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Jemma Giberson April 11, 2017

Patriarchy and Sexual Violence in Civil Conflicts: A Theoretical Analysis of Sierra Leone

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Abstract
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This work aims to test the relationship between patriarchy and the prevalence of sexual violence perpetrated in civil war, with the hypothesis that the two will be positively correlated. Based on an in-depth analysis of combatant groups in Sierra Leone, the hypothesis must be rejected in favor of the null hypothesis: patriarchy and sexual violence are not positively correlated. However, the qualitative analysis does yield an interesting potential trend. Following the 1999 RUF assault on Freetown ("Operation No Living Thing") when levels of RUF perpetuated sexual violence spiked, the other combatants groups saw increased levels of perpetrated sexual violence, suggesting there may be a domino effect amongst multiple combatant groups namely that, as one group becomes increasingly sexually violent, the others follow suit. While this trend will need further study to confirm, the fact remains that there does not seem to be any substantial tie between patriarchy and the level of sexual violence perpetrated by Sierra Leonean combatant groups.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence in warfare is a phenomenon as old as warfare itself. Zechariah 14:2 in the Old Testament of the Christian Bible says: "For I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped" (Zech. 14:2, New International Version). The Vikings and the Mongols were feared for their practices of looting and plundering conquered cities, killing the men, raping the women, and leaving nothing but destruction in their wake. For centuries wartime rape was considered merely an inevitable side effect of armed conflict and in some cases, it was the expectation and even the right of the victor. The very definition of what constitutes rape has evolved over time, moving from being defined as "when the man was someone other or inferior to the husband of the victim" to "an understanding of rape and sexual violence as instances of violence, domination, and control aimed at maintaining patriarchy and women's subordinate position within the social order" (Skjelsbaek, 2001, 212).

International discourse surrounding sexual assault has shifted significantly in recent decades. It is no longer understood as the product of uncontrollable sexual desire but as an expression of power and control. This shift in rhetoric has led to a similar change in the way sexual assault in warfare is understood. No longer is it the actions of a few rogue soldiers overcome by bloodlust and the desire to loot and plunder but a comprehensive, calculated military strategy to delegitimize, humiliate, and dominate the enemy (see Skjelsbaek, 2001; Sjoberg 2013). The question still remains however: why do some groups rape and others do not? What makes certain conflicts experience higher levels of sexual violence than others? Does societal patriarchy prior to the onset of

conflict influence the usage of rape in war? This work will attempt to establish a causal relationship between patriarchy and sexual violence in civil conflicts, posing the question, does the presence of a strong patriarchy make sexual assault more likely in civil conflicts?

1.1 Significance

In the early 1990s the world watched in horror as news broke of the horrific rape camps established by Serbian forces in the former Yugoslavia. Never before had such calculated, systematic sexual assault been seen on such a massive scale. A few years later in 1994, similar events transpired in Rwanda as an estimated 500,000 Tutsi women were raped by members of Hutu militia groups in the name of ethnic cleansing (Human Rights Watch, 1996). The global uproar was immediate. There were calls for punishment for such widespread sexual violence and Serbian and Hutu actions were internationally condemned. The sad truth, however, is that for many survivors, it came too little too late. The aim of this work and others of this genre is to contribute to a body of scholarship with very tangible and important real world implications. If sexual violence in war can be explained, conceivably someday it could be prevented.

Despite the existence of wartime sexual violence throughout the history of human warfare, it is not until the early 1990's that it takes a place of importance at the top of the international agenda. Both the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda represented significant turning points. The Tribunal for Rwanda set the legal precedent that wartime sexual assault constituted a crime against humanity, as Jean-Paul Akayesu became the first person to be found guilty of a crime against humanity rather than simply a crime of war. The final

judgment stated: "…it appears clearly to the chamber that the acts of rape and sexual violence, as other acts of serious bodily and mental harm committed against the Tutsi, reflected the determination to make Tutsi women suffer and to mutilate them even before killing them, with the intent being to destroy the Tutsi group while inflicting acute suffering on its members in the process… From time immemorial, rape has been regarded as spoils of war. Now it will be considered a war crime" (Schabas, 2009, 186). Rape, in the eyes of international law, was no longer simply an inevitable side effect of war, but a crime for which both groups and individuals could be tried and found guilty. A new dialogue was generated in which the existence of wartime sexual assault was legally codified as an affront to humanity at large and could be confronted as an epidemic rather than simply an unfortunate inevitability. In this context, sexual violence is more than merely a crime against women; it is a crime against humanity at large and must be treated as such.

1.2 Contributions

This work does not represent the first time that sexual assault in warfare has been studied and analyzed. Particularly within the last twenty years, there was been an explosion of scholarship attempting to explain why some armies rape when others do not, beginning with the cases of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Rwanda. Since that time, a multitude of new cases of extreme wartime sexual violence have emerged, one of the most prominent and extreme being Sierra Leone. Much of the existing work has been comprised of cross case analysis or study of individual combatant groups (see Hoffman, 2006; Hoffman, 2007; Utas and Jörgel, 2008; Abduallah, 1998), but rarely has there been a comparison of all combatant groups involved in the Sierra Leonean civil war, a gap this

work will attempt to fill by examining each combatant group individually on the basis of several criteria to be discussed later in greater detail.

Similarly, this work will attempt to establish a causal link between the existence of patriarchy and the usage of militarized sexual violence, a body of work that has similarly begun to grow in recent years. Much of the early scholarship regarding wartime sexual violence has focused on the links between ethnic fractionalization and the usage of rape in war and while this is an important relationship, it has since been shown to fall short of statistical significance (Cohen, 2016). Butler, Gluch, and Mitchell note this discrepancy in their study "Security Forces and Sexual Violence: A Cross-National Analysis of a Principle-Agent Argument": "Yet when we examine ethnic fractionalization as a general factor in explaining levels of sexual violence, it's not significant when agency variables are included in the analysis. The policy implication is that ethnically divided societies are not irrevocably locked into violent patterns of behavior" (Butler, Gluch, and Mitchell, 2007, 680). Ethnic fractionalization, though by no means insignificant, was largely absent in Sierra Leone and will therefore allow for an analysis of other factors, such as patriarchy.

Dara Cohen has conducted one of the most significant studies of sexual violence in civil wars. Her most recent book *Rape during Civil War* includes a data set extensively cataloging sexual violence in modern civil wars in an attempt to discern the root causes. She argues it is a product of combat socialization and controls for a variety of potentially compounding variables including gender inequality, measured by the birthrate for each country. There were no statistically significant findings and as such, she concludes that gender inequality cannot be considered a causal mechanism of military sexual violence

(Cohen, 2016). This conclusion, however, contains two major concerns. Firstly, gender inequality is the product of patriarchy; it is a symptom but not the disease. Patriarchy is largely a theoretical concept and often tangibly manifests as gender inequality, but nevertheless, Cohen's measure of birth rate alone will miss some of the more nuanced ideological trends underlying wartime sexual violence. This work will largely be an expansion of Cohen's previous findings, specifically in Sierra Leone. If a link can be established between patriarchy and sexual violence, it would suggest that socialization and conceptions of gender roles impact not only social organization, but also the landscape of wartime violence.

The second issue in Cohen's measure is the potential to confuse gender inequality at the country level and that at the level of individual combatant groups, particularly in cases when the state was not the primary perpetrator of sexual violence. As Utas and Jörgel write in their paper "The West Side Boys: Military Navigation in the Sierra Leone Civil War," "Military groups – armies, militias and rebel movements – carve out alternatively organized spaces in topographies of contested sovereignty, or in an oligopoly of violence (Mehler 2004), and thus form relative sovereign bodies" (Utas and Jörgel, 2008, 490). Based on this understanding of combatant groups relative to the state within which they operate, studying patriarchy at a more minute level is necessary in order to fully understand the dynamics informing combatant perpetration of sexual violence in conflict.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

In the analysis of militarized sexual assault as it has occurred in civil conflicts within the last twenty years, several dimensions must be taken into consideration. In order to fully understand why some conflicts are more prone to massive human rights violations than others, it is first necessary to discuss the basic elements and theories underlying both the conflict and the social structures as well. This can be done through an analysis and description of three primary areas: patriarchy, the importance of modern civil conflicts, and the theoretical explanations for the interplay between patriarchy and militarized sexual assault.

2.1 Defining Patriarchy

In its most basic form, patriarchy is defined as "a social system in which power is held by men, through cultural norms and customs that favor men and withhold opportunity from women" (Miriam Webster Dictionary). This definition, however, needs to be slightly more nuanced in order to understand fully its real world manifestations. Abeda Sultana summarizes the sociological implications of patriarchy in "Patriarchy and Women's Subordination: A Theoretical Analysis"*:* "Thus patriarchy describes the institutional system of male dominance. So we can usefully define patriarchy as a set of social relations between men and women, which have a material base, and which, though hierarchical, establish or create independence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women (Jagger and Rosenber, 1984). Patriarchal ideology exaggerates biological differences between men and women, making certain that men always have the dominant, or masculine, roles and women always have the subordinate ones" (Sultana, 2010, 3).

There are several important pieces of Sultana's definition. The first is the discussion of "social relations." Social institutions, structures, and attitudes are at times difficult to measure or are not officially codified, but that does not make them less significant than, for example, legal patriarchal structures. In the context of war, these types of social relations shape the gender roles and norms that precede and inform the context of conflict itself. Even within a patriarchal society certain male figures will have more power and influence over even those of their own gender based on their relative positioning in existing social structures, however, their distinction as male will always ensure they are exempt from the lowest rung of the social hierarchy, a position perpetually reserved for the lesser female gender.

The second crucial piece of Sultana's definition is the emphasis on the exaggeration of gendered physical characteristics. This becomes especially relevant during times of war when notions of masculinity and manhood become predicated on the ability to fight and defend one's own. Male physical domination can become even more exaggerated when linked to the "soldier" identity making physical domination and demonstrations of strength and superiority the normative expectation along with a dispelling of all traditionally feminine traits. Militarized masculinity exists in direct opposition of characteristics such as compassion and empathy, requiring stoicism, aggression, and violence to achieve military ends, no matter the cost. Hayley Lopes in her work "Militarized Masculinity in Peacekeeping Operations: An Obstacle to Gender Mainstreaming" presents the argument that this militarized masculine identity directly contributes to the usage of rape in war. "Dehumanizing the "other" and diminishing things considered "feminine" becomes dangerous as it can pave the way for violence

outside the realm of military warfare, such as sexual exploitation and abuse of women… In times of conflict, women face an enhanced threat to their security, partly because they are "othered" through their gender and ethnic identities" (Lopes, 2011, 4). Militarized masculinity represents an element of patriarchal ideology and identity formation that has translated directly into sexual assault and rape in warfare. It is a means to continue the eradication of all that is "feminized," a signal to the enemy of superior masculinity, and a way to emasculate the enemy via their inability to protect "their" women. In the few known cases of male survivors of wartime rape, it is a literal demonstration of their inferiority as they are violated, humiliated, and victimized without adequate means to defend themselves.

Feminist scholar bell hooks summarizes the connection between violence and patriarchy in her book *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love.* "Patriarchy is a political-social system that insists that males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females, and endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak to maintain that dominance through various forms of psychological terrorism and violence" (hooks, 2004, 17). hooks' definition also underlines the hierarchical organization of men within a patriarchal system. Domination is not reserved merely for the feminine, but for anything and everything considered weak; it exists across the gender dichotomy, impacting both men and women. It is a system that is reinforced by and encourages the continued perpetration of violence to maintain hegemony. "Patriarchy requires male dominance by any means necessary, hence it supports, promotes, and condones denial about its impact on our lives" (hooks, 2004, 18).

It is in this sense that patriarchy and sexual violence in the context of war becomes important.

2.2 Military Sexual Violence

In the study of wartime rape it is first necessary to establish the necessity of a gendered analysis of war. Until relatively recently, feminist theory and classical theories of war had been perceived as intrinsically at odds with one another. Before establishing a theoretical foundation for this work, this supposition must be refuted. Though modern scholarship has begun to study the intersection of gender and conflict, classical theory of war tends to overlook gender's influence and effect in armed conflicts. These classical theories can however, be reinterpreted to include a gendered perspective. Laura Sjoberg in her book *Gendering Global Conflict: Toward a Feminist Theory of War* presents a reinterpretation of Carl von Clausewitz's classic theory of war to include a gendered element. The *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* defines Clausewitz's idea of center of gravity as "the source of power that provides moral and physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act" (Department of Defense, 2016). The resulting rationale is that each side must defend their center of gravity while attempting to capture and destroy that of their enemy. When the enemy's center of gravity has been captured, they can be forced into surrender, as they have no reason to continue fighting.

Sjoberg argues that in cases of wartime sexual assault, women comprise the center of gravity as symbolic center of society. From a traditional perspective, women represent the vehicle through which society and culture are continued. They reproduce culture, values, and the future generations. Their status as cultural reproducers however,

makes them inextricably linked to and defined by that culture; they essentially "belong" to a certain group. "If belligerents fight for *their* women, it follows that a belligerent wins an absolute victory by exterminating the women understood as 'belonging' to the opponent" (Sjoberg, 2013, 200). All this serves to demonstrate that targeting women represents a clear military strategy with both real and metaphorical implications. Capturing, raping, and killing a group's women has the potential to force the enemy into a moral surrender, as they can no longer defend their center of gravity or allow the continuation of such extensive cruelty. It is not a random occurrence but a calculated means to an end.

2.3 Importance of Modern Civil Conflicts

This work will consider the role of sexual assault only in civil conflicts, a choice made for a variety of reasons, but due in large part to the fact that the majority of conflicts post-WWII have been civil wars (Cohen, 2016). There is also research that suggests a correlation between the nature of civil war and the usage of sexual assault. Based on the findings of Butler, Gluch, and Mitchell in "Security Forces and Sexual Violence: A Cross-National Analysis of a Principle Agent Argument," sexual violence and civil conflicts are positively correlated and Amelia Hoover Green later found a strong, positive relationship between civil war and the usage of sexual assault, especially when compared to interstate wars (Cohen, 2016, 6).

Considering the importance of civil conflicts in relation to wartime sexual assault, it is next necessary to consider the conditions and factors under which modern civil war, materializes. William Lind presented the idea of fourth generation warfare in 1989 to describe the blurring of the lines in modern warfare. Clear divides between civilian and

combatant, between war and politics disappear; war encompasses and affects all aspects of society. Battles do not necessarily unfold as two sides meeting on a clearly defined battlefield and fighting until one side surrenders. Battlefields are increasingly urban, densely populated, without clear borders or boundaries. All elements of society represent potential pressure points to be targeted by an enemy: economy, politics, civil society, etc. Civilians represent an inevitable challenge for combatants and war is no longer governed by clear-cut rules of conduct. Civilians are not protected by a code of ethics and particularly within civil wars, they are often the primary targets of violent military campaigns intended to inflict maximum damage. Lind's conception of fourth generation warfare encompasses both guerrilla war and insurgencies as central tactics, making it asymmetric and exponentially more difficult to track (Lind, 1989). This kind of asymmetric, borderless warfare is not constrained to a modern context but has occurred throughout history, but Lind is the first scholar to formally study and describe it.

Lind's conception of fourth generation can be expanded to include and represent a necessary condition for militarized sexual assault in civil wars. Modern civil wars in particular do not transpire along the traditional lines of classic warfare. These "blurred lines" of fourth generation warfare create an environment hospitable to large scale human rights abuses like the usage of targeted sexual assault. Civilians are no longer spectators to conflict but active participants, both as unintended collateral damage and intentional victims. Tactics like guerrilla warfare and insurgencies do not necessitate the classic rules of engagement in war, as combatants are not held to a higher standard of ethics and moral conduct. If they lack the military strength to take on the enemy with superior capabilities (in many cases the government) in an actual confrontation of military strength, then it

stands to reason that attacking civilians is a course of action to effectively force the enemy's hand.

In conceptualizing sexual assault as a weapon of warfare, particularly in the context of fourth generation warfare, it is then necessary to establish its usage as an intentional action. Sjoberg (2013) posits the idea that sexual violence in war must be included in the definition of intentional civilian victimization. Traditional explanations of intentional civilian victimization have tended to overlook, and even blatantly exclude, sexual violence in its definition, but Sjoberg presents the argument that these sexual assault campaigns actually fit neatly into the category of intentional civilian victimization (Sjoberg, 2013). Similarly, Jonathan Gottschall defines wartime rape as "distinct patterns of rape by soldiers at rates that are much increased over rates of rape that prevail in peacetime … wartime rape is a coherent, coordinated, logical, and brutally effective means of prosecuting warfare" (Gottschall, 2004, 131). This is not to suggest that in all cases of sexual violence there were clear orders handed down from commanding officers to soldiers, however, it does imply a degree of intentionality. The rape of civilians is not an accidental occurrence or collateral damage, like a bystander caught in the crossfire; the perpetrator is actively aware of their actions. Sexual violence must be understood as a clear, conscious choice.

Ethnic war has consistently been cited as a potential cause of militarized sexual violence. The logic for this argument is as follows: rape is used by one group against another group with the express purpose of carrying out ethnic cleansing or genocide. If the population can be humiliated, terrorized, and stripped of its autonomy, the enemy group could theoretically force them out of contested territory or could annihilate them

all together. The importance of ethnic identities became especially apparent in the cases of Bosnia-Herzegovina as Bosniak women were systematically raped, impregnated, and released only after it was too late for them to seek an abortion, forcing them to carry their attackers' baby to term and furthering the Serbian ethnic lineage (Stiglmayer, 1994). Similarly, in Rwanda, hundreds of thousands of Tutsi women were raped and many were intentionally infected with HIV/AIDS solely on the basis of their ethnic identity. While ethnic conflicts are one of the most common types of modern civil wars, as Cohen's statistical findings demonstrate, they alone do not account for the variation in the usage of sexual assault (Cohen, 2016). There are many examples of ethnically fractionalized states at war within themselves that do not perpetrate mass sexual violence, such as Israel and Palestine[1]. This implies that there is something else at work beyond ethnic conflict contributing to the prevalence of militarized sexual assault.

The presence and availability of natural resources are additional areas of research that have been studied for their relationship to the onset and duration of civil war. "Conflict diamonds" or "blood diamonds" have become synonymous with the civil war in Sierra Leone as rebel groups such as the Revolutionary United Front captured many of the country's high producing diamond mines and used the revenue to fund their military operations, along with the UNITA rebels in Angola, and various rebel groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Lujala, Gleditsch, and Gilmore, 2005). The findings of research in this area are highly mixed. Scholars like Lujala, Gleditsch, and Gilmore study the role played by diamonds in West African civil wars and find that "the production of secondary diamonds increases the risk of onset of ethnic war, but not other

[1] The SVAC does not indicate mass, systematic sexual violence perpetrated by either of the two groups.

types of war" (Lujala et al., 2005, 538). Other scholars such as Christa Brunnschweiler and Erwin Bulte find that "conflict increases dependence on resource extraction (as a default sector). Moreover, resource abundance is associated with a possibility of war" (Brunnschweiler and Bulte, 2009, 651). The role of natural resources in conflict – or indeed even the role of diamonds in the Sierra Leonean civil war – is not a subject area that can be explored within the scope of this project, but remains a relevant area of study.

2.4 Patriarchy and Militarized Sexual Violence

When considering the formation of patriarchy at its most base level, it is necessary to examine foundational feminist theory. Simon de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* provides the fundamental concept of the "Other" as a socially constructed identity informing and influencing structural patriarchy and oppression. In her conception, society is made up of an in-group and an out-group, a norm and a deviation from that norm. Women, she argues, constitute a perpetual "Other" in society. Men represent the normative standard and women are therefore inherently lacking. This constant state of female "Otherness" creates an environment in which women will perpetually represent a social deviation. It is predicated on the assumption that the normative man occupies an inherently superior position in the social hierarchy and the "Other" woman is therefore doomed to a perpetual and inevitable state of inferiority (de Beauvoir, 1953).

The concept of "Other" has been expanded to fit and explain instances of ethnocentric and genocidal warfare (Sjoberg, 2013); the bipolarity of an in-group and an out-group reaches a boiling point before descending into chaos and war. The "Otherness" of the out-group is used to justify policies of ethnic cleansing, as they represent deviance from the social norm and is therefore deleterious to the in-group's normative conception

of the social structure. In this enumeration of de Beauvoir's theory, women will be subjected to a double oppression in highly patriarchal societies facing civil war; they are both a gendered "Other" and an ethnic "Other" as well. It is in this context that the usage of wartime sexual assault emerges. The existing patriarchal conception of "Other" fosters a society willing to accept the inferiority of women and is therefore more likely to accept without condemnation the widespread assault of women. The same logic exists for ethnically "Other" groups; if they are inherently inferior, ethnic cleansing is merely a way to move society forward.

When studying and understanding patriarchy from a modern feminist perspective, understanding its intersectional nature is of paramount importance. Sandra Harding (1991) argues that the structural oppression of patriarchy will have widely different effects across race, socioeconomic, and cultural contexts in a viewpoint she deems "standpoint feminism." Skjelsbaek (2001) expands Harding's work by dividing the feminist theory surrounding wartime rape into three basic epistemological conceptualizations: essentialism, structuralism, and social constructivism. Essentialism sees all women as the main targets of wartime rape and they are victimized as a product of their feminine identity alone. The structuralism conceptualization has an empirical focus of all women targeted by the wartime rape, victimized because of their feminine identity but also because of their ethnic, religious, or political group affiliation. Finally, social constructivism posits the argument that all targeted men and women comprise the empirical focus and they are victimized in order to "masculinize the identity of the perpetrator and feminize the identity of the victim" (Skjelsbaek, 2001, 214).

Similarly to Skjelsbaek, this work argues that the first epistemological conceptualization falls short of adequately explaining the existence of wartime rape. Female identity, as defined by physical sex, plays a crucial role, however analyzing patriarchy on the basis of feminine identity alone falls short of offering a holistic and intersectional viewpoint; economic and social factors are additionally at play. The conception of wartime rape used in this work exists somewhere between structuralism and social constructivism. In periods of conflict, "women are targeted because they are women who find themselves in a situation where patriarchal gender relations are accentuated. Second, these women are targeted because they are female embodiments of other socio-cultural identities" (Skjelsbaek, 2012, 101). Women of targeted groups will find themselves doubly oppressed and targeted; they represent the lowest of the low in the social hierarchy.

The inclusion of men found in social constructivism represents one final, crucial nuance to analysis of patriarchy. While women are overwhelmingly targeted by wartime rape, there are still men who are subjected to the same brutal torture and for a variety of reasons, come forward at much lower rates than their female counterpoints. Social constructivism defines power as the most fundamental element of masculinity, therefore by targeting other men, perpetrators are able to physically and metaphorically emasculate other men and strip them of their very gender identity. Skjelsbaek's work can be summarized by the following: while women are more likely to sexually assaulted in war, certain groups of women are more likely than others to be victimized on the basis of their social identity, and this does not discount the existence of male victims who are assaulted as a way to delegitimize both their gender and social identity. Wartime sexual assault, as

a patriarchal policy, will inevitably be applied asymmetrically across various social groups; not all men and women will share the same experience of oppression (Skjelsbaek, 2001).

All conflicts, civil or otherwise, are inherently informed to some degree by the cultural and social circumstances in which they arise. The usage of sexual assault as a military tactic and strategy fits well into this conception. Jennie Bumet (2012) posits the idea that the civil war in Rwanda cannot be fully understood without taking into consideration the legacy of colonialism. The structural violence endured by all Rwandans informed their actions during the war and the usage of sexual assault against Tutsi women was an extension of the systematic and structural oppression under which they lived. This systematic oppression fostered a civilian culture in which women had little to no sexual or bodily agency. They were defined by their relationships to men and male relatives with little social mobility of their own. Instances of domestic violence and sexual abuse were frequent prior to the onset of armed conflict in 1994 and these injustices were not only ignored, they were dismissed as an inevitable product of the existing social order. Definitions of sexual consent ranged from problematic to virtually non-existent, an attitude that manifested itself in the rape, sexual abuse, and torture of Tutsi women. Bumet argues that as women and as Tutsis they experienced a status of double oppression, victimized for both their gender and ethnicity (Bumet, 2012).

Based on Bumet's view, gendered practice like militarized sexual assault can also be contextualized by patriarchal social norms. Simply examining wartime sexual assault without considering the circumstances and context informing the conflict is to miss a large part of the equation. From this perspective, it can be argued that a society rooted in

patriarchal values will inevitably affect the methods and tools used in the conflict itself. When female sexual agency and consent are systematically undermined by a culture of patriarchy prior to the onset of conflict, those ideas will carry over into the conflict. Bumet's work also serves to point out a glaring gap in the existing literature surrounding wartime rape. "Long before the 1994 genocide, Rwandan women and girls faced a great deal of gender violence, including physical violence (such as domestic abuse and sexual assault) and structural violence (such as gender discrimination)" (Bumet, 2012, 100). Her argument can be expanded to analysis of other instances of wartime rape, a feat this work will attempt to complete. Context is key and in this case it can be used to discern the effects of the patriarchal context.

Given that some combatant groups commit higher levels of sexual violence than other groups involved in the same conflict (Cohen and Nordås, 2014), Bumet's ideas must be taken one step further to understand how a historical context at the state level has affected the ideologies and actual practices of various combatant groups. When framed in the context of the social constructivist argument elaborated by Skelsbaek (2001), there is an implication that various groups are both victims and perpetrators of varying levels of sexual violence as a result of their social identities within a patriarchal system. This however, applies largely to a peacetime civilian context rather than one of active militaries and armed conflict. The normative theory of military performance, as discussed by Scott Fitzsimmons in "When Few Stood Against Many: Explaining Executive Outcomes' Victory in the Sierra Leonean Civil War" can be used to bridge this gap. "The central assumption of the normative theory of military performance is that the behavioral norms that make up an armed force's military culture influence the tactical behavior of its

personnel, which in turn, influences their military performance" (Fitzsimmons, 2003). Though this theory has predominantly been used to explain military strength and performance in armed conflict, it can be expanded to explain other sociological factors influencing military behavior during conflict, such as patriarchal ideology. In this framework, the degree to which a group was affected by patriarchy prior to the onset of conflict will determine and influence their experiences within the conflict itself. It is this assumption that this work will attempt to examine.

3.0 DATA AND METHODS

3.1 Hypothesis

Based on a synthesis of the existing literature, the following hypothesis can be made: the degree of patriarchy present within combatant groups will be positively correlated to the degree of sexual violence they perpetrate during conflict. The Sexual Violence in Armed Conflicts (2016) dataset (discussed in more detail later) provides a cross-national comparison that indicates that a variation exists in the usage of rape in civil conflicts. This implies that some conflicts, military groups, etc. are more likely to engage in rape during times of war and conflict than others. Given the existing literature, preexisting patriarchal institutions and ideologies will provide a catalyst for the usage of rape in warfare, however an exceptionally strong relationship should not be anticipated as such a decisive pattern will be difficult to discern from a singular case study.

This hypothesis is an attempt to expand upon the work conducted by Dara Cohen in her book *Rape during Civil War.* She argues that wartime sexual violence occurs as the product of combat socialization and presents the hypothesis that groups with lower levels

of social cohesion, i.e. those engaging in coercive recruitment tactics, will perpetrate higher levels of sexual violence. She is able to substantiate her hypothesis and provide evidence that units with lower levels of internal cohesion do tend to committee higher levels of sexual violence in civil wars (Cohen, 2016). Cohen's hypothesis represents the conventional wisdom in this area of study and as such, it is necessary to determine if the conventional wisdom is indeed accurate within this new framework and study of patriarchy.

3.2 Units of Analysis

Individual combatant groups will comprise the primary unit of analysis, as they may adopt varying levels of patriarchy compared with the state overall. Cohen discusses the need to analyze wartime rape at more minute levels: "Current narratives about the causes of rape too frequently focus on macro level or structural factors, such as the type of conflict or features of the country where the war is occurring, while ignoring the importance of variation at the level of the armed group" (Cohen, 2016, 16). It is entirely possible that national subgroups embroiled in conflict have differing levels of patriarchy and commit higher (or lower) levels of sexual violence in conflict than the government or the country as a whole. Unlike interstate wars in which the state can be considered one single actor, intrastate wars transpire as the result of a state divided. Measuring patriarchy at the state level may offer some insights about the context of the conflict and for cases in which the state is the primary perpetrator of sexual assault, it would be a relevant analysis, but for most cases it will not comprise the main unit of analysis.

On a more logistical level, the SVAC reveals that the level of sexual violence varies across combatant groups involved in the same conflict, implying that there are

differences occurring at the micro level of individual groups. For example, within the case of Sierra Leone on which this work will focus, the SVAC reveals a disparity in the level of sexual violence committed by the various combatant groups[2]: the Revolutionary United Front (receiving scores of 2's and 3's), the Civil Defense Forces and Kamajors (receiving scores of 0's and 1's), the West Side Boys (receiving scores of 0's and 3's), the Executive Outcomes (receiving scores of 0's), and the AFRC (receiving scores of 0's and 3's). This level of variation within a single case study suggests that there is something influencing group behavior or fundamental about the groups themselves that make them more likely to perpetrate higher or lower levels of sexual violence in civil war. It is the effect of one such influence – patriarchy – that this work will attempt to test.

3.3 Variables

The dependent variable is sexual violence perpetrated at the level of individual combatant groups as defined by the SVAC codebook: "Following the definition used by the International Criminal Court (ICC), we define sexual violence as (1) rape, (2) sexual slavery, (3) forced prostitution, (4) forced pregnancy, and (5) forced sterilization/abortion. Following Elisabeth Wood (2009), we also include (6) sexual mutilation, and (7) sexual torture. This definition does not exclude the existence of female perpetrators and male victims, both of which are observed in the data. We focus on violations that involve direct force and/or physical violence. We exclude acts that do not go beyond verbal sexual harassment, abuse or threats, including sexualized insults, forced nudity, or verbal humiliation" (Cohen and Nordas, 2013, 5). The prevalence and severity of the sexual violence perpetrated is coded on a scale of 0-3, with 0 indicating

[2] See SVAC codebook (Cohen and Nordas, 2013) for coding information.

that no sexual violence was perpetrated, 1 indicating an isolated level of sexual violence, 2 indicating numerous instances of sexual violence, and a score of 3 indicating massive perpetration of sexual violence (Cohen and Nordas, 2013).

As previously noted, patriarchy remains extremely difficult to quantify and measure; there are a variety of differing opinions regarding the most appropriate markers. The presence and degree of combatant group patriarchy will be assessed on the basis of several markers: the demographic of participants, the official ideology of the group, and the presence of female combatants and leaders.

Combatant Group Participants

David Duriesmith discusses the importance of the establishment and definition of masculinity in Sierra Leone. "What is required to attain the status of manhood depends on the social context. In the western world manhood may be achieved through military service, economic enrichment, marriage, or sporting power. In Sierra Leone, manhood is attained through admission to secret societies, marriage, and position within the community" (Duriesmith, 2014, 242). Based on these observations, combatants' ability to fulfill the contextual definition of hegemonic masculinity will be used as criteria through which to measure patriarchy on a categorical scale from low to high.

The importance of studying the dynamics of combatant groups is discussed by Reed M. Wood and Jakana L. Thomas in their study "Women on the Frontline: Rebel Group Ideology and Women's Participation in Violent Rebellion." "Understanding the composition of a rebel fighting force requires that the influence of the size and features of the candidate pool as well as the factors that shape the leadership's perspectives regarding acceptable recruits are identified" (Wood and Thomas, 2017, 5). The

patriarchal leanings of the combatant group participants will be assessed as a categorical variable on a scale of low, medium, and high. Fighters originating from demographics or cultures with relatively egalitarian attitudes toward gender roles will be given a "low" score, demographics with a moderate degree of gendered divisions will be awarded a "medium" score, and demographics defined by a highly gendered culture will be awarded a "high" score.

Combatant Group Ideology

Understanding the ideology of rebel groups helps to form a concrete picture of the acceptable behaviors in which they will engage and the norms and values they will uphold (see for example Moghadam, 2008; Suykens, 2015; Goswami, 2014). Wood and Thomas study the influence on political ideology, defined as "the package of ideas or beliefs that annunciate the grievances of a particular group, and proposes a plan of action for accomplishing those objectives" (Wood and Thomas, 2017, 3), on the extent of female participation in rebel groups. They find that groups with Marxists or Leftist leanings tend to be more inclusive and open to the idea of women assuming active roles in the movement. They state that "ideologies inculcating an egalitarian ethos and advocating radical revisions to traditional social orders prompt rebel leaders to create opportunities for women to occupy non-traditional roles in rebellions" (Wood and Thomas, 2017, 7). This work will use a similar understanding of political ideology to examine the ideologies of rebel groups in Sierra Leone, searching for references to the breakdown and reevaluation of traditional gendered social norms and institutions as a marker of a more egalitarian ideology. Similarly to the measurement used for the demographics of combatant groups, the ideology of the groups will be assessed on a scale

of low to high; groups with no mention of gendered rhetoric will be awarded a "low" score, those with some mention of traditional gender roles will be awarded a "medium" score, and those with gender specific ideologies will be awarded a "high" score.

Presence of Female Combatants

The third marker of patriarchy this work will examine is the presence or lack of female combatants and leaders. War has been historically conceptualized as a masculine space and female presence would therefore theoretically pose a challenge to that masculine hegemony. Gerard DeGroot discusses the predisposition to see women as inherently unable to participate in war. "It is still widely believed," he writes, "that women are genetically programmed for a caring role and cannot therefore summon the aggressive impulses necessary for effective soldiering" (DeGroot, 2001, 23). Female combatants challenge this conception of femininity and its patriarchal foundation. As DeGroot goes on to note, "… it should not be assumed that combat experience automatically grants status and equality to the combatant…" (DeGroot, 2001, 31), however, it could provide an important contestation to patriarchal ideals of gender. The presence of female combatants is dichotomous and will be measured as either present or not present, based on existing reports and accounts.

These three areas will provide sense of historical context, the goals and morals that shape individual groups, and their gendered structure. A variety of sources will be cross referenced, including official group manifestos and guiding documents, conflict reports, and works by various NGO and monitoring agencies to get a comprehensive picture of the gendered dynamics at the group level. Additionally, it has become clear that the role of intervening variables must be considered, particularly the influence

combatant groups on one another. It is entirely possible that certain groups may not begin the conflict with an inherently patriarchal ideology, but as other groups use increasing levels of sexual violence, other groups are forced to adopt similar methods, dynamics that will be explored further in this research.

3.4 Sources of Data

The major source of data for used for the measurement of the dependent variable is a dataset compiled by Cohen and the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard. "The Sexual Assault in Armed Conflicts (SVAC) Dataset includes reports of conflict-related sexual violence committed by the following types of armed conflict actors: governments/state military, pro-government militias, and rebel/insurgent forces. The SVAC Dataset covers all conflicts in the years 1989-2009, as defined by the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Database. Data was collected for all years of active conflict (defined by 25 battle deaths or more per year) and for five years post-conflict" (Cohen and Nordas, 2013). For the purposes of this study, only years of actual conflict will be included in the average scores for combatant groups, meaning that as the Sierra Leonean civil war officially ended in 2002, no years beyond this point will be included in the averages.

The SVAC is far more extensive than anything that could have been compiled in the scope and timeframe of this project and it is frequently edited and updated. Cohen does describe some possible limitations of the dataset, such as the fact that all of the data is collected from US State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices and therefore while the methods of collecting the data are likely to remain the same over time, "there may have been inconsistent interest in rape over time" (Cohen, 2016, 67),

particularly in the wake of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Rwanda. She also notes that it is rare to report the exact number of victims for each case and as such, the measurements are often more categorical.

In order to gather data for patriarchy at the level of combatant groups, official statements, documents, interviews, propaganda, conflict reports, and various other scholarly works will be consulted to determine the patriarchal leanings of combatant groups. Indicators of patriarchal rhetoric such as a narrowly defined, traditional role for women, the active encouragement of sexual violence against enemy populations, the overt sexualizing of enemy women, etc. will be considered in order to determine group ideology, in line with they hypotheses put forward by Wood and Thomas. The makeup and demographic of participants will be examined while looking specifically for patriarchal ideologies held by those specific demographics prior to the onset of war. The presence of female combatants will also be considered and will be recorded as simply present or not present.

3.5 Methods of Analysis

This work will be comprised of a qualitative case study of Sierra Leone. This decision was based partially on the logistical constraints of this project, but given the SVAC dataset, the quantitative work on the dependent variable (sexual assault) has already been completed. Cohen summarizes the need to supplement the dataset with qualitative observations: "… the statistical analyses cannot determine the direction of the relationship, or whether one variable seems to be causing another, nor can they explain how the mechanisms linking important factors may take shape on the ground" (Cohen, 2016, 56). To that end, the SVAC will allow an opportunity to ascertain patterns in sexual

violence at both the state and individual group level, but that analysis will then need to be supplemented with qualitative work to determine the effects and possible causality of the independent variable (patriarchy). As previously stated in the hypothesis, a positive correlation between the two factors is expected. The hypothesis will be falsifiable if there is either no relationship between the two factors or if they are negatively correlated.

There is a secondary, more humanistic reasoning behind the usage of qualitative data in this particular case. Sexual violence data while immensely important to understanding trends in human rights violations can miss the incredible price paid by those targeted and effected. "Qualitative research can help researchers to access the thoughts and feelings of research participants, which can enable development of an understanding of the meaning that people ascribe to their experiences. Whereas quantitative research methods can help researchers to understand how many people undertake particular behaviors, qualitative methods can help researchers to understand how and why such behaviors take place" (Sutton and Austin, 2015, 226). The goal of this work is to gain a better understanding of why some groups commit sexual violence when others do not and a more nuanced analysis of behavior and rationale will be crucial to that investigation. At the same time, the usage of qualitative methods will allow for a more personal, and hopefully compassionate, discussion and understanding of the experiences of those effected by such widespread sexual violence.

4.0 CASE STUDY: SIERRA LEONE

The United States Institute of Peace Truth Commission for Sierra Leone summarizes the causes of the eleven-year civil war: "corruption and an overwhelming

control of the executive. Colonialism and the subversion of traditional systems also had an effect" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2002). A former British colony, Sierra Leone gained its independence in 1961. The country was relatively politically stable under the first Prime Minister, Sir Milton Margai but following his death in 1964, a legacy of governmental corruption and mismanagement began that would characterize politics until the onset of the civil war in 1991. "The corruption, nepotism, and fiscal mismanagement under the one-party rule of the APC (All People's Congress) led to the decay of all state institutions and the impoverishment of Sierra Leone's population" (Human Rights Watch, 2003). The government allocated services and jobs on a largely patrimonial basis and stable employment, particularly for young people looking to enter the workforce, was increasingly difficult to find, creating a substantial, disaffected "youth bulge." When the RUF began recruiting from across the border in Liberia, they had an audience primed and ready fight against a regime that they saw as no longer working in their interest.

Foday Saybana Sankoh had been active in the student movement in the 1970's and was eventually exiled to Libya where, in the early 1990's, he met Charles Taylor, leader of the National Patriotic Front, who helped him form the Revolutionary United Front and formalize its ideology. By March 1991, the RUF was launching successful attacks from across the border in Liberia and had already taken control of several small towns. In the spring of 1992, an unrelated military coup overthrew the existing government and replaced it with a new regime, against which the RUF continued to mount increasingly violent attacks. They gained control of a majority of the country's diamond mines and as most of the existing miners had been either killed or had fled, the

RUF was able to exploit the country's natural supply to continue funding their military efforts.

In 1997, the government was again deposed in a military coup orchestrated by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, a group of former Sierra Leone Army soldiers led by Major Johnny Paul Koromah. They were able to negotiate the release of Sankoh who had been arrested in Nigeria and created an official alliance with the RUF, establishing a new government and giving several RUF leaders, including Sankoh, positions of influence and power within the new regime. In 1999, the RUF launched the most brutal attack of the war: "Operation No Living Thing." With the help of the AFRC, they were able to capture and briefly hold the capital of Freetown, viciously raping and slaughtering civilians of all ages and genders. They were eventually driven out of the city by several other armed groups including Executive Outcomes, and the power of the RUF began to decline for the remainder of the war. Some combatants left the RUF/AFRC alliance following the defeat at Freetown and reentered the war as their own independent groups, such as the West Side Boys. Sankoh was recaptured in 2000 and UN peacekeeping forces were sent in to quell what remained of the rebellion. The RUF began the process of officially disarming in 2000 and the war was finally declared to be finished in early 2002.

Sexual violence in the Sierra Leonean civil war was characterized by extreme brutality and seemingly random selection of victims. While there is evidence to suggest that many of the attacks were premeditated (Human Rights Watch, 1999) it lacked the targeted, ethnic cleansing elements of many other modern civil wars with high degrees of sexual violence, due perhaps at least in part to the fact that Sierra Leone remains a relatively ethnically homogenous country. Sierra Leone is also significant in the fact that

nearly every participating combatant group committed at least some sexual violence according to the data collected in the SVAC, though the RUF was by far the largest perpetrator (Cohen and Nordas, 2013). In many cases, sexual violence was not reserved merely for enemy combatants and their families. Civilians without any affiliation to either the government or the rebel groups were targeted mercilessly; men, women, children, and even infants were brutally raped, maimed, and killed. In the twelve years of civil war, an approximated 75,000 were killed, approximately 250,000 women experienced some form of sexual violence, and almost 3 million people were displaced (Coulter, 2008, 88). The violent chaos and seemingly random nature of the violence has come to define the civil war in Sierra Leone, but the fact of the matter is that some groups perpetuated sexual violence at higher rates than others, a phenomenon worth investigating.

This work will examine the following combatant groups: the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), a rebel group deemed responsible for starting the civil war and committing the highest level of sexual violence, the Civil Defense Forces (CDF), a local militia organized along social networks formed to resist the RUF, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), a group of former Sierra Leone military officers who staged a coup against the existing government and eventually aligned themselves with the RUF, the West Side Boys (WSB), a splinter group of the RUF and AFRC following the 1999 assault on the capital of Freetown, and the Executive Outcomes (EO), a South African based mercenary group called in to quell the violence and reestablish order in Sierra Leone. These groups represent the main players in the civil war and committed varying levels of violence, sexual and otherwise, throughout the course of the eleven-year

civil war. The table below provides a comparative overview of the dynamics at play within each group, all of which will be discussed in further detail in this work.

Table 1: Combatant Groups Overview

	Average SVAC Score	***Participants***	***Ideology***	***Presence of Female Combatants***
Revolutionary United Front	1.30	Low	Low	Yes
Civil Defense Forces/Kamajors[3]	.083	High	High	Yes
Armed Forces Revolutionary Council	0.4 1.33	Medium	Medium	No
West Side Boys	.67	Medium	Low	Yes
Executive Outcomes	0	High	Low	No

4.1 The Revolutionary United Front

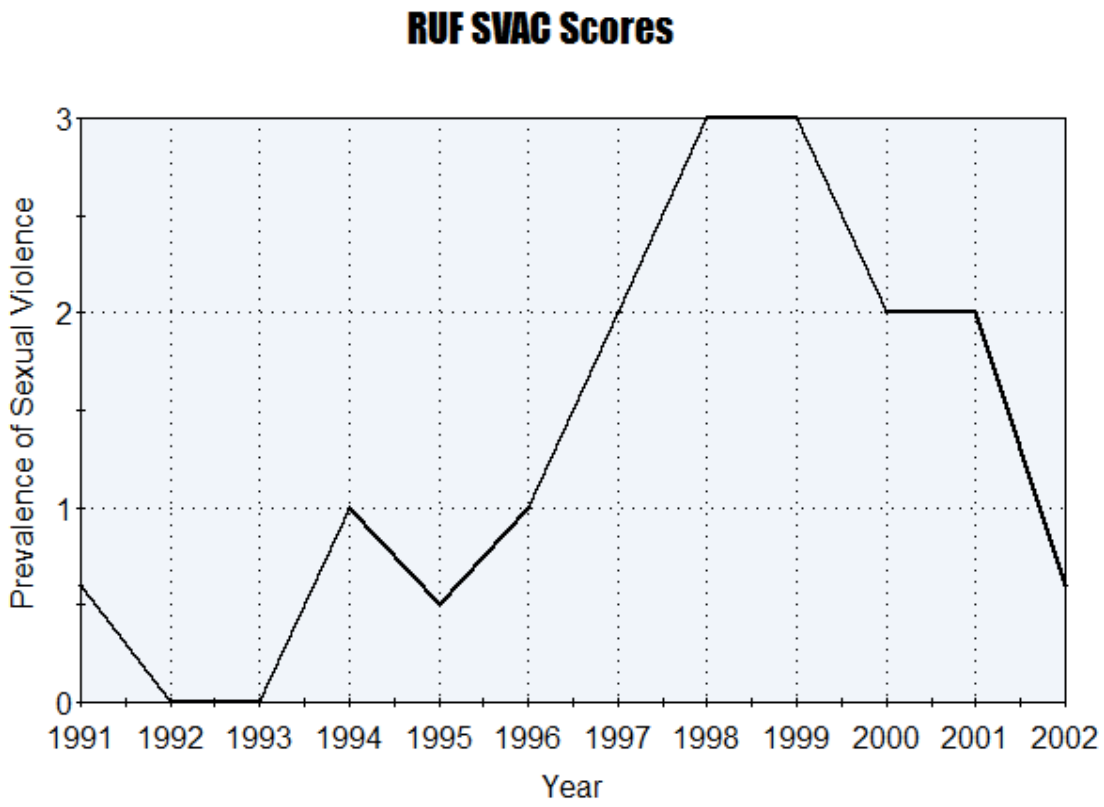
Group Overview

Table 2: Revolutionary United Front Overview

Average SVAC Score	***Participants***	***Ideology***	***Presence of Female Combatants***
1.30	Low; "Lumpen proletariat" combatants were prevented from fulfilling the hegemonic masculine ideal	Low; *Footpaths to Democracy* exceptionally egalitarian and Leftist advocating for a free and fair Sierra Leone to be enjoyed by all	Yes, though in most cases recruitment of female combatant was coercive and involved some form of sexual violence.

[3] The SVAC codes the existence of some independent Kamajor combatant groups though they are generally considered a subset of the CDF.

Graph 1: Revolutionary United Front SVAC Scores



Operating at first from across the border in Liberia, the RUF was initially able to recruit young fighters disillusioned with the current system and looking to take back their country and change it for the better. As the conflict escalated, however, the RUF began using increasingly coercive recruitment methods, including forced abduction (even of children) and drugging fighters to encourage fearless and brutal combatants. They continued to gain notoriety around the world as stories of their extreme violence and brutality began to spread: pregnant women raped and split open, children forced to kill their own parents, family members forced to rape or watch others being raped, victims mutilated and dismembered (see Human Rights Watch, 1999; Human Rights Watch 2002). Adding to the list of wartime crimes against humanity and human rights abuses,

they increasingly abducted young children, turning them into child soldiers and forcing them to participate in the violent conflict. The RUF continued to gain ground in Sierra Leone, taking over towns, mines, and briefly capturing the capital of Freetown. Several RUF leaders were found guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity and the RUF legacy of violence and terror that remains to this day. The group dissolved at the end of the war in 2002, but eventually reformed into a political party before merging with the All People's Congress in 2007.

When the scores for the prevalence of sexual violence across all years of active combat recorded in the SVAC are averaged, the RUF has a score of 1.30, signifying a relatively high level of sexual violence sustained throughout the entire civil war.

Participants

The RUF began by recruiting fighters drawn to their ideological stance and vision for a new Sierra Leone, declaring a war against corruption and the problematic institutions that had been dragging the country down for generations, albeit without any specific mechanisms to fulfill these goals. Ibrahim Abdullah discusses the role of the "lumpen proletariat" in the formation of the RUF. "By lumpens, I refer to the largely unemployed and unemployable youths, mostly male, who live by their wits or who have one foot in what is generally referred to as the informal or underground economy. They are prone to criminal behavior, petty theft, drugs, drunkenness, and gross indiscipline… It is a male-specific oppositional culture which easily lends itself to violence" (Abdullah, 1998, 208). Abdullah discusses the patrimonial culture in Sierra Leone in the decades leading up to the onset of conflict in 1991 and an educated youth population unable to find work. The Sierra Leonean government operated largely on a system of patronage,

giving positions to insiders and creating a growing youth bulge dissatisfied with the state of the country (Archibald and Richards, 2002, 345). Abdullah argues that exclusion from the workforce, especially for young men, was a particularly harsh blow as it kept them from living up to their traditional gender roles. Without a steady source of income, their ability to find a wife and begin a family was stunted, undermining their very masculinity; they could not fully assume their patriarchal role in society.

Abdullah's argument can be expanded to fit a feminist theoretical framework. Men prohibited from participating in the patriarchal system within which they live will rebel against that system using the very methods it espouses. In the case of Sierra Leone, the disillusioned youth base the RUF began recruiting from those who could not live up to the conception of masculinity they were expected to uphold and as such, lashed out at the system in a hyper masculine way. In their work on unemployment and masculinity, Sara Willott and Christine Griffin discuss a similar phenomenon: "A dominant representation of the 'successful man' sees him as providing for the family (e.g. Bernard, 1981; Hood, 1986), spending a sizeable portion of time outside the home and having freedom of movement between the public and domestic arenas… If a man is long-term unemployed and in receipt of state benefit, this will most certainly affect both where and how his time is spent and probably also his ability to provide economically for himself and his family (if he has one). It seems reasonable to hypothesize, therefore, that unemployment will pose significant structural, cultural, and ideological challenge to dominant forms of masculinity" (Willott and Griffin, 1997, 109). This is not to suggest that violent uprising is the inevitable outcome of economic stagnation and state corruption (take for example, the 2011 youth protests in Egypt), however, under the right

conditions, namely an inability to fulfill the vision of hegemonic masculinity, there is the possibility for devolution into widespread violence.

Abdullah's analysis of the lumpen proletariat is significant but likely does not entirely account for the frequency of sexual violence perpetuated by the RUF considering the multitude of other economically based uprisings that did not see similar outcomes. If socioeconomic factors were the sole cause of sexual violence in civil wars, it should be occurring at much higher rates any time a youth bulge occurred, which is simply not the case. Abdullah goes on to discuss at length the lack of concrete revolutionary ideology and intellectual leadership. "They took political action and proclaimed a "revolution" which reflected the true nature of their lumpen base. The movement did not possess the revolutionary drive or the maturity to undertake a concrete analysis of the situation which comes with a revolutionary project. It had no revolutionary intellectuals, and the radical students who originally spearheaded the call to arms were not involved in the project" (Abdullah, 1998, 235). Without any kind of experienced intellectual leadership, the RUF devolved into chaos and violence. With the exception of the three main leaders (Sankoh, Kanu, and Mansaray), few if any commanders had any previous experience, training, or even education. They had no political acumen, legal or military history and for many who were coerced into fighting for the RUF, had no particular stake or belief in their brand of revolution. Highly centralized military groups tend to have specifically delineated values, strategies, and operating procedures but in the RUF, such things were largely absent (Center for Complex Operations and Rashid, 2016). Even Sankoh himself, though he did have some experience in both the student movement and the army, there is evidence that he had little interest in studying military or political history to broaden his knowledge

base and make the RUF more effective. “Sankoh was not interested in reading, he was an action-oriented man who was impatient with the slow process of acquiring knowledge and understanding of the situation which a revolutionary project entails. Put another way, Sankoh was a militarist… There is evidence that Sankoh did not abandon the possibility of seizing power through another military coup” (Abdullah, 1998, 218).

The RUF was not a group of ideologues or visionaries bound together by a shared school of thought or moral code. “Without students or intellectual support, and led by a cashiered corporal, disgruntled economic refugees and a hijacked group of semi-intellectuals (including a doctor and a trained college lecturer), ‘the RUF is a bandit organization totally bereft of revolutionary credentials or a social agenda’ (Dokubo, 2000, 1)” (Peters, 2011, 219). This demographic phenomenon was not bound solely to the lower ranks of fighters but applied all the way up through the highest levels of leadership. Once again, this is not to say that a lack of educated elites within a revolutionary movement will necessarily lead to a high level of sexual violence in civil conflicts, but without any leaders with a morale or principled background, the RUF spiraled into increasing levels of violence and chaos.

Based on the above analysis, it appears that the RUF has a relatively low level of patriarchy in terms of the demographics of their fighters. It is true that many of the combatants grew up ostracized in the patrimonial system under which Sierra Leone had operated for decades and were unable to fulfill the hegemonic masculine ideal described by Duriesmith (i.e. taking a wife, gaining economic success, etc.). This finding is in opposition to the initial hypothesis that higher levels of patriarchy amongst combatant groups will lead to a higher level of sexual violence perpetrated, though could offer

support for Cohen's hypothesis that combatant groups with lower levels of internal cohesion will commit higher levels of sexual violence.

Ideology

When the RUF began mounting attacks in Sierra Leone, they had essentially no coherent platform or specific goals they hoped to achieve in their revolution. "Despite Foday Sankoh's many BBC interviews and incoherent "ideological" lectures to terrified communities overrun by the RUF, until 1995 many Sierra Leoneans did not know that the RUF even had political objectives" (Center for Complex Operations and Rashid, 2016). The group's sole guiding document, *Footpaths to Democracy* was not published until four years after the start of the war and even then, their mission and tactics were exceptionally vague. "The central theme of the documents was the RUF's desire to "revolutionize" and violently "remake" state and society in Sierra Leone. Neither document contained clear or coherent political program of how this was to be done, except through the endemic violence Sierra Leoneans were experiencing at the time" (Center for Complex Operations and Rashid, 2016). Even RUF perpetrated violence against civilians was seemingly utterly random at times. Some were attacked for failing to comply with RUF demands, others were brutalized for no reason at all, a trend detailed in the 1999 Human Rights Watch Report: "Civilians were often mutilated in pairs or groups of up to eight, during small rebel operations in which victims were rounded up, made to form a line and their limbs amputated one after the other. Other amputations were done as punishment for having resisted the abduction of a family member or for fleeing form a rebel patrol. In other cases the rebels choose their victims randomly, frequently without asking a single question" (Human Right Watch, 1999).

Footpaths to Democracy opens with a statement in regards to the self-proclaimed goal of the RUF. "We are fighting to create a new Sierra Leone. A new Sierra Leone of freedom, justice, and equal opportunity for all. We are fighting for democracy and by democracy we mean equal opportunity and access to power to create wealth through free trade, commerce, agriculture, industry, science, and technology… And by struggle, we mean the determination, the humanistic urge to remove the shame of poverty, hunger, disease, squalor, illiteracy, loafing, and hopelessness from this African land of Sierra Leone blessed with minerals, forests, rivers, and all that is required to restore the dignity, prestige and power of the African as an equal competitor on the world stage. This is what we are fighting for and this is why we are fighting to save Sierra Leone" (Footpaths, 1995). Wood and Thomas argue that rebel groups seeking to challenge the established institutions and redefine the values of society towards a more egalitarian vision tend to be more inclusive of women and an analysis of the RUF based solely on *Footpaths to Democracy* would appear to place them squarely in that camp. Nowhere is the promise of freedom and equality qualified as applying to only some Sierra Leoneans on the basis of gender or social status.

Perhaps the most surprising thing about *Footpaths* is its egalitarian and seemingly purposefully inclusive language, including women, the elderly, and the disabled. These often disenfranchised or overlooked groups are explicitly referenced in two different places, implying that their inclusion was not accidental. Gender, age, and physical ability seem to be secondary identifiers to a shared Sierra Leonean heritage; all things are made equal under the banner of a single nationality. Nowhere throughout *Footpaths* is one group, female or otherwise, explicitly privileged above the rest.

Footpaths makes two overt mentions to women as both participants in the revolutionary process and as recipients of the benefits to be reaped in the new Sierra Leone. The first of such references appears in "Ideas and Ideals We Believe In" under the "Arms to the People" section. "Believing that is an organized and informed people who constitute the motive force of any political and economical revolution, the RUF has trained a large number of men and women including the elderly, youth, children and the disabled from all corners of Sierra Leone and has given them arms to mantle the corrupt APC system and its sordid successors" (Footpaths, 1995). At a surface level, this implies that the RUF was willing to, at least to some degree, acknowledge the presence and participation of women in their armed movement. Nowhere in *Footpaths to Democracy* is a version of Sierra Leone without women described, nor does it espouse an especially patriarchal rhetoric. The actual implementation of this ideal was problematic, however, as it often materialized as women being kidnapped and given to individual fighters as "bush wives," a phenomenon that will be discussed in further detail later.

The RUF however, very quickly began to deviate from their manifesto as the conflict continued. Their recruitment methods, for example, were increasingly coercive as they relied more and more on forced participation, a practice *Footpaths to Democracy* clearly prohibits. "Our ranks keep swelling daily. We have no need to conscript by force. Forced conscription is an inferior method, which tends to pose security risk in the long run. Those forcibly conscripted, when they manage to escape, lead enemy troops back to locations they are familiar with. Experience and honesty have been our best teacher" (Footpaths, 1995). An egalitarian ideology is little more than symbolic when combatants, and even those at the highest echelons of leadership, blatantly ignore and act against their

supposed guiding principles. Forced recruitment additionally creates a cycle of violence as combatants with little to no investment in the movement or its sparse ideology were forcibly inducted into its ranks, going on to perpetuate more violence against other civilians. Once again, it is possible to see potential support for Cohen's hypothesis of combatant socialization as an underlying cause for the usage of sexual violence amongst combatant groups.

The directionality of the RUF violent ideology also remains suspect as Sankoh is seen as the architect of the chaos and terror that came to characterize their fighting strategy. "There is evidence that neither Kanu or Mansaray were happy with the random violence that RUF forces were committing in the name of the "revolution." An ex-PANAFU member in the army reported that the area under Kanu's control was generally peaceful and well organized; he reached out to explain what the RUF was about to the peasants and was not engaged in unnecessary violence against civilians. Mansaray's opposition to the indiscriminate killing of innocent civilians was one of the reasons why he was executed" (Abdullah, 1998, 226). While the RUF lacked a clear, concise ideology it could communicate to the people of Sierra Leone, it also clearly lacked consensus within its own ranks in regards to the methods by which those goals would be achieved. It is entirely possible that Sankoh eliminated lower commanders in an effort to consolidate power, but it also carries symbolic power for the RUF and the people of Sierra Leone: extreme violence was becoming common practice and anything less would not be tolerated. That is not to remove responsibility from individual RUF combatants or to imply that they lacked agency. Regardless of order from above, individuals still have

to make the choice to comply and carry them out. Rather, it is to suggest that perhaps the violent ideology originated, at least to some degree, from the top down.

Footpaths additionally goes into detail about the need to reform the current educational system. "The way to end exploitation and oppression, economic and social injustice, ignorance, backwardness and superstition is to make education available to all – both the young and old, male and female, and also the disabled" (Footpaths, 1995). This, again, is more progressive than would be expected for a group whose legacy consists mainly of extreme violence and brutality. The assertion of education as vital to the liberation of the Sierra Leonean people is perhaps one of the most progressive elements of *Footpaths,* especially considering that it is not limited by age, gender, or physical ability. They could have made the promise of education to all but the enumeration of various social categories implies intentionality. Education, and subsequently the equality it fosters, ought to be guaranteed to all Sierra Leoneans based not on their social identification but on the basis of their national origin. There was no overtly codified attempt to prohibit women from education or limit the scope of opportunities theoretically available to them. Patriarchy generally fears the enlightened, educated woman (hooks, 2004) and considering that the traditional female role is considered to transpire within the private sphere, there would be no need for them to seek an education and spend time away from the home. At the time that *Footpaths* was written, there was clearly no such fear within the RUF leadership. Considering education is a sphere in which women are often systematically disadvantaged or excluded all together (UNESCO, 2013), their inclusion in this new society is significant in theory, but the complete

abandonment of the principles of decency espoused in *Footpaths* makes them little more than symbolic.

Footpaths to Democracy represents several contradictions to the general assumptions about the RUF; the inclusion of women in any capacity is significant and all together surprising considering the severity and frequency of RUF perpetrated sexual violence. This carries with it several implications, the first being that, at least on an ideological level prior to the actual onset of conflict, membership in the RUF's vision of the new Sierra Leone was not predicated on gender. The document does not go into detail about the appropriate gender roles in this new society, but the RUF clearly saw women as a potential source of resistance to the old order and as potential recipients of the ensuing benefits. In actual practice, these ideas came to fruition in the form of kidnapping and coercion, challenging the idea that the theoretical inclusion of women was sufficient to prevent sexual violence.

Because *Footpaths* puts forth little evidence of inherently patriarchal ideology in it's official manifesto, it is difficult to pinpoint patriarchy as the cause of the high levels of RUF perpetrated sexual violence. Abdullah puts for an interesting additional explanation. "The lack of discipline and of a clear-cut ideology helps to explain why the RUF tolerated terror and anarchy in the name of revolution" (Abdullah, 1998. 234). There were no parameters to define acceptable behavior and the only goal was revolution, to be achieved no matter the cost. The patriarchal leanings of an ideology cannot be assessed if the ideology does not exist to begin with. The gender inequality in Sierra Leone at the time is likely to have impacted the ways in which young RUF fighters

interacted with and viewed the world around them but it does not appear to have been fundamental to the shaping of the revolutionary movement.

An analysis of *Footpaths to Democracy* reveals a surprisingly egalitarian and leftist ideology free of any specifically gender exclusive rhetoric. It describes a version of Sierra Leone of and by the people, working to ensure that every citizen, regardless of gender, physical ability, or even age, has access to the resources and opportunities promised to them simply by nature of being Sierra Leonean. Clearly the actual manifestation of the rebellion deviated from those egalitarian ideals, but at least at the beginning of the movement, these values were paramount. Based solely on the rhetoric used in *Footpaths,* a low level of patriarchy is observed in their official ideology.

Presence of Female Combatants

The RUF represents one of the most significant examples of female fighters participating in violent rebel groups in Sierra Leone. According to Cohen, the percentage of women fighting in the RUF was as high as 24%, making them a significant minority (Cohen, 2013, 396). The avenues through which these women joined the RUF remains suspect (and will be discussed in further detail), however, it is clear that there was a tangible female presence in the RUF.

4.2 The Civil Defense Forces/Kamajors[4]

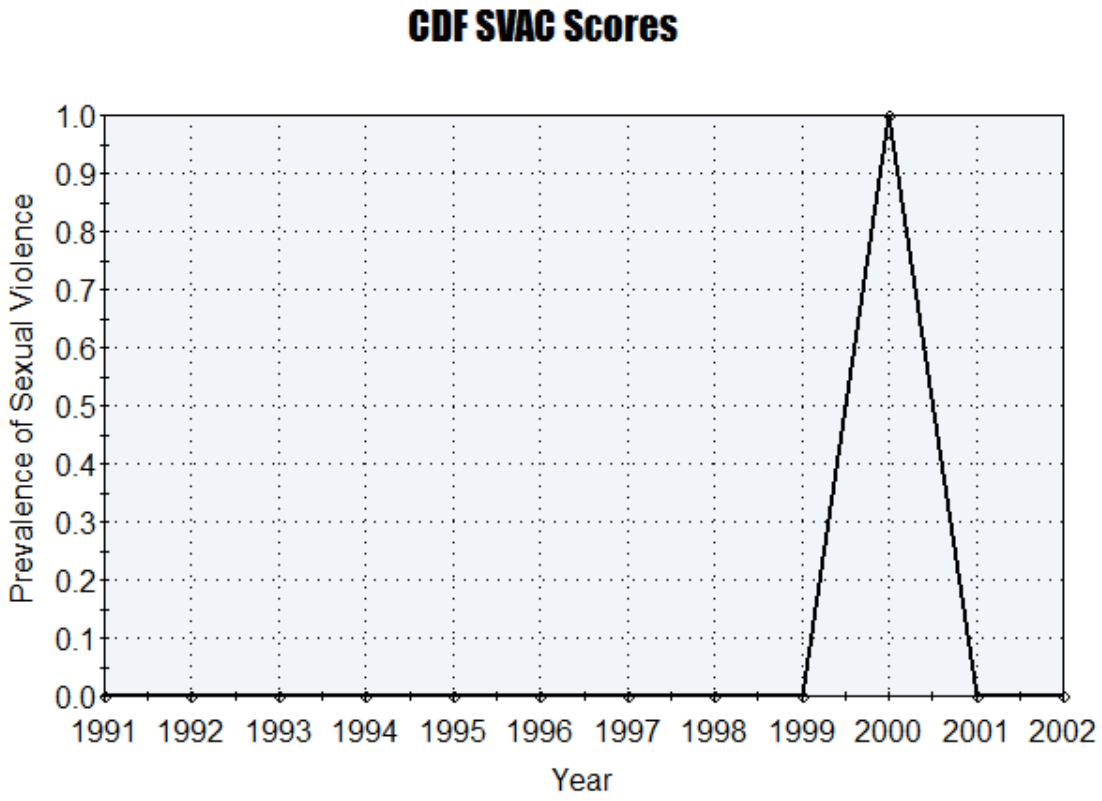
Group Overview

[4] Though the Kamajors fought mainly with the Civil Defense Forces, there were independent Kamajor units throughout the war recorded in the SVAC (Cohen and Nordas, 2013). The two will be discussed in the same section and are generally discussed a singular group however, the results recorded in the SVAC shown in two separate graphs (see below).

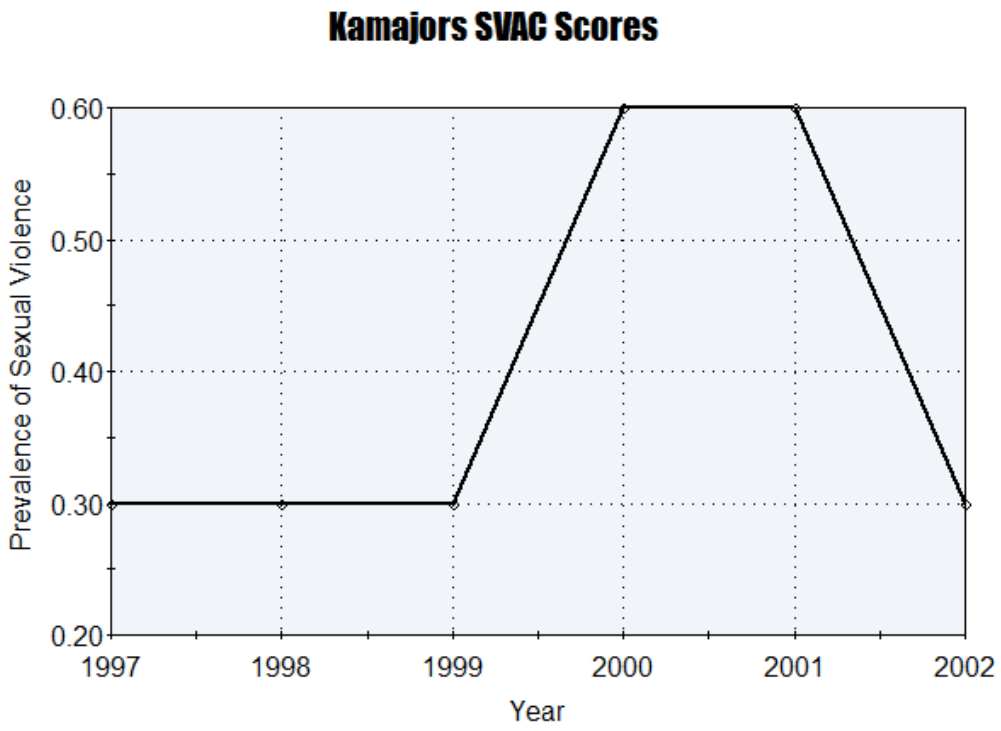
Table 3: Civil Defense Forces/Kamajor Overview

Average SVAC Score	***Participants***	***Ideology***	***Presence of Female Combatants***
CDF: 0.083 Kamajors: 0.4	High; Variety of ethnic groups but majority Kamajor	High; Clear division of gender roles, battle as inherently masculine space, little to no evidence of an overtly egalitarian ideology, maintenance of traditional structures and institutions	Yes, few female combatants, mostly the product of coercive recruitment

Graph 2: Civil Defense Forces SVAC Scores



Graph 3: Kamajors SVAC Scores



"A compromise term meant to invoke both an armed mission and a commitment to democratic processes, 'Civil Defense Forces' served as an umbrella term for disparate militias previously referred to by ethnically coded titles" (Hoffman, 2007, 642). The CDF was a paramilitary group made up of a various ethnic militias who came together in opposition to the RUF. The largest subgroup within the CDF was the Kamajors, the traditional Mende warriors, known as "specialized hunters empowered to use both firearms and occult 'medicines' in pursuit of big game and against all other forces that threatened Mende villages" (Hoffman, 2007, 641). As the civil war raged on however, the "Kamajor" identity was eventually applied to anyone joining the militias and they remained one of the largest forces actively opposing the RUF. They emerged as an

opposition to the RUF as they continued to gain territory and terrorize citizens with increasingly brutal violence.

The CDF was also responsible for sexual violence committed throughout the war, though to a slightly lesser degree than the RUF or the AFRC. When the SVAC scores for every year of active combat are averaged, the CDF receives a score of .083 with the highest score concentrated in the second half of the civil war. This is not to suggest that atrocities perpetrated by the CDF are less problematic than those perpetrated by the RUF, perhaps the CDF adopted (or allowed) such practices as a reaction to the actions of the RUF. The SVAC does not report any instances of recorded sexual violence on the part of the CDF until the year 2000, and only at the level of 1. When the Kamajors are coded as a separate group (from the years 1997-2003), they have higher and more frequent scores than the CDF, though once again, the highest scores are recorded in the year 2000, demonstrating that the worst of their offenses occurred during the later parts of the civil war.

Participants

The word "kamajoisia" (later shortened to kamajor) means "warrior" in Mende, the ethnic group comprising the majority of the CDF forces. Danny Hoffman describes the kamajors as "specialized hunters empowered to use both firearms and occult "medicines" (*hale)* in the pursuit of big game, and more importantly, the various animal, human, and extra-human forces of the forest that threaten rural villages. In Mende mythology, the Kamajors' very identity is predicated on the protection of villages. By the mid-1990's the specialized, exclusively male figures became both the symbolic and material center of community defense mobilizations throughout south-east Sierra Leone

when it became clear that the state military was largely unable or unwilling to defeat the rebel forces of the Revolutionary United Front" (Hoffman, 2007, 641). It is important first to note that the Kamajors were, as Hoffman writes, exclusively male; membership was predicated on gender identity.

In his assessment of the CDF and the Kamajors during the civil war in Sierra Leone, Hoffman argues that they must be considered not as a military group in the traditional sense, but rather a series of social institutions that became militarized as a result of war. "In contexts where the exercise of violence becomes synonymous with the demands of citizenship, adult manhood, or economic survival (all of which were true of the Kamajors), these kinds of non-military, but temporarily militarized social institutions are a more logical entry point for both understanding and engaging the sodalities which constitute the conflict zone" (Hoffman, 2007, 643). CDF fighters did not necessarily consider themselves combatants prior to the onset of civil war, but the existing social networks and structures facilitated their mobilization into a militarized group.

Fighters in the CDF, unlike the RUF, shared social ties and networks and a higher moral code. "Certainly the CDF did not operate in a state of aimless violence. But neither was it a military organization. Its principle organizational logic was one that organizes many spheres of social, political, and economic life throughout sub-Saharan Africa: relations of patronage. What this means in practical terms of people living in the region is that social networks are crucial to everything from employment opportunities to ritual initiations to individual identity. Social action needs to be understood not in terms of individual activities but as a mobilization of social networks" (Hoffman, 2007, 14). The vast majority of CDF combatants came from either shared ethnic backgrounds or were at

the very least, united behind a common goal of stopping the advances and violence of the RUF. The directionality of their involvement matters: they were not individuals recruited into a militant organization, but rather an existing group of individuals that became a militant organization. The influences and social ties that connected them prior to the onset of war remained in place once the conflict started and informed both the ways they interacted with one another as well as the ways they interacted with other combatants and civilians. At least initially, there would have been no need to forcibly bond or socialize combatants through acts of violence such as gang rape as suggested by Cohen (see Cohen, 2016) because those bonds already existed.

The Kamajor/CDF combatants came from a very specific demographic with a culturally significant role established over hundreds of years. The Kamajor warrior identity, an exclusively male category, is based in the ability to defend one's home and way of life. It is a defensive type of violence rather than offensive but requires a degree of aggressive masculinity to perform effectively as a soldier. Considering Duriesmith's discussion of hegemonic masculinity in Sierra Leone, the Kamajors would have positioned to take full advantage of the patriarchal system in which they lived. "In Sierra Leone, manhood is attained through admission to secret societies, marriage, and position within the community" (Duriesmith, 2014, 242). In this conception of hegemonic masculinity, the CDF/Kamajors were best positioned to take full advantage of the patriarchal system. Those who joined Kamajor were essentially initiated into a secret society and assumed a place of prestige within their communities" (Woods and Reese, 2008, 17). Given these observations, the Kamajor/CDF participants can be given a high

score for the prevalence of patriarchy for their ability to fully partake in the hegemonic conception of masculinity.

Ideology

Based again on the criteria that more egalitarian ideologies tend to be less gendered, the CDF/Kamajor ideology exists on the other end of the spectrum. The underlying morals and values are specifically traditional and contain provisions intended exclusively for male combatants. "The moral resonances of Kamajor identity were made manifest in a series of taboos and restrictions imposed on individual combatants by their initiation into the militia. Every Kamajor was required to pass through a series of instructions designed to instill rules of behavior expected of an initiate… Some of these restrictions were general and coincided with taboos demarcating gendered space and the practices of everyday life predating the war… Others specifically stressed a military discipline: a Kamajor was prohibited from looting villages, committing rape, and even having contact with a woman while in battle dress. The penalty for failure to abide by these restrictions was the loss of the occult protections – a serious penalty indeed for an active combatant" (Ferme and Hoffman, 2004, 81).

The Kamajor identity is based first and foremost on the ability to protect one's way of life, a value staunchly different from that of the RUF; rather than a radical reorganization of society, the Kamajor warriors existed to defend the established order. The maintenance of tradition does not make their ideology inherently wrong, however, based on the criteria set forward by Woods and Thomas, it does potentially suggest a lower acceptance of female presence and participation. Similarly, there are clear gendered divisions and codes of behavior set forward that are absent from *Footpaths to*

Democracy. As Ferme and Hoffman note, these clearly demarcated gender roles were not limited merely to instances of war, they predated conflict and applied to areas of everyday life. At the same time, the Kamajor moral contained specific provisions that would have prevented any kind of interactions across the male/female dichotomy while in battle dress. The violation of these norms was such a severe offense that it would result in the removal of combatants "occult protections" central to Kamajor performance in combat. The loss of such protections, even in a symbolic sense could amount to a death sentence, a fate fighters would be unlikely to risk unless absolutely necessary. This does not make Kamajor ideology inherently more egalitarian, but it does suggest a limitation to the potential for any kind of interactions across gender boundaries, especially in war, which could significantly hinder a fighter's opportunities to commit sexual violence.

The Kamajor conception of a warrior is tied specifically to the protection of Mende people and villages rather than on war-making or fighting more generally. "That the category "combatant" holds connotations outside the conventional sense of an active battlefield participant – connotations often strategically employed socially and in dealings with the international community – is demonstrated by a popular Kamajor war song that claims that to fight and defeat the rebels is the very essence of manhood… In other words, to be a Mende man is in a sense to accept the responsibility of fighting in defense of the community – of being a "combatant" (Ferme and Hoffman, 2004, 86). The equation of fighting to masculinity is a type of patriarchal ideology, though not one that is unique to the Kamajors and the CDF. This type of gendered discourse presents a real life example of the idea of a hyper masculinized solider, in which gender performance is based on one's ability to protect and defend what is his by giving into the supposed male

tendency toward aggression and violence (Lopes, 2011). Based on previous theorizing, it would seem logical that the Kamajors, espousing a more overtly gendered rhetoric, would have committed higher levels of sexual violence during conflict.

The fact of the matter remains, however, that despite what the moral code and ideology of the Kamajor's emphasized, they were still responsible for sexual violence during the Sierra Leonean civil war. There are a few possible explanations for this phenomenon. The first is that, as the Kamajors were joined with other local militias and ethnic social networks, the influence of their moral code was diluted as other members committed sexual violence. "As Kamajors grew in numbers, they succumbed to the general lawlessness and lack of discipline that plagued every aspect of Sierra Leonean society and government… the Kamajor began recruiting their own members. Soon, significant numbers of urban street gang members were drawn into the CDF, as were many deserters from the RUF… Soon the Kamajor CDF units were involved in corruption, extortion, mistreatment or murder of captives, and brutality towards civilians unfortunate enough to be caught in the fighting" (Woods and Reese, 2008, 18).

There is also the possibility of a "domino effect" amongst combatant groups embroiled in the same conflict: as one (i.e. the RUF) commits higher and higher levels of sexual violence, other groups begin to follow suit. The timing of the spikes in CDF/Kamajor perpetrated sexual violence occur in the years immediately following the RUF "Operation No Living Thing," suggesting that perhaps there is a threshold of sexual violence that, once reached, forces other combatant groups to adopt the same methods. Both of these theories represent areas for future study but cannot be explored further within the scope of this project.

Amongst the CDF/Kamajor combatants, there is clear evidence of a gender specific ideology, requiring the maintenance of clearly defined warrior masculinity. The gender roles may not be necessarily organized hierarchically, but they are still clearly divided, with each gender defined by specific characteristics and behaviors. There is no evidence to suggest that the CDF/Kamajors sought to alter the existing social structure or institutions, nor any concerted effort to ensure an egalitarian state of gender relations after the war. Overt references to a subjugated female gender are absent but the lack of any egalitarian ideology prevents a low patriarchal score. Based on the above analysis, the CDF/Kamajor ideology is determined to espouse a medium level of patriarchy.

Presence of Female Combatants

There is evidence to suggest that women participated as fighters in the Civil Defense Forces. Cohen (2013) finds that approximately 2% of CDF ranks were, in fact, female. This is only approximately 10% of the female population fighting with the RUF, but is still an important finding. The realities for women fighting in the various combatant groups will be discussed in greater detail, but it is clear that they were present in two of the major armed groups in the Sierra Leone civil war.

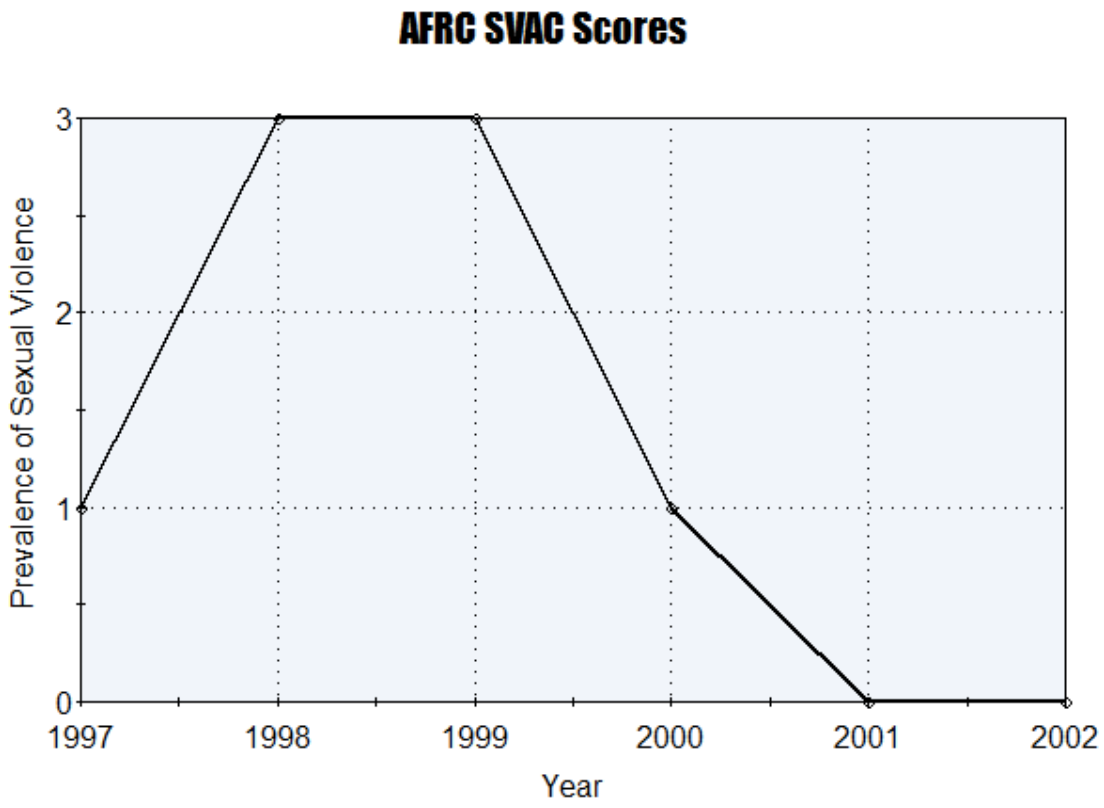
4.3 Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC)

Group Overview

Table 4: Armed Forces Revolutionary Council Overview

Average SVAC Score	***Participants***	***Ideology***	***Presence of Female Combatants***
1.33	Medium; though combatants were actively involved in military culture, they were unable to participate in the hegemonic masculinity of Sierra Leone	Medium; little official ideology put forward, opposition to the existing system and a stated dedication to restore peace, alliance with the RUF suggests at least minimal agreement with their vague vision for the new Sierra Leone	No, there is no evidence to suggest that female fighters were independently associated with the AFRC prior to the RUF alliance

Graph 4: Armed Forces Revolutionary Council SVAC Scores



The Armed Forces Revolutionary Council was founded in 1997 by Johnny Paul Koroma, a former major in the Sierra Leonean army. The group was responsible for the coup that overthrew President Kabbah and his government, installing their own regime in the name of peace and security. The AFRC immediately moved to consolidate their power and control of the country. "Within three days, the AFRC scrapped the constitution, banned all political parties, and shut down the country's private radio stations" (Kerina, Leone, Tam-Baryoh, 2014). In the spring of 1997, the AFRC was able to negotiate the release of RUF leader Foday Sankoh creating an alliance between the two groups and giving Sankoh, along with other prominent RUF leaders, roles in the new government.

Their success was short lived however, as they were ousted in the spring of 1998 and despite the RUF attack on Freetown in 1999, the AFRC was unable to regain any substantive footing in the conflict and eventually dissolved. In June 2007, AFRC combatants were found guilty of several war crimes, including the conscription and use of child soldiers, the first international court to reach a guilty verdict for such a crime. Those who still support the AFRC and Koroma reformed as the Peace and Liberation Party but did not gain enough of the vote to win any seats in Parliament in the 2007 elections.

According the SVAC, the AFRC averages a score of 1.33 for all years of active combat, a level of sexual violence nearly even with that of the RUF. Though it is somewhat surprising that the AFRC perpetrated a slightly higher level of sexual violence, the difference between the two scores is so small (three one-hundredths of a point), the two groups can be considered nearly equal. A specific trend emerges when the scores are

examined more closely from year to year however. In 1997, the year of the AFRC coup, only one source, the state, records sexual violence at the highest level (3); the other two data sources, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, both give the AFRC a score of zero, indicating no evidence of sexual violence. In 1998 however, following the alliance with the RUF, all three sources recorded AFRC sexual violence at a level of 3, a trend that continues through 1999 and aligns with "Operation No Living Thing" in 1999. This significant spike in sexual violence suggests that the RUF alliance may have influenced AFRC wartime conduct and contributed to a much higher usage of sexual violence.

Participants

When ex-Sierra Leone Army (SLA) Major Johnny Paul Koroma formed the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council in 1997 and subsequently launched a coup d'état, he was joined by other ex-SLA soldiers equally dissatisfied with the status quo. The vast majority of AFRC combatants were former soldiers with official military background and training. As with most military groups, soldiers occupied various ranks and social statuses but they were all defined by their military service. There is a reflex to assume that AFRC combatants would have been easily able to take advantage of the patriarchal system in which they lived, but Duriesmith provides a comparison of western conceptions of masculinity and those of Sierra Leone. "In the western world manhood may be achieved through military service, economic enrichment, marriage, or sporting power. In Sierra Leone, manhood is attained through admission to secret societies, marriage, and position within the community" (Duriesmith, 2014, 242). Service in the military in Sierra Leone did not necessarily directly correlate with ability to benefit from

the patriarchal system. In fact, as evidenced in Major Koromah's speeches, a sense of opposition and animosity existed between the AFRC and groups like the Kamajors. The hegemonic conception of manhood in Sierra Leone is centered around the participation in rites of passage and initiation into secret societies, activities from which the AFRC combatants were generally prohibited nor were they able to achieve the level of community significance or respect as Kamajor fighters (Koromah, 1999).

Though the military is often endowed with its own culture of masculinity (see Lopes, 2011; Sjoberg, 2013), in the context of Sierra Leone that appears to mean somewhat less than membership in social networks like the Kamajors (Duriesmith, 2014). It is true that the AFRC combatants would likely have had some degree of agency, but especially when influential government positions were allotted on a patrimonial basis, their degree of upward mobility would have been limited. This makes it impossible to award the AFRC fighters a high degree of patriarchy, but positions them somewhere between the RUF and CDF/Kamajors, giving them a medium score.

Ideology

The AFRC staged a coup in 1997, citing the government's failure to end the war following the 1996 peace agreement. They claimed overthrow of the Kabbah regime was in the name of peace and security and additionally some accused the government of engaging in patrimonial appointments based on ethnic group. In an address from Freetown in 1997, Major Johnny Paul Koroma, leader of the AFRC, describes the AFRC as being inherently at odds with the Kamajors. "…the Kamajors instantly targeted the Army as their perceived enemy. However, the military overlooked the activities of the Kamajors and fought alongside them as local forces, but when the SLPP came to power,

the SLPP government emphasized that the Kamajors should be given ante-military training which caused serious confrontation between the soldiers and the Kamajors… Welfare of the Kamajors was treated more seriously than the welfare of the Army… The Kamajors in the eyes of the SLPP suddenly became a superior force, even though the Armed Forces is constitutionally responsible for the security of the state. The Kamajors started to engage the Army in battles causing the death of many soldiers" (Koromah, 1997). The AFRC positioned themselves in staunch opposition to the Kamajors and all that they stood for. There is clear intention to move away from the traditional structures central to the Kamajor identity and even an aggressive attempt to paint them as the villain.

At the same time, in his multiple addresses, Major Koromah discussed the intent of the coup not as the result of "self motives, but purely to prevent the country from being plunged into a bloodbath of tribal war, resulting from the malicious policies adopted by the former government" (Koromah, 1997). Unlike the RUF, there was no published manifesto or clearly delineated vision for Sierra Leone; their sole goal was to end the war and restore peace and security, making AFRC ideology more difficult to analyze. A later address to the elders reveals a slightly more understanding and reasonable vision of the AFRC as Koromah describes their willingness to accept both the RUF and the Kamajors in the new order. Whether or not these promises were made genuinely or out of necessity to present a specific image is difficult to discern, however there is a clear intent to offer some degree of concessions. When examined from the perspective of the criteria that has been used throughout this study, the AFRC demonstrates a clear intention to overthrow the existing system and institutions. They sought to change the status quo and implement

their own set of policies and standards to counteract what they saw as a major contributor to the continued instability and violence. From what little documentation exists of AFRC official ideology, there are few overtly explicitly egalitarian policies or references to gender equality, however there is a stated commitment and goal of improving Sierra Leone for all its citizens. Considering the alliance with the RUF, it stands to reason that the AFRC agreed, at least to some degree, with the new vision of Sierra Lenne described in *Footpaths to Democracy,* which can be considered, theoretically at least, relatively egalitarian and leftist. It is clear that the AFRC ideology does not exist on either end of the ideological spectrum but will likely fall somewhere in the middle, warranting a medium score in the ideological category.

Presence of Female Combatants

There is no evidence to suggest that women were actively fighting in the AFRC (Cohen, 2013), as no presence was noted in ex-combatant surveys conducted by Cohen. Following the alliance with the RUF, a group comprised of up to 24 per cent women, it is possible that more female fighters may have been in closer contact to the AFRC, but there does not appear to be a portion of permanent female fighters.

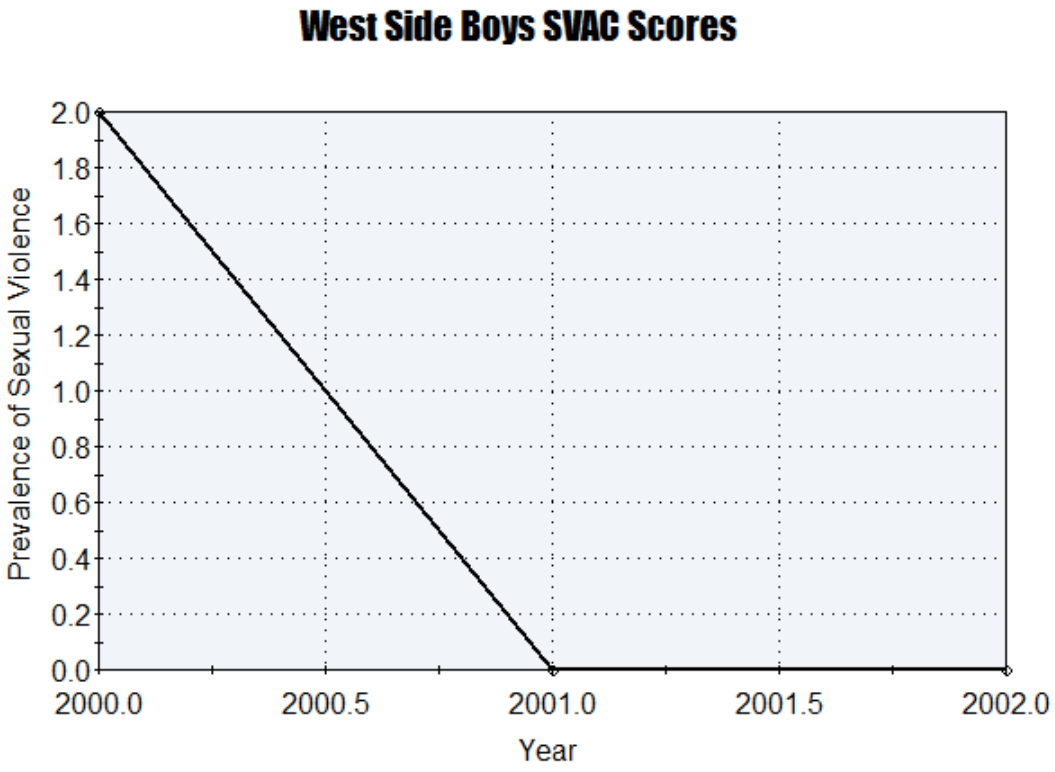
4.4 The West Side Boys (WSB)

Group Overview

Table 5: West Side Boys Overview

Average SVAC Score	***Participants***	***Ideology***	***Presence of Female Combatants***
0.67	Low; Largely former AFRC/RUF combatants forming into a splinter group	Low; Little officially ideology put forward, rejection of traditional structures and institutions, status as outsiders	Yes, though they appear to have served a more supportive role rather than as active combatants

Graph 5[5]: West Side Boys SVAC Scores



[5] Given the short existence of the West Side Boys, the x-axis scale was changed to .5 years.

Though smaller than both the RUF and the CDF, the West Side Boys were still a significant militant group during the civil war in Sierra Leone. Following the retreat of the RUF from Freetown in 1999, "…soldiers coalesced afresh around commanders with whom they had become allied or associated during the fighting. The most notable new sub-faction to emerge out of this trend was the splinter group known as the *West Side Boys"* (Truth and Reconciliation Committee, 2002). The group officially dissolved in 2000 after the failed Operation Barras, in which they captured several British officers patrolling as a part of peacekeeping forces. Their leader Foday Kallay was captured and interrogated, eventually renouncing his actions and vowing to give up his life of violence to affect change through politics. They attacked and mutilated civilians and drug use was rampant within their ranks. The West Side Boys were often perceived as less organized and less political than the RUF or the CDF, as more a band of mavericks or bandits than an actual legitimate militia (Utas and Jörgel, 2008). By the time the group emerged in 1998, Sierra Leone was already engulfed in conflict and the West Side Boys were neither large enough nor influential enough to quell the chaos. They joined a loose coalition of the CDF and Sierra Leone Army to fight against the RUF and keep valuable locations from falling into enemy hands.

According to the SVAC, the West Side Boys perpetuated sexual violence only in 2000, and even then, only two of the three sources (the state and Amnesty International) give them a score of 3. In stark contrast, Human Rights Watch gives the WSB a score of 0 for the year 2000, raising a few questions about the validity of the score given the extreme variance. It is possible that Human Rights Watch uses different collection and reporting methods than the other two sources, but in general, the WSB were not a major

perpetrator of sexual violence during the course of the civil war, averaging a score of 0.67 for all years of conflict involvement. The massive spike in the year 2000, however, is consistent with increased scores for the CDF directly following the RUF "Operation No Living Thing", again suggesting the potential existence of an influence between the levels of sexual violence between one group and others involved in the same conflict.

Participants

The West Side Boys were largely made up of former members of the Sierra Leone Army as well as the RUF and the AFRC, along with fighters (often children) recruited from the local civilian population. Of the defectors of other groups who came to join the West Side Boys Utas and Jörgel write: write: "AFRC had a large support base among certain groups of urban, socially marginalized youth, many of them had transformed into self-styled soldiers" (Utas and Jörgel, 2008, 497). The WSB was also able to gain members amongst convicts escaped from the Pademba Road Jail released as a result of the 1997 coup. Despite the presence of fighters with varying degrees of combat and leadership experience, they WSB were not connected by any shared ethnicity or philosophical leanings.

In 2000, the BBC published a brief article about the West Side Boys, describing them being "known for wearing bizarre clothing – women's wigs and flip-flops are favorites – and being almost perpetually drunk" (BBC, 2000). The WSB were rarely seen as an organized, militant group like their contemporaries but rather as a band of rag-tag youths capitalizing on the chaos of civil war but as Utas and Jörgel (2008) point out, they were able to function as a militant group far more successfully than was immediately evident from the outside. Members with formal military training were able to, at least to

some degree, steer the group into strategically beneficial engagements. “The battles in which the WSB engaged had been screened by the leadership to ensure that they contributed to the overall goal of carving out space in the power structure and the political reality of Sierra Leone” (Utas and Jörgel, 2008, 499). The West Side Boys were not without leadership or direction, despite their portrayal as such.

The structure of the group itself relied less on ethnic or cultural ties and more on commonalities in social status. “Significantly, the WSB social structure is discussed in terms of ‘extended family’ or relatedness based on social marginality, contained in the epic expression of ‘youth.’ The WSB viewed themselves as part of a ‘youth revolution,’ where they fought to take power from gerontocratic inequality, and so they modeled their way of organizing on the relative equality of the football team. Youth status and the alternative, youthful, father figure of the ‘coachie’ coincided with that of the commander, while the power structure was modeled on military rank obtained through individual skills in the battlefield rather than on age” (Utas and Jörgel, 2008, 498). There are two significant conclusions that can be drawn from this. The first is the categorization of the WSB as a counter culture and predominantly youth centric movement. Similar to the RUF, there were no guiding ideologues or especially well educated revolutionaries to lead their ranks. That is not to say the WSB was without goals, but they lacked the personnel and structure of a mature, intellectually based revolutionary movement.

The second conclusion to be drawn from Utas and Jörgel’s work is their discussion of the social structure and intergroup relationships. The WSB self organized as a meritocracy in lieu of replicating the traditional, hierarchical power structure that had dominated Sierra Leone for generations. Age is not synonymous with knowledge, though

leadership is still predicated on identification as male. There was, however, some reference to traditional family structure. Utas and Jörgel go on to mention that children, both male and female, "attached themselves, or were forcibly attached, to WSB soldiers," a process deemed "adopting families" (Utas and Jörgel, 2008, 497). The process of "adopting" is clearly far from voluntary but the reference to more normative family practices serve, no doubt, to make it sound more palatable.

As the West Side Boys were a splinter group of both the RUF and the AFRC, many of their combatants had previous experience in the rebellion and had been influenced by their former group affiliations. In both cases, they would have effectively been blocked from full and meaningful participation in the patriarchal structure. They did not have positions of social influence and in many cases, like those who escaped from prison, were social outsiders. The social organization of the group rejected the traditional and familial patriarchal structure and as such, the WSB can be awarded a low score in regards to the degree of patriarchy present amongst the combatants.

Ideology

Unlike the RUF, the West Side Boys had no clear ideology or end goal for Sierra Leone; they did not produce any kind of official manifesto, nor were they bound by any cultural moral code like that of the Kamajors. They are generally considered to be a AFRC splinter group, though they eventually did declare support for the Kabbah regime. On at least one occasion, they joined with the SLA and the Kamajors to fight against the RUF and in fact, an opposition to RUF control seems to be one of their only discernable positions. Because of the lack of codified ideological rhetoric, their views and values

must be pieced together from personal accounts, conflict records, and various scholarly works about the group.

Surprisingly, American "gangster rap" played a significant role in defining their identity, getting the inspiration for the moniker "West Side Boys" from both their geographic origin within Sierra Leone and from the influence of the music of American rapper Tupac Shakur. "During the Sierra Leone conflict – a war almost devoid of ideology – Tupac's projection of a justified sense of revenge offered often-conscripted combatants some sort of meaning to the violence they were witnessing and perpetuating. In Shakur they perceived a sympathetic voice of their otherwise incomprehensible experiences and unjustifiable actions" (Rogers, 2011). Given that the Sierra Leonean civil war had virtually no elements of ethnic cleansing or racial politics, it has often been described as a war of insiders vs. outsiders. Various scholars have argued that the war represented a total effort on the part of the marginalized citizenry to fully destroy the old system (see Hoffman, 2006; Richards, 2002; Diouf, 2003). The movement away from traditionally organized militant groups, the distaste for the patrimonial system, even the violation of the taboo of attacking unarmed citizens can be envisioned as attempts to irrevocably damage the old way of life so much so that there would be no choice but to rebuild from scratch. Tupac, it has been suggested, expressed what it meant to be a socially marginalized "other" and gave voice to the feelings of discontent that had been simmering below the surface for years prior to the onset of war (Iwamoto, 2003; Rogers 2011).

The work of Tupac and other rappers like him has often been overgeneralized and written off as problematic and one dimensional, encouraging violent lifestyles and gang

behavior. Though the West Side Boys appear to have identified largely with the surface level messages in Tupac's writing, scholars such as Derek Iwamoto offer a more nuanced picture of the late rapper (see Iwamoto, 2003). The music itself was able to transcend cultural and geographic boundaries and become important to a group of young men fighting in a war a world away from Tupac's home of California, a phenomenon that Iwamoto suggests might be predicated on a shared identity as outsiders. "It is often noted that the collective hardships of witnessing death and the constant struggles poverty conditions tend to create a tight and unified bond among gang members" (Iwamoto, 2003, 46). Tupac gave voice to the WSB shared identity and outsider status while validating their survival in a system that had long ceased to work for them, even before the onset of civil war.

This is not to say that the influence of Tupac's music is the cause of any patriarchal inclinations held by the West Side Boys, but rather it gave them an avenue through which to express ideas that had already existed. "'Tupac offers a kind of psychological solace in the midst of this chaos. In a lot of different contexts, certainly not only in Sierra Leone, Tupac offered this image of resilience, invincibility, bravado, and hypermasculinity'" (Rogers, 2011). Considering that many WSB fighters had been previously associated with other rebel groups, it is unlikely that the image of a hyper masculine, merciless, unyielding soldier was an original concept, but Tupac provided an ideal to which they could aspire.

The ideological dynamics of the WSB prove to be somewhat of a mixed bag. There was no clear attempt to replicate the traditional family structure nor was there any overt mention of the oppression of women. The lack of sexual violence perpetrated by the

West Side Boys could be due to a variety of factors. It is possible that patriarchy in this case, was not sufficient to evolve into sexual violence. It is also possible, that considering they entered the conflict close to the midway point and existed for a mere two years, they did not have time to devolve into widespread sexual violence. Considering the pattern of the CDF, in which their highest levels of sexual violence occur after several years of fighting, it is possible that they were not active for long enough for their conduct to escalate to such forms of violence. Even the RUF did not start out by committing mass rape; they fought for several years before their most brutal violence occurred. This is not to say that the West Side Boys were innocent of extreme violence, but they never adopted sexual violence as a frequent method either. The idea that combatant groups must be involved in a conflict for a certain amount of time before committing high levels of sexual violence is an additional question for further research but is not possible to include in the parameters of this work. It is also possible that the WSB provides additional support for Cohen's hypothesis of combat socialization, as fighters had no shared cultural identity or moral code.

The West Side Boys never put forth any kind of official documented manifesto so its ideological stance must be pieced together based on secondary sources and information. Based on this analysis, there is a clear continuation of the RUF rejection of traditional structures and institutions and a movement away from the status quo in Sierra Leone. This does not necessarily amount to an egalitarian ideology, however, there is some degree of rejection of the status quo. There is relatively little discussion of the ideal gender roles in the new Sierra Leone and though there was a reliance and emphasis on the work of American rapper Tupac, it seems to be much more applicable to the realm of

social standing and "outsider" status rather than as direct inspiration for gender relations. Because of this, a low level of patriarchal ideology can be attributed to the West Side Boys.

Presence of Female Combatants

Data regarding the gender breakdown of West Side Boys combatants is extremely sparse, but it is clear that women were involved in at least an auxiliary sense. When coming to the West Side Base, "soldiers seldom arrived alone, but brought with them families, wives, girlfriends, children, and other dependents" (Utas and Jörgel, 2008, 497) and girls were included in the process of "adopting families." To what extent these women and girls were being actively armed and sent into battle is difficult to discern, however it is clear that they existed amongst the WSB ranks and were involved in the structure and function of the group.

4.5 Executive Outcomes (EO)

Group Overview[6]

Table 6: Executive Outcomes Overview

Average SVAC Score	***Participants***	***Ideology***	***Presence of Female Combatants***
0	High; Career soldiers with significant military training, security personnel, highly trained, easily able to participate in hegemonic masculinity	Low; No specific ideological standing or vision for Sierra Leone, business group dedicated to efficiency and service of legitimate governments	No, there is no evidence that any of the EO mercenaries were female

[6] No graph was included for the Executive Outcome's average SVAC scores as they were not found to have committed any sexual violence during the duration of the Sierra Leonean civil war.

The Executive Outcomes, a mercenary group operating out South Africa, gained notoriety in the 1990's for their involvement in the Angolan civil war. In 1995 the RUF was advancing on Freetown and the Sierra Leonean government, looking for a way to slow them, turned to the EO for help. They were tasked to recapture lucrative diamond mines from the RUF, find and eliminate the RUF headquarters, and provide support and training to local militia forces resisting the RUF (Woods and Reese, 2008, 29). Though the EO was only deployed in Sierra Leone for the duration of seven months between 1997 and 1998, "it was able to restore order to Freetown, retake the major diamond mines located in the Kono district, and force the RUF to seek peace" (Woods and Reese, 2008, 30). Executive Outcomes disbanded shortly after the end of their Sierra Leone operations in early 1999.

According to the SVAC, the Executive Outcomes did not perpetuate any recorded sexual violence during their limited involvement in the conflict. Existing reports indicate that they had little direct contact with civilian populations and were contractually obligated to perform specific functions, often in the form of airstrikes. Their participation raises other ethical questions about the participation of outside mercenary groups in civil conflicts, but on the subject of sexual violence, the EO is not a significant player.

Participants

The EO "recruited most of its members from the 32d Battalion, Reconnaissance Commandos, the Parachute Brigade, and the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Unit… EO maintained a permanent staff of 14 with ready access to over 2,000 recruits. Within a few weeks EO assembled a force of 500 military advisors with 3.000 highly trained combat soldiers" (Woods and Reese, 2008, 29). These operatives

were all highly trained, individually recruited professional mercenaries. They had backgrounds in military service or private security and originated from outside of Sierra Leone; their only individual stake in the outcome of the conflict was in the fulfillment of the functions for which they were contractually obligated.

Given the high degree of military training within the EO, operatives were trained to be as efficient as possible in whatever their mission, whether it be dispelling enemy forces or training local fighters (Richards, 2006). Scott Fitzsimmons discusses the decentralized nature of the group in his work "When the Few Stood Against the Many: Explaining Executive Outcomes' Victory in the Sierra Leonean Civil War," as fighters were encouraged to creatively problem-solve and make decisions based on what they believed to be best in the moment. Such creative on-the-spot thinking would require a substantial amount of tactical training and knowledge. They were not a ragtag band of fighters forced together, but a group of career soldiers (Fitzsimmons, 2013). So confident were the EO in their ability to be effective that they included a provision in their contract that guaranteed "troops and equipment in less than two weeks and began making a noticeable difference on the ground within ten days" (Woods and Reese, 2008, 34).

The Executive Outcomes mercenaries were predominantly former soldiers and career military officers with extensive training and tactical knowledge. They came from a culture of efficiency and precision, intended to fulfill contractual obligations as effectively as possible. There are no women recorded as having been among their ranks, as is common in mercenary organizations, and as career soldiers it is likely that EO operatives had long been exposed to an inherently masculine military culture (see Higate, 2012) and were able to fully partake in a more western conception of hegemonic

masculinity (Duriesmith, 2014). Based on these observations, it is possible to award the EO a high score for the level of demographic patriarchy.

Ideology

Unlike the other groups involved in the Sierra Leonean civil war, the Executive Outcomes had no ideological or philosophical stake in the conflict; their participation was merely a business deal, earning the company $1.8 million per month (Woods and Reese, 2008, 29). Though little documentation about the Executive Outcomes official policy is still accessible, the company professed to work only for legitimate governments to restore stability and maintain peace. Al Venter quotes EO Chief Executive Eeben Barlow in his work "Gunship for Hire"*:* "…EO, unlike earlier mercenary organizations, works only for legitimate governments and will not participate in any kind of anti-government revolt, either actively or by training rebels. 'We are a high profile and such activity would immediately make us a renegade organization. The world is too small of such activity'" (Venter, 1996). According to these types of statements, the EO did appear to have some guiding moral principles in their commitment to stability, though their refusal to side with any party other than the government had the potential to aid corrupt regimes.

Deborah Avant touches on the EO's operations as different from the traditional private security group as the provided active combat services in her work "Private Security Companies": "Executive Outcomes…became famous for missions that included the deployment of armed personnel on the battlefield… EO's website boasted strategic and tactical military advisory services, sophisticated military training packages in land, sea, and air warfare, peacekeeping or 'persuasion' services, advice on selections of weapon systems, and acquisition, and paramilitary services" (Avant, 2005, 124). The

Executive Outcomes were not an ideologically driven group, but one seeking only to make money in exchange for goods and services. Mercenary groups and private security companies tend to be almost entirely male (there are almost no statistics on female mercenaries) and while that type of hyper masculine environment may be the product of patriarchal conceptions of masculinity, it is unlikely that any such existing attitudes influenced their conduct in Sierra Leone; they were business men fulfilling the terms of a contract.

The EO ideology is particularly difficult to assess in terms of patriarchal leanings due largely in part to its significant differences from the other combatant groups involved in the Sierra Leonean civil war. As previously noted, they had no ideological stake in the conflict itself and were involved as the result of a business contract. Altering the previously used criteria for assessing group ideology could prove problematic to the integrity of this research, therefore using the same assessment, the EO can be scored as low, considering the lack of gendered rhetoric, or even conflict specific ideas.

Presence of Female Combatants

Finding a list of individual mercenaries employed by EO is next to impossible, but from the few sources about that do exist, it does not appear that any were female, especially considering that female mercenaries are already extremely rare.

4.7 The Role of Female Combatants

Perhaps one of the most shocking things about the Sierra Leonean civil war is the presence and participation of female combatants. There are estimates of anywhere between 10 and 30 percent of combatants were, in fact, women (Coulter, 2008, 55) and as many as 5,200 women took part in the process of disarming and demobilizing the various

combatant groups (Cohen, 2013, 396). Additionally, there are significant documented cases of female fighters committing acts of extreme violence, including sexual violence, after having received military training from group leaders. “Beyond holding women down, interviewees witnessed female combatants raping other women with objects: “Women rebels would often be involved in rapes – some of the women RUF would hold onto the victims’ hands, some women RUF would rape the women with bottles and sticks.” Fighters noted that the women fighters did not seem to empathize with their victims” (Cohen, 2013, 404).

It would seem counterproductive for women to involve themselves in patriarchal gendered violence, as they would be taking part in a system created to sustain their oppression and subordination. hooks describes the need to recognize female participation in, and indeed perpetration of, patriarchal structures. “We need to highlight the role women play in perpetuating and sustaining patriarchal culture so that we recognize patriarchy as a system women and men support equally, even if men receive more rewards from that system” (hooks, 2004, 19). While patriarchy is a system that overwhelmingly benefits men, that does not bar women from participating. In the example of Sierra Leone, female soldiers subvert the perception of women as the perpetual victims of war. “The traditional perspective – a set of arguments that features common themes and assumptions about gender roles and violence – reflects the widely held belief that women are more nurturing and less bellicose than men, either by their nature or through socialization. In conflict settings, women are usually not perceived to be combatants or even to be actively involved in the violence of war. Indeed, as one scholar argues, the need to specify the phrase “female combatant” itself implies that the

conventional understanding is of a male-only fighting force" (Cohen, 2013, 389). It is true that these women took up arms and actively participated in combat, a space traditionally reserved for men, but their involvement in the Sierra Leonean civil war stems from a lack of agency rather than an independent choice; it is not an example of female empowerment, but the product of violent and coercive gendered interactions.

The avenues through which these women joined the various combatant groups must first be considered. Of the recorded cases of female fighters, it is extraordinarily rare that any appear to have taken up arms as a product of their own choice (see Coulter, 2008; Human Rights Watch, 1999); their involvement was a product of kidnapping and coercion. "… almost all were abducted and raped. Many became both 'bush wives' and fighters, some by force, some for survival, and others by choice. Many girls and women [Coulter] talked to said that they had been trained as fighters during their time with the rebels, soldiers, or militias, but some admitted to having fought only intermittently, in between serving as spies, laborers, 'bush wives,' or sex slaves, making the definition of who was a fighter more complicated" (Coulter, 2008, 58). Coulter's work illuminates the intricate and nuanced nature of female involvement in the Sierra Leonean insurgent groups. The presence and participation of women in the various fighting factions of the war cannot be an example of female agency or the antithesis of patriarchy if those women did not join the movement as a product of their own choice.

It is important to also consider the symbolic meaning of female participation in armed combatant groups and their perpetuation of violence, sexual or otherwise. "Although female fighters in Sierra Leone did not fight primarily to improve of empower their own or other women's lot in society at large, but rather to survive (see Coulter,

2006, and cf. West, 2000), individual female fighters could definitely *feel* empowered when they had a gun" (Coulter, 2008, 60). It would be problematic to equate this with true empowerment; there is a significant distinction between empowerment as the product of one's own choices and choices made under coercive circumstances. It can be tempting to view female fighters as a challenge to the traditional male sovereignty in the realm of armed conflict, but in the case of Sierra Leone, the phenomenon of female fighters exists precisely as a product of male sovereignty. Combatant groups had the physical power and strength to force women into participation and to hold the threat of physical harm or death should they fail to comply.

There is also a temptation to define these women solely by their status as "fighters" but the reality is once again infinitely more nuanced. "Most women fighting in the war have had multiple experiences of having been at one time or another fighters, rape victims, looters, mothers, or lovers. In spite of women's active participation in the war, they were clearly more vulnerable to sexual abuse and forced labor because they were women" (Coulter, 2008, 61). Coulter's work emphasizes the fact that these women, even when crossing into traditionally masculine roles, were defined first and foremost by their femininity. The perception of these women as fighters and nothing more inherently negates a substantial portion of their lived experiences. Had the notion of gender been totally removed from the equation, the phenomenon of "bush wives" would have been either nonexistent or female fighters would have been afforded the opportunity to take "bush husbands." Their gender identity placed them in a category from which male fighters were exempt.

"There seem to have been a number of reasons why abducted Sierra Leonean women became fighters. Survival and control was an issue for some; for many others it was fear, anger, and even resignation, but there were some who mentioned the prestige and resources involved in being a fighter as their prime motivator… the revision of their initial positions of vulnerability altered their position in the rebel hierarchy, which in a sense empowered them and rendered them some sense of authority in the trajectory of their own lives, however illusory… By becoming a perpetrator, one perhaps also feels that one escapes being a victim, and perhaps the only way to gain even the least bit of control over one's own life in this milieu was to take up a weapon and assume the role of a killer" (Coulter, 2008, 61). This understanding of female combatants fits the understanding of Stockholm Syndrome, as described by Dee Graham's book *Loving to Live.* She writes about Stockholm Syndrome in the context of abusive relationships, as women act in ways they likely would not have under normal circumstances in order to avoid harm from their abuser (Graham, 1994). The case of Sierra Leone can be understood as an incredibly high stakes version of the same phenomenon: many of the women Coulter spoke with describe their actions and experiencing during war as a way to avoid being physically harmed, sexually assaulted, or even killed. They were violently brought into the system and forced to engage in that same violence in order to survive.

Coulter (2008) conducted a series of interviews with former female fighters. One such woman, Aminata, describes her experience: "When they ask me to shoot or I see someone being shot, I always think if it happens to me I will die. Then at times I always feel that one day they will shoot at me and kill me. So I was not really happy… it is because of command. If you don't do it you will also be killed. No one is happy to kill

someone when you are normal… If they see any sign of sorrow on your face, you will also be killed. Because either they kill us or we shed innocent blood" (Coulter, 2008, 60). For women like Aminata, fighting and killing was a way to avoid death herself. It was not a choice made of her own accord, but one made out of necessity.

While it is absolutely true that these women suffered unimaginable fates at the hands of their captors, that does not mean that they are innocent of the atrocities they committed. "Indeed, most of my informants have been victims in any of the definitions of the word. But this does not mean that some of these women did not also at times loot, kill, and cut off hands…" (Coulter, 2008, 68). The question then becomes one of agency and victimhood. To what extent can a victim exercise true agency? Can these women be held responsible for their actions or are they merely a product of their circumstances? The argument here is essentially one of autonomy versus agency. Autonomy is defined as "self-government" or the "self-directing freedom and especially moral independence" (Miriam Webster Dictionary) and agency is defined as the "capacity, condition, or state of acting or of exerting power" (Miriam Webster Dictionary). Female combatants in Sierra Leone may have had the agency to make decisions, that is, they had the physical ability to carry out their own actions however, they lacked the autonomy to choose those actions; their circumstances limited the extent of the options available to them. Had they been afforded the choice to join a combatant group, unblemished by the threat of physical harm or death, it could then have been considered a truly autonomous decision. Coercive recruitment practices negates the argument that female combatants represent an effective challenge to the patriarchy present amongst the rebel groups in Sierra Leone and instead prevents women from assuming full autonomy in their decisions.

The cultural context of female combatants is also imperative. “Of importance here, however, is the fact that in rural Sierra Leone traditional culture, women are not believed to be inherently peaceful. On the contrary, the traditional discourse on femininity implies that women are by nature wild and dangerous, they are metaphorically “from the bush”, and therefore they need to be controlled and domesticate (cf. Ferme, 2001; Leach, 1994). What life with the rebels in the bush did was to unleash their wild and unpredictable behavior” (Coulter, 2008, 65). These female fighters were not, in fact, subverting behavioral expectations but were actually fulfilling a culturally specific gendered norm. Coulter’s analysis implies that the combatant groups saw the women they brought into their ranks as potential sources of untapped power. Rather than convincing them to go against their inherently “wild” nature, they merely allowed them the space to exist as they would in their “natural” state. This, in a metaphorical sense, also liberates combatants abusing and coercing these women into fighting from any blame or guilt. If they were simply encouraging tendencies that already existed, they did not create violent female soldiers, but merely set them free from the constraints of society; they were setting something free rather than creating it from scratch. The battlefield then becomes a space of liberation for these women, freeing them from the performance of socially informed gender roles and allowing them to return to the truest versions of themselves. The combatant groups are not captors, but liberators. Regardless of how combatant groups perceived their own practices of forced recruitment, the fact remains that many women – and men – who fought within their ranks were not present as a product of their own decisions. Similarly to the seemingly egalitarian views espoused in *Footpaths* that fell by the wayside as the conflict continued and escalated, the conception of women as in

possession of a special power becomes problematic when that power is harnessed through violence and coercion.

"Women who oppose female stereotypes in war will often be regarded as deviant or unnatural… female fighters have often been regarded by the civilian population as monsters, barbarians, and frequently as more cold blooded than male rebels" (Coulter, 2008, 88). From a theoretical perspective, women who take up arms and actively perpetuate wartime violence are not only participating in the breakdown of peacetime societal norms, but are also circumventing the normative assumptions of female behavior in war, creating a kind of double deviation. Men in wartime are expected to be violent, and while the degree to which that violence escalates may be shocking, their perpetuation of violence fulfills a preexisting behavioral expectation, but women perpetuating the same violence challenge their very characterization as women.

Scholars like Chiseche Salome Mibenge offer a different explanation for the presence of women within the ranks of rebel organizations. Though not codified in *Footpaths to Democracy,* the practice of abducting women as "bush wives" became commonplace for the RUF during the war. This practice, however, this may not be a manifestation of patriarchal ideology. Mibenge argues in "All Men Rape: Gender and Violence in Sierra Leone," that it was in fact an attempt to delegitimize traditional institutions such as marriage rather than a reflection of preexisting ideals. "The commissioners put the idea forward that the abduction of girls as bush wives and sex slaves during the war could be partly attributed to the traditional beliefs that governed the issues before the war. It is a harmful sentiment that ignores the evidence that the RUF sought to degrade culture and traditional institutions… Social life and mores in the bush

were impossible to navigate and contrary to anything known in peacetime. In effect, the rebels turned law and morality on their heads: what was immoral became not only justifiable but even heroic" (Mibenge, 2013,122). Cultural and social institutions and ideas that existed prior to the onset of war are still foundational to RUF behavior, but the directionality of their influence changes: war becomes an avenue to dismantle them rather than exacerbating them.

The presence of female combatants in the various groups studied in this work was included under the supposition that female fighters would challenge the traditional masculine order of armed rebel groups. The perception of women as inherently peaceful and absent from armed conflict would, theoretically, be subverted by their participation in war. The reality of Sierra Leone, however, has proved to be infinitely more nuanced and intricate. Most of the female fighters were brought into their respective rebel groups as the product of coercive recruitment practices; many had been forced to watch or even participate in the death of their families (Human Rights Watch, 1999) and joining the rebels could offer a degree of respite from the violence and danger. Upon further investigation and study, female presence and participation is not synonymous with equality. A distinction between agency and autonomy must be made. For most of these women, they did not choose to enter rebel groups or to perpetuate violence as the product of their own will. They may have had the agency – that is, the ability – to carry out acts of war and in some cases may have done so without direct threat or coercion but it is unlikely that any of these women were able to exercise full autonomy in their choices. The very nature of their situation ensured the suppression of their free will.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Findings

Through the process of analyzing combatant group participants and ideology, it has become clear that there is not sufficient evidence to support the hypothesis put forth in this work and therefore must be rejected in favor of the null hypothesis: patriarchy is not positively correlated with sexual violence in the case of Sierra Leone. The RUF and the AFRC were by far the most severe perpetrators of sexual violence in the Sierra Leonean civil war, but contrary to the initial assumptions, RUF official ideology was surprisingly egalitarian, giving specific inclusion to minority groups including women, the elderly, and the disabled. Individual RUF combatants were often unable to fulfill the hegemonic conception of masculinity and women made up a substantial minority of the RUF ranks. The forced recruitment method meant that, at times, combatants had very little in common with one another, both in terms of demographics as well as ideology. It seems that, at least to some degree, the complete lack of shared ideology and cohesion at the level of group leaders contributed to the devolution into unprecedented cruelty.

Though not codified in any of the groups' official ideologies, the practice of abducting women as "bush wives" became common practice during the war, however, this may not in fact, be a manifestation of patriarchal ideology. Chiseche Salome Mibenge argues in "All Men Rape: Gender and Violence in Sierra Leone," that it was a in fact an attempt to delegitimize traditional institutions such as marriage rather than a reflection of preexisting ideals. "The commissioners put the idea forward that the abduction of girls as bush wives and sex slaves during the war could be partly attributed to the traditional beliefs that governed the issues before the war. It is a harmful sentiment

that ignores the evidence that the RUF sought to degrade culture and traditional institutions… Social life and mores in the bush were impossible to navigate and contrary to anything known in peacetime. In effect, the rebels turned law and morality on their heads: what was immoral became not only justifiable but even heroic" (Mibenge, 2013,122). Cultural and social institutions and ideas that existed prior to the onset of war are still foundational to RUF behavior, but the directionality of their influence changes: war becomes an avenue to dismantle them rather than exacerbating them.

The RUF's perpetuation of sexual violence peaks in 1998 and 1999, receiving a score of 3 from all three reporting sources recorded in the SVAC. Their earliest years were marked by scores of 0 or -99, signifying either a lack of sexual violence or a lack of existing reports. The massive spike around 1998-1999 aligns with "Operation No Living Thing," the RUF assault and eventual (though brief) capture of the capital of Freetown. In the year 2000, immediately following "Operation No Living Thing," the sexual violence scores for both the WSB and the CDF see a dramatic spike, receiving scores at times as high as 3, the maximum possible value for the level of sexual violence in any given year. Without further testing it is difficult to attribute these phenomena to anything other than coincidence, but it could suggest that as one group perpetrates increasing levels of sexual violence, the other groups will follow suit.

At the other end of the spectrum, the Kamajors/CDF had very clearly delineated gender roles and the "warrior" identity was of paramount importance to the idea of masculinity. These types gender roles and norms can often signal patriarchal ideology, particularly when violence is a prerequisite for masculinity, and this social structure had existed amongst the Kamajors for centuries. It is true that the CDF did perpetrate sexual

violence during the civil war, but they still did so to a much lesser degree than the RUF and their worst offenses took place predominantly following massive sexual violence on the part of the RUF. This once again disproves the initial hypothesis of this work, as the opposite effect was anticipated.

With a score of 1.33, the AFRC remains technically the worst offender of sexual violence. Their military service, though carrying with it a certain degree of patriarchal culture, does not align with the Sierra Leonean version of hegemonic masculinity and in some cases prevented them from ascending to higher positions and social standings. After the alliance with the RUF in 1998, the AFRC sees a substantial increase in the level of perpetrated sexual violence, suggesting a potential relationship between the closer ties to the RUF and the degree and frequency of sexual violence for which the AFRC was responsible.

Executive Outcomes was never recorded as having perpetuated any sexual violence, which, considering their lack of ideological involvement or personal stake in the conflict is logical. They were operating under a specific business contract and though they eventually disbanded in 1999, perpetrating massive sexual violence against civilian populations could have caused major damage to their professional reputation and impacted the number of clients they were able to obtain in the future. In the context of this work, it may be necessary to develop a second scale when assessing the effects of patriarchy, if any, on the operations and behaviors of professional mercenary groups.

Much of the evidence found in this study has in fact, provided support for Cohen's (2016) hypothesis that groups with lower levels of internal cohesion commit higher levels of sexual violence. The RUF, one of the most infamous perpetrators of

sexual violence, had neither overarching social or ethnic ties nor a consistent ideology to create a sense of unity or common goal around which combatants could rally. Similarly, the Kamajors, a majority group within the Civil Defense Force, had perhaps the highest degree of social ties including a moral code of conduct and initiation into the Kamajor society. The CDF/Kamajors committed the lowest levels of sexual violence of all the combatant groups, perhaps as the result of their high degree of social cohesion. Groups like the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council and the West Side Boys fell in between the RUF and CDF in terms of the level of sexual violence they perpetrated, a finding consistent with Cohen's hypothesis considering the moderate level of social cohesion and similarities amongst combatants in their ranks. This work, it seems, has inadvertently provided support for Cohen's findings, the conventional wisdom in this area.

5.2 Questions for Future Research

In the course of completing this research, a variety of new hypotheses and questions have arisen. The following are additional hypotheses that have come to light in the course of this work and could merit further investigation in the future:

Hypothesis 1: A lack of clear ideology makes combatant groups more likely to perpetrate high levels of sexual violence during civil conflict.

This phenomenon can be clearly seen in the case of the RUF as discussed in the work of Abdullah Ibrahim and others. Without a clear ideological foundation and disagreements at even the highest levels of leadership, the RUF quickly declined into chaos and extreme violence. Whether or not this trend reaches the level of statistical significance or is

present in other combatant groups in Sierra Leone and beyond, however, is an area for future study.

Hypothesis 2: When one combatant group adopts widespread sexual violence as a policy in warfare, other groups will be forced to adopt similar methods in order to remain an effective force in war.

This hypothesis arose out of the observation that, as the RUF started to become increasingly violent, other groups such as the CDF began to adopt similar tactics. It is not until 2000 that the CDF receives an SVAC score from any of the three sources higher than 0 and the WSB received scores of 3 from two of the three sources in the same year. Given that these spikes in scores from groups otherwise relatively uninvolved in the perpetuation of sexual violence occurs in the year directly following "Operation No Living Thing," it raises questions as to the relatedness of the two phenomena. This hypothesis would lead to other qualifying questions, such as: Is a specific number of groups adopting sexual violence necessary before other groups will follow suit? Must combatant groups commit sexual violence for a specific amount of time before other groups begin perpetrating sexual violence as well? Will one particularly violent group create a domino effect for other militant groups until all parties involved in the war are perpetuating high levels of sexual violence? All of these questions represent areas for additional future study.

Hypothesis 3: Combatant groups must have some ideological stake in the conflict in order to perpetuate sexual violence.

This hypothesis arises from the study of the Executive Outcomes in Sierra Leone. Private security companies tend to be almost entirely male, employing overly masculine soldier types. On the surface, this kind of culture aligns with the idea of patriarchy but for groups like the EO, there does not appear to be any sexual violence perpetuated on their part. Mercenary groups are nearly always outside parties with little to no personal stake in the conflict other than completing the terms of a business contract. It may be that some sort of personal, ideological involvement in the conflict is necessary before groups will start committing widespread sexual violence.

Hypothesis 4: Combatant groups seeking to overthrow the existing order will violate and destroy social norms and institutions rather than adopting them into their wartime conduct.

This hypothesis is the product of Mibenge's reinterpretation of the RUF practice of taking women as "bush wives." The assumption of this work has been that combatant groups will use institutions of the society within which the conflict arose to inform their behavior in times of conflict, but Mibenge suggests the opposite. It may be true that for groups seeking to overthrow the existing regime, it is necessary to completely annihilate the previous social order in order to fulfill their vision. This could provide some explanation to the difference in levels of sexual violence perpetrated by groups like the RUF and the CDF.

Hypothesis 5: Protest masculinity is more positively correlated with levels of sexual violence than hegemonic masculinity.

In his work "Is Manhood a Causal Factor in the Shifting Nature of War?" Duriesmith discusses the difference between protest masculinity, "a construct through which men are able to stake a claim to manhood through exaggerated masculine principles…due to scarce access to cultural or economic resources" (Duriesmith, 2014, 243), and hegemonic masculinity, the dominant conception and definition of masculinity. The case of the RUF suggests that an inability to participate meaningfully in the patriarchal system may cause a violent backlash against the system itself and resulting in high levels of sexual violence.

5.3 Limitations

Qualitative Study

Given the entirely qualitative nature of this work, there are limitations to the conclusions that can be drawn; the findings within this study remain observational and theoretical. The usage of singular case study also limits the external validity of this work and makes it difficult to generalize the findings to other cases. However, the intention of this work has always been to explore dynamics within Sierra Leone rather than general trends across a variety of cases. As Ben Willis writes in "The Advantages and Limitations of Single Case Study Analysis," "Criticism of generalizability is of little relevance when the intention is one of particularization" (Willis, 2014). Single qualitative case studies will always be difficult to generalize and run into issues of external validity, however, they can still present important findings. In an ideal situation, multiple case studies would have been conducted and compared to present a more holistic understanding of patriarchy and sexual violence however, due to the amount of detail and time needed to fully describe each combatant group, multiple case studies were not possible within the scope of this project.

Along the same lines, the categorical scale used in this work to measure the degree of patriarchy present among combatant groups are largely subjective to the researcher and could be open for debate and disagreement. Without easily quantifiable and concrete markers, it is significantly more difficult to ensure agreement in regards to the scores awarded. The goal of this work has been to offer a potential scale for measuring and understanding the presence of patriarchy within armed combatant groups. The scale is not without its flaws and could benefit from further study and testing but has been an attempt to offer a jumping off point for future research.

Source Bias

Much of the source material and documentation of the conflict has been drawn from court proceedings and official documents, introducing a potential source of bias. Court documentation is created in a very specific context and each side has a specific agenda in mind, both of which have the potential to sway the content and interpretation of the material. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2002), for example, while providing a wealth of information in regards to each combatant group's involvement in the civil war, was created with the specific purpose of determining guilt and responsibility and as such, will contain an inherent bias. This is not inherently negative, but is something that must be taken into consideration in the interpretation of the material used in this work.

Similarly, the Human Rights Watch report "Sierra Leone: Getting Away with Murder, Mutilation, Rape" has provided much of the information about the specific violence perpetrated by the RUF during the 1999 takeover of Freetown. The report provides first hand accounts from a multitude of survivors detailing the violence they

endured and witnessed, but given that the report was created as part of a growing body of evidence against the RUF, it contains an inherent bias. It helped to bring the RUF and its leaders to justice and gave survivors of violence the important opportunity to share their experiences, however, it was written under the assumption that the RUF was guilty and will likely have a specific skew.

Another potential source of bias arises from the fact that the entirety of the data on the dependent variable used originates from the same source, the Sexual Violence in Armed Conflicts dataset. While it is an extremely significant advancement in the study of sexual violence in civil war, because it is the only data source used in this work there is no way to correct for any potential measurement issues. The SVAC also works within the parameters of one definition of sexual violence and while it is an extremely inclusive definition, it is also highly subjective. Additionally, there are at least two instances included in this case study in which two of the three sources used to score combatant groups (the state and Amnesty International) have awarded a group a score of 3 while the third source (Human Rights Watch), gave a score of zero. The fact that this phenomenon occurred twice within a singular case study suggests there may be a discrepancy between the reporting methods and criteria used for the three different sources that has impacted, at the very least, the average conflict score for the various combatant groups.

There is a high degree of variance over time in the level of perpetrated sexual violence recorded in the SVAC for Sierra Leone. No sexual violence is recorded for several years only to experience extreme spikes usually in the later years of the war. This high level of variation could be due to a variety of different factors. The first could be simply the global awareness of sexual violence in civil war as well as the availability of

reporting mechanisms. Given that the civil war in Sierra Leone began in 1991, several years before the seminal cases of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Rwanda, it is possible that reporting was not a priority, or even happening at all. As the international community became more aware of the violence transpiring in Sierra Leone, it is possible that both the amount and quality of reporting improved. It is also possible that there is simply a certain amount of time needed in conflict before combatant groups will become the most sexually violent, a question that could be researched and discussed further in future studies.

Considering the extreme circumstance and instability of civil war, it is extremely likely that many instances of sexual violence go unreported for both male and female victims. The social stigma of being a survivor of sexual violence aside, reporting is even more difficult in the chaos of war, particularly for a relatively prolonged war such as that in Sierra Leone. It is unlikely the exact number of survivors of sexual violence will ever be known, but it is likely that the true statistics are higher than reported. Whether or not this would impact the results of this study is difficult to say, but it within the realm of possibilities and could bias the outcomes.

Additionally, it is important to acknowledge the cultural perspective from which this work is written as a potential source of bias. This research is authored from a distinctly western point of view and therefore has the potential to be either insensitive to or ignorant of the cultural norms and practices within Sierra Leone. There has been an effort to maintain neutrality and avoid passing value judgments both in the language and tone used, but cultural perspective will likely always contain a degree of inherent bias. To that same end, many of the sources and reports used in this research were written by non-

Sierra Leonean authors and outside parties. While the information they provide has been invaluable, it is also possible to miss the Sierra Leonean perspective.

In a slightly different vein, it is also important to acknowledge the incredible human price paid in conflicts like the Sierra Leonean civil war that can be overlooked when discussed in academia. It is important to study violence from an objective academic perspective in order to identify trends and better understand it in the future, but at times it can be easy to forget the immense toll extreme violence – sexual or otherwise – can take on those effected. Every score given to combatant groups in the SVAC represents very real individuals whose lives were either taken or drastically impacted by sexual violence, and solely quantitative data can often undermine that fact.

5.4 Final Comments

Throughout the course of this work, it has become clear that patriarchy, given its highly theoretical nature, remains extremely difficult to tangibly quantify and measure. Gender inequality, the manifestation and outcome of patriarchy, is often far easier to study but has the potential to gloss over underlying theoretical and ideological influences. This work has attempted to offer an in-depth analysis of the combatant groups in the Sierra Leonean civil war in order to provide an explanation for the high levels of sexual violence committed by various parties during the twelve-year civil war. Based on the collected evidence, it was necessary to accept the null hypothesis in this particular instance and concede that Cohen's hypothesis of combatant socialization may in fact offer the best explanation for the occurrence of sexual violence in civil wars, at least in the case of Sierra Leone.

The goal of this research has been to provide the beginnings of a framework through which to measure the level of patriarchy present in rebel combatant groups, a framework that ideally could be applied to other case studies. The extreme and brutal nature of the violence perpetrated in the Sierra Leonean civil war has made this study at times difficult to complete and possibly difficult to read as well, but the study of sexual violence remains of the utmost importance as it continues in conflicts around the world. This research may not have been able to offer a conclusive explanation, but it has hopefully provided a better understanding of a significant abuse of human rights.

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