Limba] said 'Temnes, don't come here.' But sometimes we play together and do things together (James, an SSS3 pupil in the commercial stream, Sherbro by ethnicity).[27]

At the same time, strong ties among the same ethnic group were suggested by some, such as Jalikatu, an SSS3 pupil who comes from a small village nearby and is a Temne by ethnicity: 'If you come from the same tribe, we act like we are from the same village and the family. If I have trouble I will speak in my tribal language.'

8.5 Educational governance in Makeni

As my study did not focus on governance issues empirically (see Section 6.6), I limit myself to making a brief note on a few aspects of educational governance in Makeni. They are about the ineffective participation of communities in school management and the weak institutional capacities of the system apparent in the low remuneration of teachers and the tolerance of major corruption. The common petty corruption on the part of teachers is not included here, as it has already been covered in Section 8.4.4.

According to the plan, as part of the devolution and decentralisation processes, communities are to be involved in the school management (see Section 7.3.4). However, this system was not functioning effectively in the MCSS I was attached to. Teachers commented that the committee did not to meet regularly (Field note, 8 October 2009) and, as a matter of fact, I did not meet the parent representative in the committee as he rarely came to the school. Furthermore, teachers appear not to have a clear understanding of the functions and differences between the SMC and Board of Governors. I was attached to the

[27] Although historically Krios had most advantage over others in Sierra Leone, the Krio ethnic group did not come up at all in my engagement with young people about discrimination in school.

secondary level of MCSS, which, in theory, should have Board of Governors for managing the school and yet teachers kept referring to the SMC as the mechanism for school management. Such confusion in the roles of the SMC or Board of Governors appears to be understandable in view of the fact that no policy documents on devolution specify their roles.

The effects of the weak institutional capacity of the system stood out in my data in two ways. One is the continuing poor remuneration for teachers. Although teachers commented that payment had increased slightly, they still complained that it was not sufficient to make a living and to support their family, which is often large. Such complaints seem to be legitimate as a bag of rice that is usually only sufficient to sustain a family for one month costs 120,000 to 150,000 Leones (equivalent to US$ 30 to US$ 45 in 2009) in Makeni, and this takes up more than 44% of an average wage for secondary school teachers and more than 66% for primary school teachers. Additionally, there were many other teachers who were not put on the payroll despite the requests from the schools. The Principal of the MCSS and the Training Manager of the TVIM complained about the limited number of teachers that the government had been approving on the payroll (Interviews, 2 December 2009; 1 December 2009). For teachers who were hired after the implementation of the 'ceiling' system in 2003, it was commented that it took as long as three years to be approved (e.g. a teacher in the MCSS, Interview, 2 December 2009). Irregularity or delay of payment, however, was not found to be a problem for teachers who were already on the payroll (Informal interviews, two teachers from the MCSS; a female teacher from a primary school in Makeni).

The second effect from the weak institutional capacity that stood out in the study is the extent to which major corruption continues to be tolerated in the system in Makeni. For instance, Bombali District was found to have one of the highest rates of discrepancies in the country between the value of textbooks transferred from the DEO and the value received by schools (PETS Task Team MoFED, 2006, cited in Boak, 2010).[28] In addition, young people casually told me of schools that were infamous for accepting students who were not up to standard in exchange for bribes. In accord with such comments, such 'infamous' schools received the worst WASSCE results in Bombali District in 2009; in one of such schools, only two candidates out of 416 candidates achieved a pass (credits in more than four subjects). In comparison, 42 students out of about 212 candidates had achieved a pass in the best performing government-assisted school in Makeni (Bombali DEO, 2009). Whether the corruption is related to ethnicity or patronage could not have been examined in the study, however.

8.6 'Representations' and 'expectations' of education in Makeni

The last element to consider is the conception of education, more specifically the representations and expectations of education by beneficiaries in Makeni (see Section 7.3.1 for findings on the goals and expectations of policymakers at the level of institution). The themes to be addressed in this section are the social significance of education *in perception* and the extent of exclusiveness in the social conception of education. As depicted in the framework, the social significance of education *in perception* is a concept adopted from Stewart and, to reiterate, it is essentially about whether education is seen to have value in the society in question and for what purpose it is valued (see Section 4.2.1 for details). I will show below that education, particularly its value as an instrument to achieve socioeconomic mobility, is perceived to have a high social significance in Sierra Leone.

[28] Port Loko was another district that was found to have the highest rates of 'negative' discrepancies.

However, the elitist conception of education that is in imbalance with the educational reality of Sierra Leone appears to be fuelling the social marginalisation of those who are little educated.

I will elaborate the findings in this section because the examination of the representations and expectations for education by the beneficiaries is considered to help advance the theoretical understanding of the role of education in violent conflict. This is in addition to the importance of it in an empirical investigation, which has been already argued in Chapter Five. The representations and expectations by beneficiaries are a feature inferred theoretically in social science literature, giving a base to judge whether other features in education would be a factor that puts society at risk of conflict (see Section 5.5.1) and yet are an element that has not been empirically studied in depth, either in the education or the social science literature (see sections 3.6 and 4.5).

8.6.1 Social significance of education *in perception*

The social significance *in perception* is found to be high in Sierra Leone and may even be increasing. Young people perceive education as essential to economic and social mobility, often using the expression that education is 'the key to success.' For example, Musa, who completed the SSS but had no prospects of going to college stated: 'Education is the light and key to success… you need to learn before, then you will be lucky to have a job.' Many SSS pupils believe that they can achieve their lofty dreams with a university degree, such as becoming a lawyer, a doctor, a bank manager, and an NGO worker. This suggests that education is *perceived* to hold high social significance in Sierra Leone.

Moreover, since the conflict, the social significance of education *in perception* may have even become higher. For one, the awareness of the importance of education is perceived to

have increased during and after the war (e.g. Dean of TVIM, Interview, 14 October 2009; Bombali District Chairman of Principals Conference, Interview, 29 September 2009; a regional director for an international NGO in Makeni, Interview, 26 November 2009). Partly, this is associated with the exposure of a difference between the educated and uneducated people during and after the war. In refugee camps, the educated, i.e. teachers, were observed to have been able to work, while those without education remained unemployed and without resources (e.g. a regional director of an NGO in Makeni, Interview, 26 November 2009). Furthermore, after the war, not only were teachers able to go back to the teaching job as soon as schools reopened, but also they received their salaries that had been delayed or not been paid before and during the war (Dean of TVIM, Interview, 14 October 2009; a teacher at MCSS, Interview, 2 December 2009). Those who had family abroad, often with a high level of educational achievement, received money or materials or were even themselves able to go abroad (e.g. Bombali District Chairman of Principals Conference, Interview, 29 September 2009). Young people also perceived the advantages of educated people through the experience of the war. For instance, Musa's father used to be a rich businessman, going to trade in Guinea, but most of his properties, including his machinery and cars, were destroyed or raided by the rebels. Now the family lives in poverty without any prospect of restarting the business. Musa said:

> If [my father] had been educated, after the process, let me say, he can go to any institution to apply himself, and maybe he can have job and then able to cater for us, but now just look at him. He doesn't have enough money to further my education. That is why people who are educated are better than those who are not educated.

Musa felt that the reason his father was unable to find a job after the war and his family is facing poverty is because he lacks education, regardless of whether or not this is a realistic view considering the scarcity of employment in the present Sierra Leone. In addition to exposure to the advantages of educated people through the war, awareness-raising

programmes on the importance of education by various NGOs and agencies since before the war have further increased a sense of the importance of education (e.g. President of Principals Conference, Interview, 26 October 2009; President of SLTU, Interview, 25 October 2009; Paramount Chief, Interview, 24 November 2009).

The other contributing factor to the growing social significance of education *in perception* is that many job advertisements in recent years, particularly after the war, require qualifications. In other words, the society is perceived to be becoming more credentialistic. For example, John in masonry explained that while you could become a security guard without any educational background before the war, now they ask for at least the BECE result. Adult informants confirmed such a view, with the Training Manager of TVIM commenting to me:

> [T]he youth are little more conscious now that they should learn something because they know that within a very short time, if you don't have certificate or a paper… you will find difficult to get any job… So people are very conscious (Interview, 1 December 2009).

Thus, it is true that education *is perceived to* have a powerful social significance in Sierra Leone despite the fact that, in reality, many of those who attain higher levels of education have difficulty finding employment. On the other hand, it should be remembered that the nature of credentialism in Sierra Leone is, strictly speaking, quasi-credentialism. As presented earlier (see Section 8.3.2 above), young people are aware that credentials alone do not determine social, economic and political mobility; these have to be coupled with S*ababu*.

Having substantiated the high and perhaps even increasing social significance of education *in perception* in Sierra Leone, it is important to discuss whether it is the instrumental or

innate value of education that is perceived to hold social significance. Such a discussion is necessarily limited by nature, but my data suggests that education appears to be more valued for its instrumentality. Their conception of education as 'the key to success' pointed out earlier implies that getting educated is the means for their economic mobility. I will illustrate this with a case of John in more detail here. He had stopped going to school at Class 4 but came to the TVET institute after he had worked as a mason for some years in Kabala. His reasoning for coming to learn at TVIM in Makeni was to receive a certificate in masonry with which he believes he can get better employment. He has recently undertaken job training in Freetown as part of the programme and he hopes to acquire a superior job in Freetown subsequently.

At the same time, the instrumentality of education is not simply about economic mobility. As I will discuss in the next section, although TVET may be more relevant in terms of economic applicability to real life in the Sierra Leonean context, formal schooling is more valued in comparison. This appears to suggest that, to some extent, without being instrumental in economic terms, education is also valued in terms of social status and for social mobility. Further, education's social significance appears to also lie in its influence on the type and level of social network that one can establish through schooling. For instance, John said: 'I can get money but educated people interact with people who are well educated… when you get money, people don't care about you.'[29] From one perspective, he was able to get the job training experience as a result of the social network that TVIM has built. Furthermore, he may be able to get a better job there because of the social network. A number of young people noted that it is more through schooling than through the ethnic group or family relations that one can establish *Sababu* with people who

[29] This quote was translated from Krio to English by his coursemate Jamal.

are influential in society (e.g. Samuel, Mahmood, Peter, Ibrahim, and Henry in SSS). A powerful role of schools in building the social network can also be seen in the alumni networks. Historically, the most prominent one in Sierra Leone is the Old Bo Boys Association of Bo School (see Chapter Two). Its strong ties still exist although its degree of influence might have lessened due to the development of other prestigious schools.

8.6.2 Elitist conception of education

The social conception of education in Sierra Leone is found to be elitist. This is suggested in the notion of 'being educated' itself. Most of the young people said that being educated in Sierra Leone means getting a 'paper' from tertiary institutions. For instance, James, an SSS3 student in the commercial stream, described how, '[by] getting a paper from college, you are considered to be educated. People are fighting for this paper.' The SLTU President further elaborated on the meaning of 'being educated' in Sierra Leonean society:

> [It means] graduates of university, first degree. Having second and third degree are additional one. [It means] having higher positions, being lecturers. Those who have teaching certificate (TC) are not considered. HTC is middle… The WASCCE level are just considered as those who know how to write your name, but not considered as educated. That makes a big difference. That is why all the brothers fight to get there. Educated means you went to a university (Interview, 25 October 2009).

This suggests that the conception of 'being educated' is reduced to getting a piece of paper from a tertiary institution. Such a conception of education suggests that, not only is society credentialistic as discussed above, but also the conception of 'being educated' is elitist in Sierra Leone because only a tiny (and uneven) proportion of the population is able to get a tertiary education in present-day Sierra Leone (see Section 7.4.1).

The elitist credentialism in Sierra Leone is also suggested from the perceived difference between academic and vocational qualifications. Many students in the TVET institute told me that they would go back to formal schooling if they had a chance. Isatu in Masonry told

me of her wish to go back to school to sit the BECE and WASCCE exams after getting her certificate in Masonry. She expressed the necessity of 'defending' her certificate; if somebody else had the same qualification along with a WASCCE result, then the person would be employed over her.

In contrast to the high value attached to being an educated person, the notion of 'dropouts' has a social stigma attached to it in Makeni. More specifically, they are seen in association with criminal activities. During my fieldwork, 'armed robberies' became a great concern in Sierra Leone. They are cases of breaking into houses with some 'arms,' mostly not guns, but anything that can be harmful, such as machetes and sticks (Director of Media and Public Relations of Sierra Leone Police, Interview, 15 December 2009). In order to reduce such crimes, the government even launched the Military Aid to Civil Power programme, in which the military lend assistance to police to patrol together at night. Dropouts often came up in conversations as those robbers. The Local Unit Commander of the Makeni police told me that the robbers were '15 to 26 [of age], mostly drop outs. Not further education. They sit idle, poor in background' (Interview, 25 November 2009). Other adult informants also made similar comments connecting 'dropouts' to robbers, such as the Director of Education Office of the Catholic Mission in Makeni:

> [T]hey are not gainfully engaged. They don't have certificate or paper, they hang around. They cause problems. That is why the most of the problems, rubbery, the crime are associated with these people…The man who is working at the end of the day go back home tired and he wants to get sound sleep to be able to wake up for the other day to go to work but these guys just hang around and look for a fast way of getting money. How do you do it? They go night to steal things. It is inconvenient to society (Interview, 13 October 2009).

In terms of girls, those who are out of school are often associated with the commercial sex industry. For instance, the Bombali District Chair of Principals Conference said that girls who have dropped out of school earn money for the family as commercial sex workers,

often with the consent of parents due to poverty the family faces (Interview, 29 September 2009).

Of course, not all dropouts are associated with criminal activities, which is especially true of the group of young people who participated in my study. Although they may be a small minority, not only are they not socially deviant, but also they are attempting to actively overcome the social stigma attached to being dropouts. The FECYP was created by the young people themselves and they attempt to engage with society in a meaningful way, such as by airing radio discussions every week on issues that concern children and young people, such as hygiene, teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, and education. They also perform dramas in schools to promote peaceful conflict resolution skills.

However, young informants themselves also devalued non-educated people to some extent. This was observed when I asked them to draw an image of an uneducated person. Many of the informants illustrated a person, often a farmer, without decent clothes or shoes (see Figure 7 below). Similarly, asked what they could achieve without becoming 'educated,' many young people named two occupations: farming and selling in markets. Some even said that one could only be a robber (Samuel, an SSS2 pupil in the commercial stream).

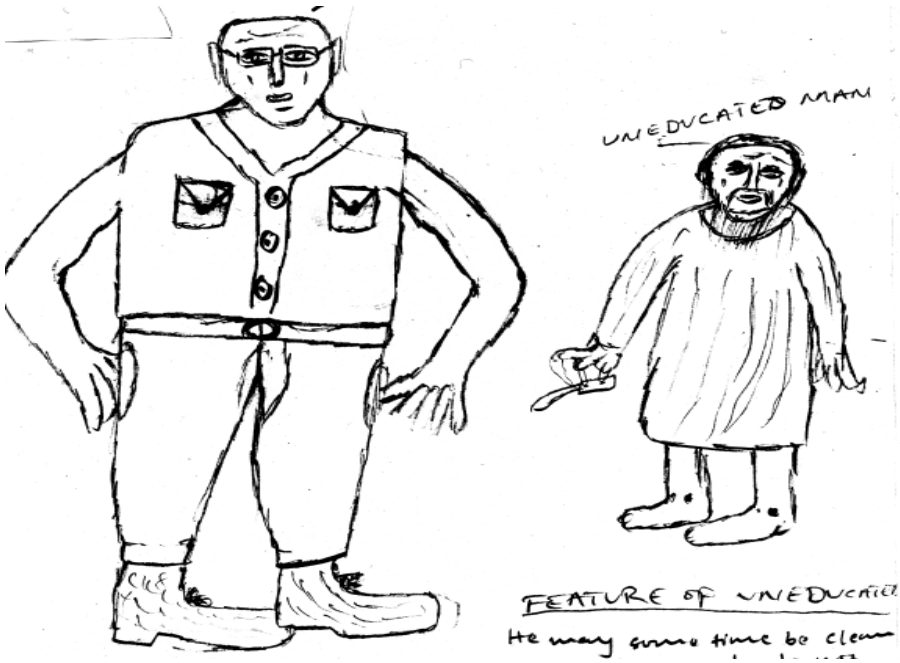


Figure 7: A drawing by Abdul, a SSS2 pupil on the image of an 'educated person' and an 'uneducated person'

In terms of the out-of-school participants – who themselves would be classified as 'uneducated people' in the Sierra Leonean standards – their sense of inferiority in society was revealed in the study. There was a long list of what they could not do. For example, Musu, who dropped out of schooling after passing NPSE, stated:

> I won't be able to help others and can't play a role in the family. I can't talk to colleagues and other people with confidence… Just have the fear that maybe if you talk to somebody who is educated they won't listen to me… [or] not interested in talking with me without education.[30]

This list appears to include basic things that one should feel one is able to do as a member of society, such as talking to others with confidence. Furthermore, when I asked the out-of-school participants what they do every day, they often replied to me saying that they do 'nothing.' For instance, Dauda said 'nothing. At times I am at home, go out. During weekend, go for watching film or football games. I go to mosque five times a day.' These comments seem to suggest that they feel they are not doing anything 'meaningful,' i.e. education or work. There was another occasion that drew my attention to how the society

[30] This interview was partially interpreted from Krio to English by Alexis, another participant in the study.

may be marginalising out-of-school children and young people, perhaps without intending to do so. This was when a group of children, many of currently out of school, held a radio discussion on the importance of education. A community worker at the radio station joined the discussion to emphasise the importance, but in doing so she made the comment that he or she is 'nothing to the community' if a person is not educated.

Although young people who do not become an 'educated person' may be marginalised from society as such, peer-based social networks among young people at the level of friendship do not appear to be seriously affected by the level of schooling. Many participants' comments suggested that they formed and maintained friendships regardless of their level of education. I asked all the groups of young people about their friendship with those with other educational experiences. For instance, of those in formal schooling, I asked whether they had friends who were out of school or who were on the TVET track, and how their relationship with such friends was. Many shared with me that they had friends with different educational experiences from their own and expressed sympathetic views about their friends. For example, Paul, who is studying Masonry at TVIM from Kabala, told me: 'Some of them [the friends from formal schooling] are in college and graduated. Sometimes they tell me to hold on. If there is a chance they might call on me.' Furthermore, many respondents recognised that only those who have 'an opportunity' or 'a chance' can climb the academic ladder and thus those who are in SSS were sympathetic to those lacking the opportunity. Ibrahim, when asked about friends who are out of school, answered:

> I don't feel good because I am coming to school every day but they don't have that opportunity. They want to educate [themselves] but because of financial reason or [not having] somebody to help them [they can't come to school].

At the same time, not everyone behaved in this way; some TVET participants or those with a lower level of formal schooling suggested that some of their friends with a higher level of education were not sympathetic towards them. Paul continued to state in the same interview as above that some others would not talk to him because they feel too 'proud.' The word 'proud' frequently came out in the participants' responses, often with a negative connotation. Paul elaborated on those 'proud' of their higher level of education in another interview:

> Some feel proud. He doesn't interrogate [converse] with non-educated friends. Some … don't like to pay them visit or get accompanied or associated with. As soon as you have [he has] degree, he will say I am above you.

Nonetheless, more informants said that many of their friends mingled equally regardless of their educational level. The finding that many young people mingled regardless of educational level appears to mediate the level of social marginalisation by educational level in Sierra Leone; while society in general and adults may marginalise them, young people among themselves at least do not seem to generally marginalise each other.

8.7 Summary and reflections on education in Makeni

This chapter presented a complex picture of how the education system after the war is actually experienced and perceived by young people and key adult informants in Makeni. On the one hand, the kind of formal schooling experienced by young people in Makeni is certainly dire, as is consistent with and expected from the findings at the national level presented in the previous chapter. Problems include: the low quality of schooling; little support being provided for the TVET institutes; low professional standards of teachers; and the failure of well-intended plans to reach the beneficiaries (i.e. peace education and the teaching of war history). Despite such poor conditions and despite the reality of Sierra Leone that unemployment among the educated youth prevails, on the other hand,

education is perceived to have a strong social significance. Moreover, the majority of young people in the study are striving hard to get to 'be educated.'

The findings in Makeni also highlight issues related to educational access to schooling. The levels of education that are relevant to the socioeconomic mobility, i.e. SSS and tertiary education, are both unequally distributed and inaccessible generally. Combined with the elitist conception of 'being educated' (with society only recognising those in receipt of a 'paper' from tertiary institutions), this suggests that those who do not get to those levels of education face grave consequences, being marginalised both economically and socially. Yet the study has found two alternatives to formal schooling through which young people can be relatively meaningfully engaged with society, however limited they are: TVET and *Okada* bike-taxis. In addition, in view of educational inequalities in the context of Makeni, despite the acute educational disparities among regions at the levels of education that are relevant in terms of socioeconomic mobility, they were not perceived as a source of tension in society by the informants.

The findings also revealed that the educational system is failing to cultivate critical thinking in learners. The curriculum is centrally constructed and implemented around examinations and the teaching of war history is completely lacking in the curriculum. In part, pupils' lack of critical thinking was apparent in their simplistic understanding of the factors that laid the foundation for the war. Nevertheless, the study also found that the young people have some critical thinking ability, exhibited through their critical understanding of the factors that motivated young people to fight in the last civil war and also through their realistic insights into the issue of unemployment of the educated.

On a positive note, there was no significant discrimination among pupils or by teachers due to ethnic or regional differences. Nor were there any cultural groups who are deliberately denied access in Makeni. Furthermore, although young people with lower levels of education were socially marginalised from society, they were, on the whole, making friends with other young people whose educational levels or cultural origins are different from theirs.

Having presented the findings of the educational realities in post-conflict Sierra Leone in this chapter and the previous chapter, I will analyse what these findings imply in relation to the research question in the next chapter. This will be done by connecting the findings presented so far to the literature reviewed earlier in the study.

Chapter Nine: Analysis

9.1 Introduction to the chapter

Having presented the findings in the previous two chapters, the aim of this chapter is to address the research question. To reiterate, it is:

> ***Which features of the educational system in Sierra Leone might put the country at risk of further conflict?***

The analysis of the findings show that education in post-conflict Sierra Leone has some of the features or the factors suggested by the literature as putting a society at risk of violent conflict. The analysis further expounds on the complexity of the features found.

As in the presentation of the findings, the analysis is organised in alignment with the conceptual framework. My analysis thus centres on the four elements in education: structure, curriculum and quality, governance, and conception. In analysing each element, I will merge the findings from the two levels of analysis, i.e. institution (presented in Chapter Seven) and beneficiaries (presented in Chapter Eight), and also merge the analysis of the element per se and the element in its wider context.

As explained at the outset, the main purpose of this study is to analyse critically the role of education (in all its facets, structure, curriculum and quality, governance and conception) as a factor in violent conflict. The study is principally a theoretical consideration of the proposition that education does play a part in violent conflict. What part exactly remains an open question but the study argues that we come closer to answering it through an interdisciplinary analysis of the causes of violent conflict. Indeed, I have outlined such an analysis in chapters Four and Five above. It goes without saying that the opposite to the

part education plays in inviting or fuelling violent conflict is its role in preventing or mediating it. However, the study does not set itself the task of examining the opposite – rather, it acknowledges that the study of education and its role in reconciliation and the building of peace in conflict-affected societies is a field of study in its own right (e.g.Paulson, 2011; Novelli and Smith, 2011; Wessells, 2005; Bretherton, Weston and Zbar, 2005). Moreover, it is the contention of the study that the recognition of features or factors in education that might put a society at risk of conflict is the first step for education to fundamentally unfold the 'positive' potential of education towards peacebuilding and stability. To reiterate, if features that put society at risk of conflict are present in education, then we cannot deny the possibility that they might become salient and, together with other factors in society, might fuel a cycle of conflict.

9.2 Analysis of the findings on education in post-conflict Sierra Leone

9.2.1 Structure

In light of the literature reviewed in the study, five features in or around education are illuminated as part of the factors that may put a society at risk of conflict. Among the five, two of them are about access, i.e. inequality and inaccessibility, while others are about educational access in the wider context, or the relationship of educational access to other dimensions of society.

The first feature is inequality in educational access. More specifically, it is about the regional unevenness of access to SSS and tertiary education. In light of Stewart's idea (see Section 4.2.2), the key to measuring whether education (among other factors) can be relevant to a risk of violent conflict in the society in question is, in short, whether there are inequalities among cultural groups in the particular type (and level) of education that has social significance. The findings have shown that people in Makeni largely attach

importance to education due to its instrumental value, more specifically to the value of education as a means to achieve socioeconomic mobility (see Section 8.6.1). The findings have further revealed that the level of education that is relevant to significant socioeconomic mobility is at least the completion of SSS (see Section 8.3.1). This suggests that the social significance of education lies in the instrumental value of education in Sierra Leone and, more specifically, in SSS and tertiary education as they are most instrumental in terms of the socioeconomic mobility of people there. The findings have also demonstrated that, although there are no considerable inequalities in access to the lower level of formal schooling, access to SSS and higher education is unequal among cultural groups, specifically among regions (see Section 7.4.1). In light of Stewart's idea, this suggests that the inequality among cultural groups in accessing the levels of education that have social significance, i.e. SSS and tertiary education, exists and, therefore, can be seen as a feature that might put society at risk.

However, it should be noted that the people's perceptions of the inequality found in the study are different from the reality; they did not mention region or ethnicity as sources for inequalities. In terms of the adult key informants, they consider that the educational inequalities are *not* the source of frustrations or tensions among regions or ethnic groups although they recognised the existence of continuing educational inequalities by region (see Section 8.3.1). I will come back to the discrepancies between inequality in reality and in perception in relation to the politicisation of education later.

The second feature illuminated in the structure of education is related to the general inaccessibility of the higher level of education, i.e. the SSS and tertiary education. Theoretically, the idea of the 'opportunity cost of rebellion' by Collier et al. suggests that

the society has a high risk of civil war when the majority of people lack access to the level of education that increases the opportunity cost of rebellion, i.e. the income foregone by enlisting as rebels. The findings in the study reveal, as I have also discussed above, that the minimal level of education that allows young people to achieve substantial economic mobility is completion of SSS and the completion of SSS, not to mention enrolment in tertiary institutions, is largely inaccessible to the majority of young people in Sierra Leone (see Section 7.4.1). Even more, it is perceived to be so (see Section 8.3.1). From the theoretical view of the opportunity cost of rebellion, then, this suggests that the country has many young people whose income to be foregone is cheap and thus who may be easily get recruited in a rebellion were one to happen.

However, it is too early to draw such a conclusion from the findings in my study. Empirically, what Collier et al. and other youth-bulge theories have found is the relevance of *enrolment rate at secondary school,* particularly of males, to the risk of conflict (see Section 4.3.2). From the empirical point of view, then, what matters in the case of Sierra Leone is the enrolment rate at JSS level. That level is much more easily accessible (41% in 2004, see Table 3) than the completion of SSS (3–4% in 2009). From Collier et al.'s empirical point of view, then, the accessibility of education in the country is not a factor that can put society at risk of rebellion. However, this contradicts Collier et al.'s *theory* because my findings show that accessing JSS does not in fact have much effect on the economic prospects of young people in Sierra Leone (see Section 8.3.1). Furthermore, it should be noted that even those who complete SSS or tertiary education face bleak employment opportunities, as I will analyse further below. This suggests that the *actual* income forgone (by enlisting as rebels) might not be that different between those with SSS or tertiary education and those with less schooling. Nevertheless, *in perception* it does

seem to suggest that those with SSS or tertiary education *perceive* the opportunity cost to be higher than those with less schooling, which is due to the high perceived social significance of education found in the study (see Section 8.6.1).

In addition to the unevenness in and insufficiency of educational access per se, there are three features about educational access in the wider context that the literature suggests are part of the factors that may put society at risk. The first is related to the insufficient meaningful opportunities for so-called dropouts or young people who leave schooling before achieving the qualification from SSS. The literature suggests the importance of meaningful opportunities for dropouts in regard to stability. In pre-war Sierra Leone, it was those who were partially 'educated' that became mobilised into rebellion because they were frustrated about the lack of opportunities, either to further their education or employment. The only work available was farming but they felt unfit for it after receiving schooling – however little was (see Chapter Two). More theoretically, through the lens of the opportunity cost of rebellion, meaningful opportunities for dropouts may suggest that the opportunity cost of rebellion for them might in fact be higher than having no alternatives at all. This is because the alternatives, i.e. some kind of training or employment, may raise their 'opportunity cost' to some extent. In light of such literature, on the one hand, the scarcity of opportunities found at the national level may be seen as a feature that might put society at risk. The findings show that the opportunities for dropouts either for training or employment continue to be scarce, with the TVET track being poorly implemented generally and those who do not get to complete SSS being likely to have difficulty in finding work (see Section 7.4.1).

However, at the micro level, the study has found some alternatives for the dropouts and they may be seen, however limited they are, to be contributing to raising the opportunity cost of rebellion for them. What are found to be significant alternatives are the *Okada* bike-taxi business and successful TVET institutes. The effects of the *Okada* bike-taxi business on schooling or on society may not be entirely positive, given the informants' comments about riders' involvement in female pupils' pregnancy and their lack of interest in learning (see sections 8.3.2 and 8.4.1). Nevertheless, in light of the opportunity cost of rebellion, the business might be seen as contributing positively to raising the opportunity cost of the *Okada* riders because they are involved in economic activities that generate earnings for them to live, albeit day to day. If they were not involved in the business, they might have no choice but to live idly unless they get involved in criminal activities or violence. Peters (2007) also suggests that the business seems to be contributing to reducing the chance that young people may be attracted to violent conflict, albeit from a different angle; such a business offers excitement similar to that they experienced during the war but in a peaceful manner.

In terms of TVET institutions, the successful ones – even if they are not incorporated in the 6-3-3-4 as the TVET track, like the one I was attached to – are found to be providing meaningful opportunities to young people who dropped out of formal schooling or who did not have a chance to go to school at all. As shown, although the equipment and facilities are inadequate (see Section 8.4.1), the students there believe that they can get a job based on the skills they learn (see Section 8.3.2). This means that those who are enrolled in the TVET institutions have some economic prospects, which seem to in turn suggest that the TVET institutions – when they are successful – are also contributing to raising the opportunity cost of rebellion for the young people enrolled at them.

The second feature about education access in its relationship with the wider context is some degree of alignment of regional educational inequalities with other HIs, i.e. social HIs and political division. Stewart claims that conflict is more likely to occur when the HIs coincide multi-dimensionally (rather than existing only in one dimension) (see Section 4.2.1). In particular, she emphasises political HIs as a determining factor; conflict is not likely to occur even when other HIs (social, economic, or cultural status HIs) exist sharply but do not align with political HIs. On the other hand, the society is likely to have conflict if other HIs exist and align with political ones because frustrated elites (through political deprivation) try to galvanise mass support by emphasising the inequalities in other areas. The findings show that regional inequalities are not only found in education but also in other elements of social HIs (e.g. access to electric lights, pipe-borne water, and health services) and that political division runs by region in Sierra Leone. Moreover, some reports claim that national politics are becoming more and more regionalised and ethnicised, which is found to be, to some extent, affecting the educational institutions (see Section 7.4.1).

On the whole, then, these multi-dimensionalities of inequality may be seen as a feature that puts society at risk from Stewart's point of view. However, a closer examination of the findings in my study reveals the complex face of the alignment of inequalities and divisions and this should be taken into account when considering the implications of the multi-dimensionalities of inequalities in Sierra Leone. For one, although the national statistics did not show significant regional disparities in economic terms, i.e. the employment ratio by region (see Table 7.6), ethnicity came up in comments by young people in Makeni as a factor that determines employment opportunities (see Section 8.3.2). Secondly, although there are sharp inequalities by region in different areas, the ways in

which the regional inequalities run among different dimensions are different; education HIs are most notably between the west and the east, with other social HIs being between the west and the north and political division between the north (and west) and the south (and east). Thirdly, political division is not found to be an *inequality*; different parties are given fair opportunities to compete (see Section 7.4.1). Lastly, people's perception on the issue of the politicisation of education (and educational inequalities) differs from the reality and from Stewart's explanation. As above, Stewart suggests that educational inequalities have a high risk of being politicised when they align with political inequalities and can be a source of tensions, and indeed in reality education is politicised to some extent. Yet people on the ground perceive that regional educational disparities are not likely to be a source of tensions in society and are not likely to be politicised, saying time and again that education and politics are two different issues. The reason for this is suggested by adult informants as, first, education is open to everyone (in other words, nobody is denied access) and, second, the government is actively trying to reduce the gap. What this complex face of the relationship between educational inequality and other inequalities implies is beyond the study's scope of analysis.

The third feature to educational access as part of the wider context (and the last in the structure of education) is related to the unemployment of educated young people. The findings, on the one hand, suggest that even many of the young people who have accessed the level of education that should be relevant to their socioeconomic mobility, i.e. SSS or tertiary education, face unemployment (see Section 7.4.1). And yet, on the other hand, young people generally have overly hopeful expectations in regard to the power of education to help them achieve economic and social mobility; simply put, once they become 'educated,' i.e. receive the piece of 'paper' from tertiary education, they believe

they will be able to get a job with a stable salary (see Section 8.3.2). The literature suggests that the transition breakdown between education and employment is a feature that can put society at risk because education is not meeting the beneficiaries' expectations as an instrument facilitating their socioeconomic mobility. The unmet economic prospects of university students was one of the ways in which the pre-war educational system is considered to have fuelled the conflict (Chapter Two); those who instigated the original 'revolution' were university students who expected the government to provide jobs upon graduation but realised that their expectation was unlikely to be realised. Theoretically, Gurr's idea of relative deprivation also sheds light on the unemployment of educated youth as a potential source of disillusion and anger; increased young people's aspirations through education, on the one hand, and their not finding a job, on the other, implies a great sense of relative deprivation (see Section 4.2.2).

Nevertheless, the findings at the level of beneficiaries in the study reveal that the perceptions and expectations of young people are complex and do not fit straightforwardly with the explanation by Gurr, also being rather different to what is understood to be the expectations of pre-war young people. The difference from (what is understood to be) the expectations of pre-war young people is that the young people I have engaged with did not feel a public sector job had been *promised* to them by the government upon becoming 'educated.' They did not blame the government excessively for not providing them with jobs nor did they blame the educational system for not providing a relevant education. They rather put the responsibility on the pervasive economic decline. Moreover, they were aware that education alone would not be enough – and would need to be coupled with '*Sababu*' or patronage – for them to get the high salary job they aspire to (see Section 8.3.2). Such insights seem to suggest, after all, that expectations regarding the power of

education may not be too high, and thus that the possible disillusionment and frustration that could arise – when in reality education does not facilitate their mobility as they wished – might not be as grave as it could be.

Before ending the analysis on the structure, it should be noted that the study did not find that different cultural groups in the system are segregated in Makeni, the other possible feature in the structure of education that is considered to be associated with a risk of violent conflict.

9.2.2 Curriculum and quality

Four features in relation to the curriculum and quality are illuminated as factors that are associated with a risk of conflict in light of literature reviewed in the study. They are: 1) an irrelevant and poor-quality curriculum; 2) examination-focused pedagogy; 3) failure to cultivate the critical abilities of pupils; and 4) teachers' practice of 'petty corruption' and 'violence' as part of the school ethos.

The first and second features are interrelated. The GMR (UNESCO, 2011) argues that an irrelevant and/or poor-quality curriculum can lead to unemployment among educated young people and leave them vulnerable for mobilisation into conflict. Indeed, some of the literature on Sierra Leone also argues that this was the case in the civil war in Sierra Leone (i.e. SLTRC, 2004c; Krech and Maclure, 2003). The findings reveal that Sierra Leonean education continues to be irrelevant and poor quality; although there was a plan to make the system more relevant – by strengthening and expanding the TVET track for pupils who would otherwise become dropouts – it has been poorly implemented in reality (see Section 7.4.2). This was commented on by adult informants as a symbol of the lack of relevance that the educational system in Sierra Leone continues to have. In terms of the quality, the

findings have shown that the quality of the schooling is so poor that it is producing massive failure in the public examinations, particularly the WASSCE (see Section 7.4.2). Pupils' perceptions reflect the reality they face; they complained that even SSS pupils nowadays cannot write a simple letter in English due to the poor quality of teaching. At the same time, it should be noted that pupils recognised some degree of quality and relevance in the education they were receiving; they commented that they felt all the subjects that they were learning were useful and were of reasonable quality and also being able to apply some of the academic skills learned in school in daily life, like calculating rice for selling for the villagers (see Section 8.4.1). Furthermore, it should also be noted that I did not find any evidence that, as per the GMR's argument, the lack of a relevant education with poor quality hinders pupils from attaining employment and thus contributing to educated young people's frustrations.

The third feature in the curriculum that is illuminated as part of the factors that put society at risk is the examination-focused pedagogy. According to Harber (2004) and Davies (e.g. 2004), the examination focus promotes authoritarian teaching (which is at the core of schooling as 'violence,' according to Harber (2004)), promotes excessive competition and stress, and also neglects cultivation of critical thinking. The findings have shown that the curriculum in Sierra Leone is greatly geared towards the public examinations to be taken, i.e. NPSE, BECE, and WASSCE, and the pedagogical style applied in the classrooms focuses on rote memorisation (see sections 7.3.3 and 8.4.2).

On a related note, the fourth feature is the absence of elements in the curriculum that cultivate the critical thinking of pupils. Davies (e.g. 2004; 2005) argues that failure to cultivate critical thinking could mean pupils are vulnerable to the influence of distorted

political messages, as it is critical ability that helps pupils to be resilient against them (see Section 5.5.3). The findings have revealed that the curriculum continues to lack subjects that promote such ability, although there were plans to include it, or more precisely, the cultivation of critical understanding of the history and the war (see Section 8.4.3). Without an opportunity to learn about the war in school, the study also found that young people lacked critical understanding of the root causes of the war. This was seen in their 'positive' representation of ex-President Siaka Stevens who – the academic literature on Sierra Leone suggests – laid the foundation for the state to collapse and conflict to emerge (see Section 8.4.3). However, the study also found that young people did possess and have acquired some ability to critically think in other ways. The young participants exhibited insights with regard to how and why pre-war youth in Sierra Leone got involved in the war. They also had a realistic view on the meaning of conflict and are resilient to a potential mobilisation to it because of their actual experience of the civil war. Their sensible insights into the issue of unemployment may also attest to this (see sections 8.3.2, 8.4.2 and 8.4.3).

The fifth and the sixth features are to do with school ethos, in the form of teachers' regular practice of 'petty' corruption and 'violence,' i.e. corporal punishment and 'sexual abuse'. Corruption by teachers based on patronage may be inferred as one of the symptoms of a society that has high risk of conflict and state collapse from Bates and Reno's explanations. For those thinkers, corruption connected with patronage is one of the symptoms seen when ruling elites are predatory and without care about the provision of social services to citizens (see Section 5.5.4). The findings have shown that pupils frequently commented on the 'hidden fees' requested by teachers on a daily basis. However, the petty corruption found in the study does not fit to the explanations of Bates and Reno, as it was not found to be based on an established patron–client relationship; the pupils in the study claimed that

by and large the teachers were not discriminatory among pupils based on bribes (see Section 8.4.4). On the other hand, 'violence' is identified as an element that promotes violent conflict by Harber (2004) and the GMR (UNESCO, 2011); it is one of the way in which school perpetuates a culture of violence among pupils and, as a result, in the society (see Section 5.5.3). In the study, pupils commented that teachers regularly use corporal punishment (see Section 8.4.4) and it was identified as one of the factors preventing some pupils from attending school (see Section 8.3.1). It should be noted, however, that pupils themselves were not totally against the use of corporal punishment; they saw some use of it as necessary for disciplining purposes (see Section 8.4.4). In addition, the 'sexual abuse' of female pupils by teachers was also commented on as part of their low professionalism. For instance, it was frequently mentioned that teachers 'fall in love' with pupils and the student might be impregnated or will be punished academically if they are refused (see Section 8.4.4).

On a positive note, no feature in the curriculum considered to be relevant to the risk of ethnic or ideological conflict (as in the Second World War) was found, such as elements that actively promote divisions among cultural groups, ultra-nationalism, or militarism. Moreover, the study did not find systematic or serious discrimination against pupils by teachers or among pupils, particularly on the basis of cultural groups, which would have been a risk feature from Bush and Saltarelli's (2000) point of view (see Section 5.5.3). Rather, students generally reported to have been mingling regardless of ethnicity or the regions they come from (see Section 8.4.4).

9.2.3 Governance

As has been mentioned earlier in the thesis, the findings on governance issues are thinner than the three other components. Accordingly, the analysis on governance is brief. Three

features in the governance are illuminated as part of the factors that the literature suggests can put society at risk of conflict. The first is about the ongoing centralised decision-making power in the education sector. As discussed, the centralisation of power is considered to fuel conflict from a variety of perspectives: by Bates and Reno as a primary symptom of the ruling elite turning from a 'guardian' or service provider to a 'predator' (see Section 4.4.1); by the cases of ethnic conflicts and the Second World War where governments came to hold total control over the educational system to manipulate the curriculum and access for political purposes (see Section 3.4); and by the case of Sierra Leone itself where Stevens gradually centralised all sectors under his control (see Chapter Two). The findings have revealed that, in reality, the education system has continued to be centralised because of the poor implementation of the plan to decentralise it. However, the government's intention to decentralise its decision-making power, even attempting to involve communities at the school level, should be made note of as a significant difference from the theoretical perspectives and from other cases discussed above, including the condition of pre-war Sierra Leone. There, the ruling elites are considered to have intentionally centralised and maintained the power for their own sake.

The other two features in relation to governance are connected: the weak institutional capacity and the great degree of tolerance of corruption rooted in patronage in the system. Based on Bates and Reno's explanations, I have suggested that the weak capacity of the state and the tolerance of corruption rooted in patronage as two of the four symptoms that imply ruling elites may be manipulating the state for their political conveniences (see Section 5.5.4). The weak institutional capacity of the state and the educational sector was apparent throughout the findings in the inability to implement structural, curricular and governing reforms in the education sector. In addition, the poor financial capacity of the

state was apparent in its failure to provide satisfactory remuneration to teachers and civil servants in the sector (see Section 8.5). On the other hand, the findings have revealed pervasive corrupt practices in terms of both 'major' ones in the system and 'petty' ones by teachers (see sections 8.5 and 8.4.4). This is also a reflection of the weak capacity of the sector, too; the state does not have the power to curb corruption and civil servants, including teachers, practice corruption to cover their basic needs because they are poorly remunerated. However, as we have seen above, there seems to be a significant difference from Bates' and Reno's explanation in that no evidence was found in the study showing that the ruling elites of Sierra Leone are actively attempting to undermine the state institutions for their own convenience. The study did not find that teachers' petty corruption is rooted in systematic patronage, either.

On a positive note, the finding suggests that accountability – another feature in governance that is a concern in relation to stability – may be increasing (see Section 7.3.4).

9.2.4 Beneficiaries' representations and expectations of education

In my study, the conception of education on its own was not found to contain any feature that is seen to put society at risk. As I will show below, the study did not find any 'negative' goals and expectations of education being envisioned by either policymakers or donors. Furthermore, at the level of beneficiaries, the literature does not suggest that representation or expectations in regard to education on their own can fuel conflict. What the study suggests is that there are two features in the *relationship* between the beneficiaries' representations/expectations of education and the actual conditions of education in Sierra Leone that can be illuminated – in light of the literature – as two features that can put society at risk. They are the discrepancy with regard to the social significance of education *in perception* in light of the actual social significance of

education and the imbalance between the social conception of 'being educated' with the (in)accessibility of education in the country.

In regard to the first feature, the issue there is that young people held unrealistic expectations on the power of education; they believe that if they can get a 'paper' from the tertiary level of education they will be able to find a job. Because of this 'faith' in education, many of them do not even have alternative plans to becoming 'educated,' such as trying to go to TVET institutions to get some practical skills or to find employment immediately after secondary schooling. This is not to say that young people are simply over-emphasising the power of education; as I have already shown, young people do have some realistic insights and strategies. It is also wrong to state that the perceived high social significance of education or the high instrumental value of education are threatening to stability. On the contrary, if the unemployment of educated young people is put aside for a moment, it should be recognised that education is a source of hope for many people; unlike *Sababu,* or patronage, education is a means that they can acquire if they make effort and which may allow them to get out of poverty and to achieve the socioeconomic mobility they crave. It may be why people strive for education, as I have suggested, even knowing that education alone is most likely not sufficient to improve their lives in the way that they wish.

The second feature is the elitist social conception of 'being educated', which is in tension with the inaccessibility of the higher levels of education in Sierra Leone. Despite the fact that very few people manage to proceed to university level (i.e. 2.1% in 2006), the conception of 'being educated' refers to those who have received a 'paper' from a tertiary institution. This is an understandable phenomenon in view of the scanty employment

opportunities in Sierra Leone. Because these opportunities are so scarce, when employment is strictly determined by candidates' credentials, those who can access the opportunities must have exceptionally high credentials. The credentialism seen in Sierra Leone is not strictly like that, with the importance of *Sababu* also influencing employment prospects. Nevertheless, putting that aside, the problem is that such representation of 'being educated' is found to result in *socially* marginalising the majority of young people. That is, those who are not able to climb the education ladder to the tertiary level are considered to be, at best, 'partially educated' – but are more frequently considered to be mere dropouts. In that vein, the study has revealed that these dropouts feel ashamed and unimportant in society (see Section 8.6.2).

Moreover, since tertiary education or completion of SSS with a qualification is out of reach for the majority of young people in Sierra Leone, this means that the majority of young people are marginalised socially as well as economically. Such social marginalisation by level of education does raise a concern, particularly in the Sierra Leonean context. In the pre-war period, it is suggested that it was marginalised youth who were mobilised in the past civil war (Chapter Two). From Gurr's point of view as well, a sense of relative depravation that is wide (or multidimensional) makes a society more prone to violent conflict. Furthermore, if we extend the idea of the opportunity cost of rebellion to social terms, such an elitist notion of 'being educated' may be seen as a cheaper opportunity cost for those without SSS or tertiary education; social marginalisation makes their social opportunity cost low, as well as the economic opportunity cost. Therefore, with the finding that young people are marginalised socially as well as economically in present-day Sierra Leone, the possibility that they might be mobilised in civil unrest, if it were to occur, cannot be denied.

On a positive note, young people are generally found to not be marginalising each other due to differing levels of education and to be maintaining friendships freely among their peers (see Section 8.6.2). The young people who cannot reach the tertiary level of education would be doubly marginalised if they were excluded by both their peers who were able to become 'educated' as well as from society. In turn, such a situation might make their sense of relative deprivation higher, with them feeling doubly frustrated against society in general as well as against their peers. Nevertheless, a potential reverse effect from the strength of friendship among young people in Sierra Leone regardless of their education levels may be worth pondering. This might be a factor behind the coming together of young people with a higher level of education (university students) and 'lumpen youth' to plan the 'revolution' that ultimately evolved to the civil war.

In addition, the study did not find any element in the goals and expectations of policymakers that is identified as part of the factors that can put society at risk of conflict. Education is not envisioned in Sierra Leone as a means to promote ultra-nationalism, war efforts or to control the state by one ethnic group. The three impetuses behind educational reform and reconstruction in Sierra Leone were all well intended. To reiterate, they are the imperative to reform the elements in education that had fuelled the conflict, expectations of education as a key tool in peacebuilding, and the rights discourse (see Section 7.2). Rather, as adult informants commented, the government is trying to provide education as part of social services to its citizens, including free primary schooling for every child and JSS being opened to girls in the Eastern and Northern regions. This seems to show that, in Bates' term, the government and the ruling elites in Sierra Leone are trying to be 'guardians' rather than 'predators.'

9.3 Conclusion of the analysis

The chapter has analysed the findings on the case of Sierra Leone so as to approach the research question. In light of the literature, first of all, education in Sierra Leone seems to contain some features or factors in and around education that are considered to be part of the factors that can put society at risk of conflict. Not only has the analysis identified the features in light of the literature, but it further elucidated the complex 'face' of the features, mostly through the findings at the level of beneficiaries. The complexity was not fully explainable by the existing literature reviewed in the study. Consequently, it is not possible to – in light of the literature – and the study does not try to, draw conclusions about what the complexity of the features implies for the stability of the country although I will contemplate this briefly as part of discussion. Regardless, what is clear is that it is the theoretical and conceptual framework that the study has created and used that made it possible to elucidate the complexity of the factors. Therefore, the efficacy of the framework will be one of the key points to be discussed in the next chapter. Having analysed the findings and approached the research question, therefore, I now turn to the final chapter, discussion and conclusions.

Chapter Ten:
Discussion and Conclusions

10.1 Introduction

This is the final chapter in the thesis and the culmination of the study. Having presented and analysed the findings on the case of Sierra Leone, in the first section I contemplate the implications of the analysis and reflect on education there from the pre-war to post-war periods. Secondly, I will discuss the efficacy of the theoretical and conceptual framework as a way to discuss the theoretical implications of the study. Thirdly, I synthesise the outcomes from the empirical and theoretical explorations in a series of theoretical propositions. The study then concludes by outlining the contributions it has made and also making suggestions for future work in view of its limitations.

10.2 Reflection on Sierra Leonean education from the pre-war to the post-war periods

The study has shown that there are features of the educational system and the context in which education takes place that are relevant to the stability of Sierra Leone, such as in the areas of access, curriculum and quality, governance, and expectations. This has been argued in view of the existing literature reviewed in the study. The issues related to inequalities in educational access (i.e. inequalities in accessing SSS and tertiary education among regions and their alignment with other inequalities and political divisions) are considered to be associated with a risk of ethnic conflict by Stewart's idea of HIs. A general inaccessibility of SSS and tertiary education is considered to be a factor that decreases the opportunity cost of rebellion, in light of Collier et al.'s theory, thereby raising the risk of civil war there. The weakness of the state's institutions, evidenced by poor implementation capacity and lack of control of corruption, are features that illustrate

the vulnerability of the state to the ruling elite's political manipulation, in light of Bates and Reno's ideas, and thus suggest a risk of conflict. Education in Sierra Leone also contains other features that can potentially fuel 'grievances' more broadly in light of Gurr's theory. Although the educational system is not to be blamed entirely, the reality is that young people – both educated and non- or partially educated – continue to be marginalised in present-day Sierra Leone. On the one hand, many of those who manage to access the level of education that entitles them to become 'educated' face difficulties in finding jobs in the areas they want to be in. On the other hand, the great majority of young people are not fortunate enough to become 'educated,' being marginalised economically and socially. Thus, not only are meaningful opportunities scarce for them but also the elitist conception of 'being educated' in Sierra Leone gives them a sense of social inferiority.

These elements the study suggests as features that might be associated with a risk of another conflict are more numerous than other studies have identified; indeed, previous works have only pointed to the gap between expectations and the reality of the power of education as such a factor (e.g. Krech and Maclure, 2003; Maclure and Denove, 2009; Skelt, 1997; see Section 2.1). In this section, I will contemplate what such results may imply for the stability of the country and whether the role that education plays in Sierra Leonean society after the war has fundamentally changed from the pre-war period.

Of course, many of the elements and relationships analysed in the study as being associated with a risk of conflict are not unique to Sierra Leone. For instance, the pervasive unemployment of educated people is a common phenomenon all over West Africa and in the developing world more generally (see Section 4.2.2). Moreover,

inequalities among cultural groups in terms of access to higher levels of learning are also widespread in both developed and developing countries (e.g. UNESCO, 2008; Buchmann and Hannum, 2001; Breen and Jonsson, 2005; Foster, 1980). The elitist conception of education, particularly the stigma attached to TVET, is also not something unique to Sierra Leone but is observed in African countries more generally (c.f. Foster, 1965). Furthermore, many of the elements in the curriculum and in terms of quality, such as an examination-centred system, use of corporal punishment, and an absence of elements to foster pupils' critical thinking ability, are recognised as common features of many educational systems around the world, something also noted by authors who put forth the argument that they are relevant to violent conflict (e.g. Harber, 2004; Davies, 2004; Fuller, 1991).

Then, a logical question that may arise is, what might the results from the study imply for the stability of the country when these elements or relationships have not fuelled a violent conflict in many other countries? As stated earlier, this is not something the study can argue with evidence. For one, it should be clear by now that the mechanisms that result in conflict emerging in a contemporary society are highly complex, so it is not the contention of the study that education can, alone, cause a conflict; instead, education-related features are considered to be merely part of the issues and processes in a society that may trigger, cause or fuel violent conflict. Secondly, as I have emphasised throughout the thesis, the theories that depict the role of education in many ways need further interrogation; the theoretical ideas in the field of education and conflict are not yet established (see Section 3.6) and the theories on contemporary violent conflict's relation to education are largely based on theoretical speculations (see Section 5.3). At the same time, it is not odd that the features in education that are seen as relevant to a risk of violent conflict are not something extraordinary or unique; after all, the root causes of the war in Sierra Leone themselves are

not considered to be extraordinary or unique factors either. Keen (2005) suggests that, 'many of the problems highlighted […] are (alarmingly) not specific to Sierra Leone' (p. 8) and that Sierra Leone might have been 'unlucky' in having a 'combination' of various factors. The concept of 'combination' seems to be the key in understanding the factors that contribute to violent conflict, as this also resonates with the theoretical literature reviewed in the study. According to Stewart (e.g. 2008a), it is when HIs are multidimensional that a conflict is likely to emerge. Similarly, for Gurr (1971), rebellion is considered to break out more when relative deprivation is wide in scope (as well as being acute) (see Section 4.2.2). In Bates' (2008) idea, too, it is the combination of the three key variables that pushes the ruling elites to be predatory, which leads to state collapse and an emergence of violent conflict (see Section 4.4.1). Bates (2008) also notes elsewhere that it is not because Africa has peculiar unavoidable features that had led many of its states to collapse in the late twentieth-century. Rather, what happened is seen as a condition in which the key three variables were pushed to the extent that the 'possibility of political order became vanishingly small' (p. 138).

As a way to discuss the case of Sierra Leone further, I wish to focus on the present conditions of education in Sierra Leone in light of the role that education is considered to have played in the civil war there. Reflecting on this, one key question seems to be whether the elements and relationships around education that are considered to have fuelled the civil war have been reformed or not after the war. The answer is clearly that they have not been reformed comprehensively, as I have argued elsewhere (see Matsumoto, 2011). This is partly due to the poor implementation of the reform plan due to the weak institutional capacity of the sector and, indeed, Sierra Leone as a state. However, even if the reform plan were implemented well, it would not have 'corrected' all the factors

considered to have fuelled the conflict. Certainly, the elitist nature of the education system has been tackled through the expansion of provision, the more relevant curriculum, and the decentralised governance. However, the issue is that two other ways in which education is considered to have fuelled the war (both raised in Chapter Two) do not seem to be approached or even be identified within the post-conflict reform initiatives: the elitism and exclusivity arising from the representation of education as a form of symbolic capital and the failure of education to fulfil people's expectations as such in reality. As a result, while in reality the higher level of education continues to be inaccessible, the elitist conception of education that only recognises college graduates as 'educated people' also continues. Moreover, people continue to have high expectations regarding the power of education, despite the fact that, in reality, it does not seem to be fulfilling the expectations of the majority of 'educated' young people. More fundamentally, the reasons why the two ways in which education has fuelled the war have not been addressed by the post-conflict reform seem to stem from an approach that treats education as a self-contained institution. What policymakers have so far approached are issues inside educational institutions (i.e. inaccessibility, irrelevance and centralisation), but the two issues policymakers are failing to address are about the relationship of education to the wider context.

In a simple sense, policymakers appear to assume that fixing the issues *within* the educational system will be sufficient to alter the role of education in Sierra Leone from a contributor to the civil war to a key contributor to peacebuilding. In reality, however, the educational system and the power of education appear to be largely constrained by and embedded in the conditions of Sierra Leone as a conflict-affected country. The stark condition of the educational system with poor quality and scarce resources to implement

the reform plans can be seen as a clear reflection of the conditions the country faces after the war.

Although the study has elucidated the challenges facing the education system and the grim picture of post-conflict education, there are positive aspects too. As World Bank (2007) states, it is evidence of a 'remarkable recovery' and a real achievement that primary education and JSS have become so widely available to children countrywide. Moreover, some of the effects of the conflict on education are not entirely negative. Indeed, the war helped people who previously did not value education so highly to realise its worth, such as families in rural areas who had not sent girls to school or families who had valued business rather than education (see Section 8.6.1). A professor in education at FBC also shared with me that he is essentially confident that education is playing a positive role in society: 'Even though children are not performing as expected, they go to university. They go out of country. It is height of decline, but there is small hope of children who are achieving' (Interview, 15 December 2010). After all, however limited its power in reality, education – either formal schooling or TVET – is a source of hope for young people. As mentioned earlier (see Section 8.3.2), education is a tool that people can acquire when they strive for it – unlike *Sababu*, which is out of reach for most people. Josephine, who had stopped being a commercial sex worker after getting a scholarship, is a good example (see Section 8.3.2).

Furthermore, this sense of hope seems to be important to the stability of the country. A widely known line in an RUF pamphlet called 'Footpaths to Democracy' (1995) reads: 'a society has already collapsed when majority of its youth can wake up in the morning with nothing to look up for.' Although it remains a contentious issue as to who actually written

those,[31] it still seems to reflect the sense of hopelessness that young people felt in the wake of the conflict. Thus, it seems a good sign that young people after the war are found to be feeling hopeful about their lives and their futures. It should also be remembered that, although on the one hand the young people have overly hopeful expectations regarding the power of education as I have expounded earlier, they also have sensible insights into the conditions they face and do not excessively blame the government for them. Also, they are attempting to find ways to promote their own survival and success and are not merely passive recipients of the conditions that are presented to them. For instance, Alexis, who completed the WASSCE with good results but had no prospect of attending college but who had founded the FECYP, found a job with an international NGO after the end of my fieldwork. This was after two years of volunteering at various NGOs. The NGO hired him on a project with a monthly salary of 250,000 Leone (equivalent to US$ 63 in 2010) (Phone conversation, July 2010). This is a relatively large amount, especially taking into account that he does not have further qualifications.

10.3 Usefulness and limitations of the existing theories and efficacy of the theoretical and conceptual framework

More theoretically, the findings from the study and analysis of them reveal both the usefulness and limitations of the existing theories about how education can fuel the risk of violent conflict. On the one hand, the theories across the social sciences have helped illuminate many elements in and around the educational system in Sierra Leone that could not have been identified from the theoretical ideas in the field of education and conflict. On the other hand, since the social science theories are macro-level theories on the root causes of conflict and not focusing on the education sector, the findings from the micro level in the study have revealed the limitations in the logics behind the theories. The study

[31] The pamphlet was, according to Abdullah (1999, cited in Keen, 2005), actually written by Akyaaba Addai-Sebo, a representative of International Alert in Freetown.

has been able to reveal these because of the theoretical and conceptual framework that has guided the empirical investigation of the case of Sierra Leone. Therefore, in this section, I discuss the usefulness and limitations of the existing theories that the findings illuminate and how the framework has enabled to do so. It is important to note, however, the study did not set itself to test the validity of the existing theories either in education or across social sciences as I have emphasised throughout the study. Thus, it is not the validity, but the usefulness and limitations in understanding the role of education in violent conflict, that I attempt to discuss here.

Empirically, the framework has enabled the study to illuminate features of education in the political and social context of Sierra Leone that might put the society at risk of conflict which educational literature, on its own light, might have failed to do so. This was an important way of looking at the case because, as discussed above, a significant number of features of education that can be associated with a risk of violent conflict in Sierra Leone lie in education's relationship with the wider context more than or at least as well as in the elements in education itself. Furthermore, the context that the framework has enabled an understanding of was not limited to the level of institution (or the national level), but incorporated the level of beneficiaries. Because of that, the framework has enabled the study, for one, to identify a wide range of elements (i.e. access, curriculum, quality, governance and conception) in and around education as features related to education that might put – together with other elements in society – Sierra Leone at a risk of violent conflict. On the other, it has enabled the study to reveal the complexity of each feature that is not explainable by the existing theories, as showed in Chapter Nine.

More theoretically, in turn, the framework has enabled the study to not only adopt but also critically analyse the limitations of the social science theories on contemporary violent conflict in shedding light on the potential role of education in violent conflict. Below, I will discuss the usefulness and limitations of each strand of the theories reviewed, in light of the findings from the study, as this reveals both the uniqueness and the main contributions of the study.

Stewart's idea of HIs has helped the study identify, to an extent, whether and how the educational inequalities are a matter of concern in the case of Sierra Leone, where the inequalities are only found to exist at SSS and tertiary levels (see Section 9.2.1). This is because the idea has clarified the kinds of educational inequalities and the conditions that can lead to violent conflict, which the education literature has fallen short in specifying. More specifically, when there is an inequality among cultural groups in terms of access to 'education' that has social significance, educational inequality can potentially be a relevant factor in violent conflict. The idea of HIs also has helped draw attention to some concurrence found there of educational inequalities with other HIs in society, i.e. inequalities in other social services and political division, as a factor that raises a risk of violent conflict (see Section 9.2.1). This is because the idea clarifies that a society becomes more prone to violent conflict when educational inequalities coincide with other inequalities.

However, the findings from the study also point to three limitations in the idea of HIs in regard to elucidating just how educational inequalities are associated with that risk. The first is that the idea does not explain the implications of the difference between the educational inequalities (or any kind of HIs) in reality and in perception (see sections 8.3.1

and 9.2.1). Similarly, the second limitation is that the idea of HIs does not illuminate the implications when the social significance of education in reality does not match that in perception. The findings here point out that the social significance of education is perceived to be high as an instrument to achieve socioeconomic mobility and yet whether education enables everyone to achieve that in reality was found to be highly questionable (see section 8.3.2 and 8.6.1), something which is a key factor in this context. Lastly, the idea of HIs as a theory falls short in answering why HIs were not the salient factors in arousing the Sierra Leonean war (in other words, why the civil war did not become an 'ethnic' war) despite the fact that the HIs are suggested as having been sharp in many dimensions (Chapter Two). Consequently, the idea of HIs does not provide an answer as to whether the HIs, including educational ones, in post-conflict Sierra Leone pose a threat to stability.

Gurr's idea of relative deprivation enabled the study to identify the discrepancy between the social significance of education in perception from that in reality found in the study as a feature that might be associated with a risk of conflict there (see Section 9.2.4); education is raising the expectations of young people regarding improvements to their life, but this is unlikely to be met in reality for the majority of them and can be a cause of dissatisfaction. As such, the idea of relative deprivation has been useful as a complementary theory in relation to that of HIs in understanding how education can be part of the 'grievances' that give rise to violent conflict. On the whole, while the HIs illuminate the role of educational inequalities among cultural groups (in reality) and their relevance to ethnic conflicts, the idea of relative deprivation sheds light on people's perceptions and expectations of education and their relevance to violent conflict.

Nevertheless, Gurr (1970) falls short in explaining the complex perceptions of young people found in the study. The young people in the study have demonstrated both overly hopeful expectations of the power of education and realistic assessments of it (See sections 8.3.2 and 8.6.1). Further, regardless of the expectations, the study did not find that expectations having been raised by education were a source of frustration against the government, as Gurr argues, as the case here showed that young people did not in fact blame the government for the unemployment of educated people (see Section 8.3.2).

The idea of the opportunity cost of rebellion by Collier et al. has helped the study identify the inaccessibility of secondary-level education, especially SSS, as a feature in contemporary Sierra Leone that might be associated with a risk of violent conflict (see Section 9.2.1). From the findings, its explanation that attending the secondary level of schooling increases the opportunity cost of rebellion seems to be, at least partially, compelling; the secondary level of education (JSS and SSS) provides meaningful opportunities to young men, at least while they are in school, as they are engaged with school activities every day.

Nonetheless, the findings from the study also raise questions about the idea of the opportunity cost of rebellion and the role of education in it. One is that the theory of opportunity cost, like the HIs, seems to fall short in explaining what the pervasive unemployment of those who are highly 'educated' or schooled at the secondary level implies for a risk of violent conflict. For the majority of young people in Sierra Leone, at least among the participants of the study, completing the SSS or getting a paper from a tertiary institute does not seem to bring substantial economic benefits (see sections 7.4.1 and 8.3.2). The completion of SSS is even perceived to be a pause *en route* to tertiary

education, not as something valuable in itself that brings economic benefits, with tertiary education thus being seen as the only kind of education that brings socioeconomic benefits (see Section 8.6.1). Therefore, the explanation that secondary schooling raises the opportunity cost of rebellion might only be compelling in the sense that it provides opportunities to engage the young people while they are in school, and *in perception* they feel they are engaging themselves to complete the level of schooling that gives them the key to accessing tertiary education (which would, finally, bring substantial socioeconomic benefits). In other words, secondary schooling on its own is not perceived to nor does it in reality bring future economic benefits for the *majority of* young people in Sierra Leone, which runs contrary to the explanation of Collier et al.

On a related note, a further question is whether the opportunity cost of rebellion that formal schooling, or more specifically secondary schooling, might increase is only captured in economic terms. Given the finding that the social significance of education in Sierra Leone does not only lie in its economic benefits but also in social status (see Section 8.6.1), the opportunity cost that secondary schooling might entail does not seem to be fully encompassed in economic measures. Put simply, if young people were making rational choices in everyday life only based on economic measures, TVET should be more popular than it is (see Section 8.6.2).

Lastly, the findings from the study raise a more fundamental question about whether the opportunity cost of rebellion alone explains the relevance of the unavailability of secondary schooling to a risk of violent conflict, as it has been found to do by Collier et al. and other youth bulge-related studies (see Section 4.3.2). In fact, the inaccessibility of SSS might be fuelling young people's sense of grievances, not only making their opportunity

cost low. This is because the study has found a sense of inferiority and marginalisation among those who have not been able to complete the SSS (see Section 8.6.2).

Finally, Bates' and Reno's theories about the role of ruling elites and states in an emergence of violent conflict have helped elucidate to some extent how education is one part of the state institutions and public services provided by the state and whether and how the ruling states might neglect it in Sierra Leone. From this, on the one hand, these ideas have helped the study to understand that the risk of conflict in Sierra Leone is lower because the government and the ruling elites are trying to be 'guardians' rather than 'predators;' the state is clearly trying to provide primary schooling for every child at a low cost and JSS access to the historically marginalised girls in the Eastern and Northern regions. On the other hand, it falls short in explaining and understanding the implications of the weak state capacity in the education sector found in the study, given that, here, weak state capacity is not due to current ruling elites' political manipulations as both Bates and Reno posit.

On the whole, the findings reveal that all the theories (grievance, economic and political explanations) have been useful in revealing different features of education that might be associated with a risk of violent conflict, particularly in view of education in the wider context. In other words, employing one theoretical strand alone, e.g. economic explanation, would not have been sufficient to identify all the features of education that the study has *found* to be potentially associated with a risk of violent conflict. At the same time, the findings point out that there are clearly more to be done in order to have a deeper and broader understanding of the role of education in (the risk) of violent conflict.

10.4 Synthesis of theoretical and empirical explorations in the study: Theoretical propositions

Having discussed the implications of the outcomes from the study empirically and theoretically in the previous two sections, I now turn to address the fourth (and final) aim in the study. To remind the reader, it is: to propose a number of general theoretical propositions about the characteristics of educational systems that might put society at risk of conflict.

The propositions are in the four areas of education as depicted in the framework, i.e. structure, curriculum and quality, governance, and conception. They are complex. As my study has explored, many of the propositions, particularly in the structure, involve both people's perception and a differing reality. On the whole, they require examination of the educational system both at the level of institution and at the level of beneficiaries, all in the context of the society in question.

The propositions should not be seen as the definitive statements of how education can fuel violent conflict. In other words, about the extent to which these features might play out, it leaves the question open, because of its complexity. Further, they are not the kind of statements the study provides evidence for. Rather, they should be seen as an *initial base* to be modified as our knowledge on the role of education in violent conflict is advanced both theoretically and empirically. Theoretically, my study did not 'test' the validity of the theories on which it is based and, as discussed above, further interrogations are required. Empirically, deeply contextualised case studies like the study may add other propositions through the examinations of the cases. My intention behind the setting out of the propositions here is to respond to the call by Rappleye and Paulson (2007) mentioned at the outset of the study (see Section 1.3); the field of education and conflict needs to have

common theoretical understandings where knowledge can be unified for it to go beyond its current 'emerging' status and develop further.

The propositions that are stated here are different to a practical check-list or set of assessment indicators. Such tools for delivery of education in conflict-affected countries or fragile states are provided by some development agencies (i.e. EFA FTI Secretariat, 2008; INEE, 2008; USAID, 2006; Berry, 2009). The propositions here are not to be simply supported or rejected as might be the case in check-lists. As my analysis has shown, the examination of each feature and proposition may not, in many cases, lead to a simple conclusion whether the propositions are supported or not; the findings from the examination at different levels or the inter-relation of the factor in people's perceptions and in reality may not coincide. Indeed, the propositions are intended to spur a kind of investigation that pays attention to the 'complex face' of each feature or factor, as the study has demonstrated with the case of Sierra Leone.

The propositions are presented below. I shall not explain each of them as they should now be self-evident, having been discussed in one way or another throughout the thesis.

Table 11: Risk features in the structure of the educational system

	Components	**Propositions**
1	Inaccessibility of education	The level and the kind of education that has social significance in reality and in perception is (and is perceived to be) inaccessible to the majority of beneficiaries.
2	Inequality in access to education	There is (and is perceived to be) a sharp disparity among cultural groups in access to the level and kind of education that has social significance in reality and in perception.
3		The system is (and is perceived to be) 'closed'; certain cultural groups are (and are perceived to be) denied access to the level and kind of education that has social significance in perception and in reality.
4		The government is (and is perceived to be) striving to maintain or widen the disparity in educational access among cultural groups.

5	Issues in educational access in context	Inequality in access to education among cultural groups couples (and is perceive to couple) with inequalities in the political, economic, cultural, and social dimensions.
6		Those who have accessed the level and the kind of education that has social significance in perception do not receive the expected benefits in reality; highly educated beneficiaries are unemployed.
7		The fault for the unemployment of highly educated beneficiaries is entirely attributed to the state and to the educational system.
8		The young people who drop out or have never enrolled in schooling are not (and are perceived not to be) provided with meaningful alternatives to schooling, such as employment or training opportunities.
9	Segregation of different groups	Different cultural groups are (and are perceived to be) segregated into different educational institutions.

Table 12: Risk features in the curriculum and quality of the educational system

	Components	**Propositions**
10	Irrelevance	The curriculum is (and is perceived to be) irrelevant to the socioeconomic reality of society and to the lives of beneficiaries.
11	Low quality	The standard of education is so low that the education system produces massive failure in qualifying exams that determine (and is perceived to determine) pupils' chances of substantial socioeconomic mobility.
12	Political unfairness	The curriculum contains politically unfair elements (e.g. inculcating the superiority of one cultural group or the country, hatred towards other cultural group(s) or country(s), the righteousness of war, or restricting language of instruction) informally or formally, particularly in areas associated with national politics, history and geography.
13	Excessive examination focus	The curriculum is exclusively geared to preparing pupils for examinations and focusing on memorisation of facts.
14	Failure to cultivate critical thinking skills	The curriculum lacks subjects that foster critical thinking ability in pupils, e.g. critical pedagogy or political education, or subjects that foster critical understanding of the causes of the war in the country (if it has had one).
15	Authoritarian pedagogy	Pedagogy is authoritarian in style, which encourages pupils to be 'unquestioning' 'obedient' and 'conformist.'
16	Military training	The curriculum incorporates teaching of how to conduct combat and/or how to support war efforts.
17	'Negative' school ethos	Pupils from certain cultural groups are discriminated against (or favoured by) teachers and school administrators both inside schools and in terms of the socioeconomic opportunities to follow.
18		Pupils from different cultural groups do not mingle and also discriminate against one another.
19		A high degree of petty corruption that is rooted in patronage is practiced on an everyday basis and this affects pupils' school life directly.

20		'Violence' is a daily school experience for pupils, i.e. corporal punishment, teacher's sexual abuse, and fighting among pupils.

Table 13: Risk features in the governance of the educational system

	Components	**Propositions**
21	High centralisation of decision making	Decision-making power in the education system is highly centralised.
22	Weak institutions	The system is dysfunctional overall, e.g. essential equipment is lacking, teachers are absent in teaching hours, and there is no capacity to carry through policies set out at the national level.
23		Teachers and administrators are poorly remunerated to the extent that their jobs do not pay them enough to sustain themselves and/or the payment is habitually and significantly delayed.
24	Lack of accountability	Mechanisms to ensure accountability in the system are absent or neglected.
25	Tolerance of corruption rooted in patronage	A high degree of major corruption rooted in patronage is tolerated in the administration of the educational system (i.e. embezzlement, bribery, transgressing rules and procedures, registration of 'ghost' teachers).

Table 14: Risk features in the conception of the educational system

	Components	**Propositions**
26	Education as a tool for political manipulation	Policymakers envision the educational system as a political tool for the mobilisation of the populace for war or to promote the superiority of a cultural group over the other(s) in the state.
27		Policymakers intentionally neglect education in favour of other political goals.
28	Imbalance between the conception of education and the reality	The social significance of education in perception is mismatched with the social significance of education in reality.
29		The social conception of 'being educated' is elitist in comparison to the general (in)accessibility of formal education.

10.5 Contributions of the study

It now only remains to discuss the contributions and limitations of the study. This section outlines the contributions while the next discusses the limitations. The study has set out to achieve four aims (see Section 1.3). To reiterate, they are:

(1) To explore the theoretical explanations of societies at risk of violent conflict across the social sciences;
(2) To identify – using the interdisciplinary approach – the characteristics of educational systems that are considered to be associated with violent conflict;
(3) To examine which of these characteristics are present in post-conflict Sierra Leone; and

(4) To propose a number of general theoretical propositions about the characteristics of educational systems that might put society at risk of conflict.

The first aim has been addressed in Chapter Four, where I explored the three strands of explanations on the root causes of violent conflict across the social science literature. The study has achieved the second aim in the theoretical and conceptual framework set out in Chapter Five; it depicted the characteristics of educational systems that are suggested to be associated with violent conflict by the literature reviewed in the study, both in educational literature and across the social sciences. The third aim has been accomplished in Chapter Nine by connecting the results from the findings presented in chapters Seven and Eight to the theories reviewed in the study. Last, the fourth aim has been completed in Section 10.4 based on the results from theoretical and empirical explorations in the study. Having achieved these four aims then, the study offers a number of unique contributions to the field of education and conflict, theoretically, empirically and methodologically.

First of all, the study has advanced the existing interdisciplinary approach in the field both theoretically and empirically (see also Smith, 2005; Novelli and Cardozo, 2008; Brown, 2010; Ostby and Urdal, 2010; Hilker, 2010). As has been mentioned, studies have just started to spell out concretely what elements in or relationships around education can fuel the root causes of conflict (Ostby and Urdal, 2010) and the only empirical examination applying the approach is Hikler (2010) on the case of Rwanda (see Section 3.3.3). My study has extended the approach theoretically, through the creation of the framework and the theoretical propositions on elements and constituents in and around education that are considered to be associated with violent conflict. Moreover, it has extended the approach empirically by investigating a new case, Sierra Leone.

Through its interdisciplinary approach, the study provides a more comprehensive understanding of the role of education in violent conflict in four ways. First, the study has identified how education as a social institution can be entangled in the political economy of a country in such a way that allows or promotes the emergence of violent conflict. In contrast, the existing studies have chiefly elucidated the elements *inside* education, examining education as an independent institution in seeking to understand the ways in which education contributes to violent conflict (see Section 3.6).

Second, the study has discussed ways in which education fuels the *root causes* of violent conflict. As discussed in Section 3.6, studies in the field of education and conflict have not addressed how education fuels the causes of violent conflict, whether they are about ethnic conflict, the Second World War, or are general explanations. By engaging with the body of social science literature that tackles the root causes of contemporary violent conflict, the study has identified the ways in which education might fuel the root causes, not only the labels of conflict (such as ethnic divisions or hatred).

Third, the study has identified ways in which education might fuel non-ethnic contemporary conflict. As pointed out in Chapter Three, most studies in the field are focused on understanding how education fuels ethnic conflict, but the ways in which education serves to do this in non-ethnic conflict cases have been little discussed. The study has identified a number of features of education that might make it a part of the factors fuelling non-ethnic conflict, drawing on theoretical explanations from across the social sciences that speak to non-ethnic contemporary conflict.

Fourth, the study has shown how the perceptions and experiences of the beneficiaries of education are relevant factors in understanding the role of education in violent conflict and the risk of it. This has become apparent in the analysis of the findings in Chapter Nine. On the other hand, existing studies in the field of education and conflict have focused on examining the policies and provisions of education, not the actual education as it is received and perceived by beneficiaries (see Section 3.6).

Empirically, the study makes a number of contributions to knowledge about Sierra Leone. The most important contribution is that it has advanced the understanding of features in education that may – together with other elements – put society at risk of further conflict there. Other studies have elucidated the reality that young people's expectations regarding the power of education to enable substantial socioeconomic mobility are not achievable in reality as a factor that might fuel another cycle of conflict there (see Section 2.1). The study does concur with this argument to some extent, but has identified other features related to educational access, curriculum, quality, governance, and the conception of education that also play a part (see Chapter Nine). This has been achieved because of the study's engagement with the theoretical literature, while others have only compared the realities of post-conflict education with pre-war education.

The study also adds sophistication to the understanding of the features in education that might be associated with a risk of conflict based on the complex accounts by young people that the study has accessed. For instance, with regards to the unemployment of educated youth, the study elucidates that young people do not only have overly hopeful expectations on the power of education but also realistic insights; the young people in the study did not expect the government to provide a public-sector job upon them becoming 'educated' nor

blamed the government excessively for the pervasive unemployment of youth (as the pre-war youth are considered to have done).

More generally, the study adds new knowledge on post-conflict education in Sierra Leone. The findings from the study largely resonate with the dire picture of education in post-conflict Sierra Leone painted by other academic studies (see Section 2.1), yet the study has provided a more nuanced account of the young people's expectations and experiences of formal schooling in Makeni, a place where no previous studies have been conducted.

The theoretical and empirical contributions mentioned above were made possible by the methodological practices adopted. In particular, the study showed that young people's perceptions and experiences regarding education can be studied directly (not relying on views of teachers or parents on their behalf) in a way that produces the relevant and quality data needed to approach the research question. Among the methodological practices the study has employed, I highlight the holding of regular group research sessions with the young people. This is something unique in the field of education and conflict, where previous studies have not focused on beneficiaries' perceptions and experiences as mentioned above. Moreover, this approach has allowed the study – within a limited timeframe – to actualise three methodological principles that I considered essential in terms of collecting data from the young people. They are rapport with the informants, triangulation of data, and flexibility in the data collection methods.

I conducted regular research sessions with three groups of young people separately over three months (see Section 6.4). Various themes have been addressed using different methods, i.e. individual interviews, FGDs, and visual and written methods. These regular

research sessions were vital in building a rapport with the young people in a limited time. As previous ethnographic studies with conflict-affected children and young people suggest doing (e.g. Boyden and de Berry, 2004), I have employed participant observation to some extent in the study. However, as the time was limited and as I was dealing with a large group of young people who were not in one institution, it was not possible to observe or build a rapport with everyone. The holding of regular group research sessions made it possible to build relationships with the participants as I collected data over time. Not only during the research sessions themselves, but also the time before and after them gave me the chance to interact and build trustful relationships with the informants. The girls' accounts on fee payments by their boyfriends came up when we walked back home together after a research session, and a few girls confided that they have a son in one of individual interviews in the last sessions.

Moreover, the holding of regular research sessions allowed the triangulation of data. I addressed essentially the same theme through various methods, through dissimilar phrasing of questions and at different research sessions. The realistic insights of the young people regarding unemployment among educated people were captured when I approached the issue through a different phrasing of questions at a separate session to the one where I encountered their overly hopeful expectations. Another example is the combination of individual interviews with the use of visual and writing methods, which allowed me to have two kinds of data on the same topic and also to gather better quality data, because writing or drawing gave the informants to think about the theme through a practical task before I talked to them.

Lastly, the holding of research sessions allowed flexibility in the research, which was essential in collecting data ethically from groups of young people with various literacy levels in a sensitive setting (see Section 6.7). As expected, some, particularly out-of-school informants, were not comfortable with drawing or writing methods, and some phrasings of the questions were not clear to the informants. I was thus able to adjust to the informants' comfort level and their ways of communicating in English by modifying some methods and phrasing of questions through the holding of multiple sessions with them.

10.6 Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research

As a way to close the thesis, I discuss the limitations of the study and make suggestions for future investigations. The study has limitations, just as any other study would, especially an independent doctoral study. I consider there to be two kinds of limitations: aspects in the study that could benefit from further theoretical and empirical interrogations and elements that have been intentionally omitted from the study but are important for future studies to tackle so as to encourage further knowledge development in the area.

There are elements in the study that could benefit from further interrogation. One is education's link with the Second World War. As mentioned, my review of the literature on education's role in it is far from exhaustive (see Section 3.4). The purpose there was to provide a glimpse of the knowledge about the role of education in the Second World War that is offered by educational historians, given that this body of literature is often ignored in the field of education and conflict. I believe that I have only scratched the surface in this respect. At the same time, it is also recognised – as is the role of education in violent conflict in general – as an under-researched area, which many of the educational historians

in Lowe (1992) recognise (see Section 3.4). As Lowe (1992) put it, this area is 'crying out for further study' (p. vii).

The second element that could benefit from further interrogation is the way that social science literature on the root causes of violent conflict has been drawn in the study. This may sound contradictory, as it has also been cited as the main contribution of the study. However, I must admit that it has been a great challenge to draw on the theoretical literature from the fields outside my speciality, education. The number of studies on the root causes of contemporary conflict is rapidly growing, especially in the last decade. There is a wealth of theoretical work in the area already and I anticipate it will continue to grow, being such a vibrant area of study across the social sciences. As this body of literature grows, it would be valuable to revisit the ways I have drawn on the literature on the root causes of violent conflict and build on it, both in depth and breadth. For instance, it may be worthwhile to explore whether education may play a role in other factors of contemporary conflict that I did not examine, such as environmental issues (including land issues) (e.g. Homer-Dixon, 1994), regime types (e.g. democratic or authoritarian regimes of the state) (e.g. Hegre, 2003; Hegre et al., 2001), or natural resources (e.g. Ross, 2004) (see Section 4.1) .

The third element that could benefit from further interrogation is my argument in Chapter Two about how education is considered to have fuelled the civil war in Sierra Leone. This remains a contested area (see Section 2.4) and, originally, I had developed a rather partial view on the role of education in the war based on some of the existing studies (i.e. Richards, 1996; Peters and Richards, 1998; Keen, 2005; Wright, 1997; and, to some extent, Humphreys and Weinstein, 2004; 2006); I had assumed that education was an important

agenda for the RUF in relation to its intellectual origin and that educational grievance was a great part of the young people's fury against the state, which encouraged many of them to join the RUF. I had also assumed, like some of the writers mentioned above (e.g. Richards, 1996; Wright, 1997), that the RUF's attacks on educational institutions were premeditated because of their education-related grievances. However, I came to develop a fuller picture of how education may have fuelled the war during the fieldwork, mainly by collecting some interview data. The result of this is the argument presented in the study (Chapter Two) and in Matsumoto (2011). Yet these works of mine are not investigations centred on the role of education in the war but rather concentrate on present-day, post-war Sierra Leone. Similarly, other educational studies that touch on the role of education in the war are not centred on understanding it (e.g. Wright, 1997; Skelt, 1997; Krech and Maclure, 2003; Paulson, 2006). This is despite the fact that, as stated, many studies on the war touch on the role of education in it. I believe, therefore, that it would be valuable to have more on the pre-war educational system and its relationship with the war, although I recognise the practical challenges of doing so; many of the pre-war education documents are burnt or lost and already a decade has passed since the end of the war.

The fourth limitation is that the study did not *test* theories on the role of education in violent conflict, as mentioned throughout the thesis. This includes the theoretical ideas in the field of education and conflict, the theories on contemporary conflict, and the theoretical propositions that the study itself has put forward. The study has shown that the theoretical ideas in the field of education and conflict are yet to be established, that there are ambiguities in the explanations offered by the social science literature on the role played in contemporary conflict, and that theoretical propositions set out in the study are not statements that the study then provides evidence for. Future studies – both deeply

contextualised case studies and quantitative studies – would be necessary to test the theories and advance our knowledge, although of course this is a challenging task scientifically.

In addition, there are two significant elements I have judged to be outside the scope of the study but that I recognise as being vitally important. One is a gender perspective. Davies (2004) considers gendered violence and inequalities as one of the three roots of violent conflict (See Section 3.3.3) and some quantitative studies (e.g. Barakat and Urdal, 2009; Bussman, 2007 and Melander, 2005, cited in Ostby and Urdal, 2010) suggest that gender equality in education is associated with a lower risk of conflict. In my study, I did not focus on this either theoretically or empirically, although the distinct struggles of girls have surfaced in the study: for instance, the struggles of Josephine who used to be a commercial sex worker and has a son or a number of female SSS pupils with children who continue to go to school. I have not found any empirical works in the educational literature that have attempted to explore empirically the link between gender (in)equality and the risk of conflict, although there are works on gender issues in education in conflict-affected contexts (e.g. Kirk, 2007) and in the Sierra Leonean context (see, for instance, Maclure and Denov, 2009; Sharkey, 2008). This could be an important area in terms of advancing understanding of the role of education in violent conflict and in the post-conflict context with regards to a risk of further conflict.

Another area I did not include but which is an important area for study in the field is the relationship between education and terrorism. As I have described in Chapter Three, my study treats it a distinct phenomenon and thus as outside its remit. Nevertheless, not only is the risk of terrorism the major rationale behind donors' engagement with 'fragile states'

but is also behind the donors' increased investment in education in such states and conflict-affected countries (see Section 3.2). Although I maintain the stance that they are different in nature, it would nevertheless be extremely valuable to compare and contrast the ways in which education can fuel violent conflicts (of different types) and terrorism in low-income and weak states, as well as to seek to understand the reasons why.

* * * * *

On the whole, the relationship at the core of the thesis, between education and the risk of violent conflict in low-income and weak states, remains under-researched. The rationale for this research has been framed by the contention that studies in the area are greatly needed in the still-emerging field of education and conflict, as well as by a desire to show how we may approach such work. In addition to the empirical exploration of the case of Sierra Leone, the study has advanced the interdisciplinary approach to the topic and provided a framework and propositions that might serve as a theoretical and conceptual base for future studies to build on. Thus, the contribution of this research would be enhanced if there were to be more similar studies, those that explore the relationship empirically in various contexts (including in different regions in Sierra Leone) and those that interrogate and further advance the theoretical and conceptual base the study has provided.

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Appendix A: Consent form and information sheet given to participants in the study

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15 Norham Gardens, Oxford OX2 6PY
Tel: +44(0)1865 274024 Fax: +44(0)1865 274027
general.enquiries@education.ox.ac.uk www.education.ox.ac.uk

Director Professor John Furlong

Role of education in the lives of conflict-affected adolescents in Sierra Leone

Consent Form

If you agree to participate, please sign below and give it to the researcher.

- I have read and understood the information on this study and have had the opportunity to ask questions and get satisfactory answers about this study.
- I understand that I can withdraw from the study without any consequences at anytime simply by informing the researcher of my decision.
- I understand who will have access to identifying information provided and what will happen to the data at the end of this project.
- I understand that this project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee.

I agree to participate in this study.

Your Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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Director Professor John Furlong

Role of education in the lives of conflict-affected adolescents in Sierra Leone

Information for Participants (adolescents)

The purpose of the study
Through this study I seek to gain a deep understanding about the role of education in the lives of young people who have lived through armed conflict in Sierra Leone. I will focus particularly on the experiences, needs and aspirations of adolescents in the age range 12-18.

Why am I being asked to take part?
I want to learn directly from young people about your experiences of school, your ideas about education in Sierra Leone, and about the lives of young Sierra Leoneans at this time, including the opportunities for employment.

Why take part?
I cannot guarantee any direct benefit from participation in the study. However, I hope that the information I gather will help improve the educational programmes for children and young people in Sierra Leone in the future.

How will I participate?
There are many ways you can participate. I will be asking a number of young people to take part in informal interviews – either alone or with friends or family members. I will hold meetings with small groups of young people when we will share ideas together. I also hope to join some school classes and participate with you in other daily activities. You do not need to answer questions that you do not wish to. You can ask me any questions or discuss any worries you might have before, during, or after you take part in any activities. You can change your mind and withdraw from the research at any time. If you decide not to participate it will not affect the education or any other services that you are receiving.

Will my name be used?
When it comes to publication, without your prior permission I will not use personal names or other personal information by which you might be

identified. I will make every effort, but I cannot guarantee that all readers will not be able to identify you. We can discuss any concerns you might have about this at any time.

Who will have access to the personal data provided?
I am the only person who will have access to individual data. In my notes the identity of each interviewee will be concealed through the use of a code that only I will know.

What will happen to the information at the end of the project?
All data will be held securely. The UK Data Protection Act (1998) will provide a legal basis for withholding personal information by which participants may be identified. Material from interviews will be used for the following purposes:

1) As the basis for my doctoral thesis.
2) For the production of reports for collaborating organisations
3) In the creation of academic articles to be published in international journals in the fields of education and social studies.

I will be happy to provide copies of published material to all participants in the research.

Ethics
This project has been designed in accordance with the Ethical Principles of the British Educational Research Association and the Association of Social Anthropologists (UK and Commonwealth). It has been approved by the Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC), University of Oxford.

Contact for Further Information or Follow-up
For any further information, please feel free to contact me:

Mitsuko Matsumoto, Doctoral Student,
Department of Education, 15 Norham Gardens, Oxford, OX2 6PY, UK
email: Mitsuko.Matsumoto@education.ox.ac.uk
Phone (in Sierra Leone): 076 296 953

Or contact my co-supervisors:

David Johnson, Reader, Department of Education
David.Johnson@education.ox.ac.uk; or

Jason Hart, Senior Research Officer and Departmental Lecturer,
Department of International Development Jason.Hart@qeh.ox.ac.uk

If you agree to participate, please sign the separate consent form, and give to the researcher.

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Director Professor John Furlong

Role of education in the lives of conflict-affected adolescents in Sierra Leone

Information for Participants (adults)

The purpose of the study
Through this study I seek to gain a deep understanding about the role of education in the lives of young people who have lived through armed conflict in Sierra Leone. I will explore the role and potential of education in this period of rebuilding following the end of the conflict, focussing particularly on the experiences, needs and aspirations of adolescents in the age range 12-18.

Why am I being asked to take part?
Though the main participants in my study are adolescents, I am interested in interviewing adults who are working with or have regular contact with them. I am interested in learning from parents, teachers, educational administrators, NGO workers, governmental officials, and community leaders. In particular, I would like to learn about your views on the role of education in the lives of adolescents, especially in relation to the challenges of building Sierra Leonean society following the end of the conflict

Why take part?
I cannot guarantee any direct benefit from participation in the study. However, it is my plan that the information I gather will help improve the educational programmes for children and young people in Sierra Leone in the future.

How will I participate?
In most cases, I would like to conduct a one-to-one interview with you. You do not need to answer questions that you do not wish to and you are free to end the interview at any time. You can ask me any questions or concerns you might have before, during, or after the interview. With your permission, I may record the interview on an audio tape. We will discuss this before the start of the interview.

Will my name be used?

When it comes to publication, I will not use personal names or other information – such as professional titles – by which you might be identified without your prior permission. While I will make every effort to ensure the anonymity of all participants I cannot guarantee that all readers will be unable to identify you. We can discuss any concerns you might have about this at any time.

Who will have access to the personal data provided?
I am the only person who will have access to individual data. In my notes the identity of each interviewee will be concealed through the use of a code that only I will know.

What will happen to the information at the end of the project?
All data will be held securely. The UK Data Protection Act (1998) will govern all use of the interview material obtained by me, providing a legal basis for withholding information by which participants in the research may be identified. Material from interviews will be used for the following purposes:

1) As the basis for my doctoral thesis.
2) For the production of reports for collaborating organisations
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Contact for Further Information or Follow-up
For any further information, please feel free to contact me:

Mitsuko Matsumoto, Doctoral Student,
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Or contact my co-supervisors:

David Johnson, Reader, Department of Education
David.Johnson@education.ox.ac.uk; or

Jason Hart, Senior Research Officer and Departmental Lecturer,
Department of International Development Jason.Hart@qeh.ox.ac.uk

Appendix B List of adult informants

Category		Position	Location	Interviewed date	Analysis
Policymakers	1	Deputy Minister, MEST	Freetown	14 Dec. 2009	√
	2	Officer, EFA in charge	Freetown	14 Dec. 2009	√
	3	Officer, basic education in charge	Freetown	17 Nov. 2009	√
	4	Officer from Bombali DEO	Makeni	4 Dec. 2009	√
	5	The former Minister of Education	Freetown	16 Feb. 2009	√
Researchers	6	Professor, History	Freetown	14 Dec. 2009	√
	7	Director, Peace and Conflict Studies	Freetown	15 Dec. 2009	√
	8	Professor, Education	Freetown	15 Dec. 2009	√
	9	Director, a university in Makeni	Makeni	5 Sep. , 1 Dec. 2009	√
SLTU	10	President	Freetown	25 Oct. 2009	√
	11	Bombali District Chairman	Makeni	7 Oct. 2009	√
Principals Conference	12	President	Freetown	26 Oct. 2009	√
	13	Bombali District Chairman	Makeni	29 Oct. 2009	√
Missionaries	14	Director, Education Office of the Catholic Mission	Makeni	13 Oct. 2009	√
	15	Director, Muslim Educational Office	Makeni	26 Nov. 2009	√
	16	Staff, Educational Office of a Christian mission	Freetown	15 Dec. 2009	
NGO	17	National staff, UNICEF	Freetown	27 Oct. 2009	√
	18	Staff, UNDP	Freetown	23 Aug. 2009	√
	19	Regional Director, HANCI-SL	Makeni	16 Sep. 2009	√
	20	Project Coordinator, Street Girls Project, HANCI-SL	Makeni	26 Nov. 2009	√
	21	Regional Director, DCI	Makeni	30 Nov. 2009	√
	22	Regional Director, Plan	Makeni	26 Nov. 2009	√
	23	Director, CDHR	Makeni	25 Nov. 2009	
Other sectors	24	Director, ACC	Freetown	26 Oct. 2009	√
	25	Assistant Superintendent of Police, Director of Media & PR	Freetown	15 Dec. 2009	√
	26	Local Unit Commander, Police	Makeni	25 Nov. 2009	√
Journalists	27	President, SLAJ	Freetown	15 Dec. 2009	√
	28	Northern Region Chair, SLAJ	Makeni	19 Sep. 2009	√
	29	Northern Region Vice-Chair, SLAJ	Makeni	8 Oct. 2009	
	30	Northern Region Secretary-General, SLAJ	Makeni	31 Aug. 2009	
	31	Sub-editor, Premier News	Freetown	27 Oct. 2009	
Teachers and other educationalists	32	Principal, MCSS	Makeni	2 Dec. 2009	√
	33	Teacher, MCSS	Makeni	2 Dec. 2009	√
	34	Training Manager, TVIM	Makeni	1 Dec. 2009	√
	35	Dean, TVIM	Makeni	14 Oct. 2009	√
	36	Teacher (Masonry), TVIM	Makeni	1 Dec. 2009	√
	37	Teacher (Home and Management), TVIM	Makeni	1 Dec. 2009	

	38	Principal, a Christian school for girls	Makeni	1 Dec. 2009	
	39	Principal, Magburaka Government Secondary School for Boys	Makeni	22 Sep. 2009	
	40	Principal, Bo Government Secondary School	Bo	8 Dec. 2009	
Parents	41	Worker at a local NGO	Makeni	22 Oct. 2009	√
	42	Worker at a NGO and journalist	Makeni	7 Oct. 2009	
Community leaders	43	Paramount Chief	Makeni	24 Nov. 2009	√
	44	Board member, MCSS	Makeni	27 Nov. 2009	
Young adults	45	A worker at city council and ex-teacher	Makeni	24 Sep. 2009	
	46	Journalist	Makeni	13 Oct. 2009	
	47	Worker at a local NGO	Makeni	9 Oct. 2009	√
Youth related	48	District Chairman, Youth Commission	Makeni	5 Oct. 2009	
	49	Youth Representative, National Youth Commission	Freetown	15 Dec. 2009	

Appendix C-1: List of questions asked to adult informants[32]

General questions

1. How do you see the conditions of educational system in present day Sierra Leone?
2. How do you see the major challenges that education faces currently?
3. How is it compared to the condition that prevailed before the war? In terms of access, structure, quality, and curriculum?

Education and the civil war

4. Looking at the relationship between education and the past civil war, some people claim that education played a contributive factor.
    1. What do you think about the argument that educational system produced drop-outs and that they got involved in conflict?
    2. Why do you think many drop-outs were mobilised? Is it because of the faults in education?
    3. What do you think about the argument that, at the beginning of the conflict, young people joined because of RUF's promise of free education? If you agree, why do you think it was attractive to many young people?
    4. Is there any other link between education and the civil war?
5. Do you think the issue of drop-out and unemployment has been addressed adequately after the war?
    1. Do you think that young people are frustrated to the extent that it is alarming to the stability of society?
6. At the present day, how do you see the effects of conflict on educational system?
7. Do you think that young people have critical mind due to the experience of war (as some claim)? How and why (not)?

Access

7. Do you think everyone benefit from the system?
    1. Do you think access to schooling has been reformed sufficiently after the war?
    2. Do you think the gaps in educational opportunities between the Southern region and the Northern region have lessened?
    3. Do you think these gaps have bearing on increasing tensions in society? What do you think might happen if this condition continues?
8. Do you think there are many who want to continue schooling but drop out unwillingly?
    1. Why do you think they drop out?
    2. Is it an alarming phenomenon to the stability of society?
9. How is the implementation of the Girls Education programme?

Curriculum

10. How relevant do you think is the curriculum of schooling at present to the reconstruction and development of Sierra Leone?
11. How does examination system play a role on this?
12. Does the curriculum cover topics important to the modern forms of employment?
13. Does the curriculum deal with the history of war? Should they?
14. About the young people's positive portrayal of Siaka Stevens: Why do you think that they have shared such views? Do you think it is important that young people and children learn a more balanced view?

[32] It is important to note that I did not ask all the questions listed here to every adult informant. All the interviews with adult informants were semi-structured, meaning that I have modified some questions, added follow-up questions, and selected relevant questions to ask depending on the informant.

Society and education

15. How do you describe the implications of 'being educated' in Sierra Leone, socially, economically, and politically?
    1. Has it changed overtime (especially in relation to the rapid expansion of educational opportunities)?
    2. (If they think it has changed) What would be the effect of this change on society?
16. How do you see the issue of corruption in the educational system?
    1. Is it getting better or worse? Is it alarming?
    2. Do you think corruption in education promotes corruption in society, or corruption in society is reflected in education?
17. How do you think people perceive the role of teachers in Sierra Leone?
    1. Has the perception changed overtime?
    2. Why do you think teachers solicit money from students these days?
    3. Do you think the war relates to the corruption by teachers in any way? How?
18. SABABU and education:
    1. How would you describe the concept of Sababu in Sierra Leone?
    2. Do you think it is alarming to the stability of society that people feel they need to have *Sababu* (otherwise they cannot get employment)?
    3. Do you think *Sababu* that comes from schooling is powerful in Sierra Leone? How is it compared to *Sababu* by family or by tribal group?

Economy and education

14. Do you think the gap between education and employment is increasing or decreasing?
15. Does the gap have bearing on raising tensions in society?
16. Can education play any role, in improving the economic conditions or employment opportunities?

Politics and education

17. How do you think the relationship between politics and education in Sierra Leone now?
18. Does education play some role in politics? How?
19. Does the regional divide in current national politics affect education anyway? How?
20. About Bo School in the south and Magburaka School in the north. Does it relate to the regional divide in national politics? How?

Appendix C-2: List of themes covered with young informants[33]

I. Basic information about each informant

1. Gender
2. 'Tribe' (ethnicity)
3. Age
4. The place of origin
5. Who he/she lives with
6. Who pays the fee
7. How do you pay the 'extra fees' for extra lessons, pamphlets, etc?
8. Educational level of parents
9. Number of brothers and sisters
10. Educational level of their sisters/brothers
11. Frequency of meal per day
12. whether he/she eats lunch at school

II. Role of education in the lives of young informants

1. The places they regularly visit (through social mapping excercise)
2. Life before and after school
3. Reasons for choosing to attend SSS level of schooling (or TVET institute, for those who go to OIC
4. What they like (and do not like) about formal schooling
5. What they like (and do not like) about TVET
6. Their aspirations for further education/training
7. Reasons for dropping out from school (for those who dropped out)
8. Things that those who dropped out think they need in order to go back to school

III. Implication of being educated

1. Their role model
2. The 'habits' of somebody who is educated
3. Their perceptions on the level of schooling necessary for them to be considered as an educated person in the community
4. The 'habits' of somebody who is not educated
5. The habits of teachers
6. Things they think they perceive they can do if they have the chance of getting 'educated'
7. Things they think they perceive they cannot do if they do not have the chance to be educated
8. Their perceptions and friendship with young people who have different educational opportunities, e.g. students in formal schooling were asked about friends at TVET institutes and out of school friends

IV. Education and social/economic aspiration

1. People who discouraged them from going to school/TVET
2. Things that discouraged them from going to school/TVET
3. People who encouraged them to go to school/TVET
4. Things that encouraged them to go to school/TVET
5. Their social and economic aspirations after schooling/TVET training

[33] It is important to note that these are the basic themes I have explored with each young informant either individually or by group. Some themes listed here are rather simple (that can be addressed by one question) while others are more complex, which I have approached with a series of questions.

6. Their level of confidence about getting a job after completion of schooling/TVET training
7. Their perceptions about means through which Sierra Leoneans acquire high social status
8. Their perceptions about means through which Sierra Leoneans become rich
9. Their perceptions on whether/how education relates to the acquisition of social and economic mobility
10. The relationship between education and *Sababu*
11. Their perceptions on the unemployment issue of educated youth

V. Structure of education

1. **Access**
   - **i.** Their perception of accessibility of schooling (to what level to whom it is accessible)
   - **ii.** Their perceptions of reasons why some drop out or not come to school
2. **Inclusiveness**
   - **i.** Their perceptions about the level of interactions in school among pupils from different backgrounds, i.e. social, ethnic/cultural, and economic backgrounds
   - **ii.** Their perceptions and experiences of discrimination among pupils in schooling

VI. Curriculum and quality of education

1. Curriculum
   - i. Relevance and usefulness of schooling in their daily life
   - ii. Quality of schooling
   - **iii.** Their perceptions of the 6-3-3-4 system (whether it is a good system, etc.)
   - **iv.** Their perceptions of the examination system, i.e., NPSE, BECE, and WASCCE (whether it is a fair and good way to evaluate their abilities, etc.)
2. School ethos
   - **i.** The use of corporal punishment, e.g. use of cane by teachers, in school (their experiences and perceptions about it)
   - **ii.** Their perceptions and experiences of discrimination by teachers in schooling

VII. Ideal education

1. Generally, what would be the priority if you were to change the educational system?
2. Would you like to keep the shift system? Why or why not?
3. What teaching style would you want teachers to use?
4. Should students pay school fee? If so, how much? Why or why not?
5. How should students' performance be assessed? Would you like external exams or internal exams? Why?
6. What events or extracurricular activities should school have?
7. Should teachers use cane to discipline pupils? Why or why not?

VIII. Follow-up questions/themes

1. Social, economic and political benefits (perceived and actual) of being educated, and the extent to which young people value each
2. Different ways in which young people perceived to gain *Sababu,* and the role education plays there.
3. After the war do you think young people have more critical mind, meaning, if somebody comes in again to Sierra Leone now and ask them to take up a gun, do you think they will fight? Why or why not?
4. Their views on the current government and the president, and its support for education and unemployment issues
5. Their views on the past presidents, i.e. Stevens and Momoh