

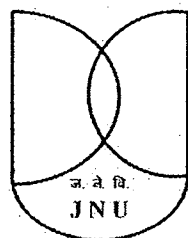
DEVELOPMENTS IN LIBERIA, 1999-2009

Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the award of the degree of

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

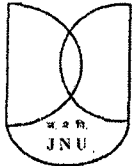
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Date: 21 July 2010

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled " DEVELOPMENTS IN LIBERIA,1999-2009",  
submitted by me for the award of the degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY is my own work.  
The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this university or any other  
university.

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CERTIFICATE

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**For**  
**My Beloved Mother Smt Sushila Sahoo**  
**&**  
**My Revered Father Shri Somanatha Sahoo**

**For being**  
**A constant source of Inspiration**  
**In my Life**

**For**  
**Without them**  
**It would not have been possible**

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## PREFACE

Liberia is Africa's oldest republic, but it became better known in the 1990s for its long-running, ruinous civil war and its role in a rebellion in neighboring Sierra Leone. Liberia was traditionally noted for its hospitality, academic institutions, cultural skills, and arts/craft works. Liberia has a long, rich history in textile arts and quilting. The free and former US slaves who emigrated to Liberia brought with them their sewing and quilting skills. The history of Liberia is unique among African nations because of its relationship with the United States. It is one of the few countries in Africa, and the only country in West Africa, without roots in the European Scramble for Africa. It was founded and colonized by freed American slaves with the help of a private organization called the American Colonization Society in 1821-22, on the premise American slaves would have greater freedom and equality there. Slaves freed from slave ships also were sent there instead of being repatriated to their countries of origin. These colonists formed an elite group in Liberian society, and, in 1847, they founded the Republic of Liberia, establishing a government modeled on that of the United States, naming Monrovia, their capital city, after James Monroe, the fifth president of the United States and a prominent supporter of the colonization.

The first chapter, which is introduction to this dissertation, contains some basic facts of the history, geography & economy of Liberia. Liberia is situated in West Africa, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean to the country's southwest. Land boundaries total is 1,585 km out of which the border countries: Guinea 563 km, Cote d'Ivoire 716 km, Sierra Leone 306 km. Coastline is 579 km. The landscape is characterized by mostly flat to rolling coastal plains that contain mangroves and swamps, which rise to a rolling plateau and low mountains in the northeast. Liberia is divided into 15 counties, which are subdivided into districts, and further subdivided into *clans*. The oldest counties are Grand Bassa and Montserrado, both founded in 1839 prior to Liberian independence. As of the 2008 national census, Liberia was home to 3,476,608 people.

Of those, 1,118,241 lived in Montserrado County, the most populous county in the country and home to the capitol of Monrovia, with the Greater Monrovia district home to 970,824 people.

While the institution of slavery in America grew, reaching almost four million slaves by the mid 1800's, free African-Americans (with legislated limits), a growing population in the U.S., due to abolition in the North and manumission, chose to emigrate to Liberia as well. African-Americans gradually migrated to the colony and became known as Americo-Liberians, from whom many present day Liberians trace their ancestry. On July 26, 1847, Americo-Liberian settlers declared independence of the Republic of Liberia.

The second chapter contains all the major problems that Liberia is facing today from 1999 to 2009, like the severe repression under Taylor regime, Liberia's increasing involvement in international drugs trade field etc. Charles Taylor, who had fought as a rebel leader from 1989 to 1997, headed a brutal regime as president from 1997 to 2003, some activists rated the repression even worse than under Doe. In 1980, when Doe seized power in a military coup, he became the first indigenous head of state, but he soon frustrated many by replacing the Americo-Liberian with hegemony of his ethnic group, the Krahn, a minority of less than 5 percent. A 1986 report Bill Bekerley for the New York based Lawyers Committee for Human Rights reveals severe repression under Doe, including bizarre, horrible acts against prisoners. In the aftermath of an attempted coup in 1985 against him, an orgy of violence ensued. LURD was formed in 2000 by Liberian refugees in the West Africa sub region. Its support comes from internally displaced Liberians and exiles. No former warlord had been nor shall be involved or associated with the LURD in its national effort to build democratic institutions in Liberia. LURD had a two-tier organizational structure. A political campaign to establish rule of law, and a military campaign to free the Liberian people from the tyrannical rule of the Taylor-led regime.

A report published by the UN's Office on Drugs and Crime ( UNODC) in December 2007 had drawn unprecedented international attention to West Africa's role as an intermediary in the cocaine trade between Latin America and Europe. Major news papers had carried full-page

articles on the subject. But law enforcement officers have long been aware of the reach of West Africa's drug trading networks and the UNODC and other official bodies had for some years been observing a sharp rise in cocaine exports from Latin America to West Africa.

The third chapter contains all the constructive developments like that of establishment of political base & elections in 2005 as well as the formation of govt under first woman president of Africa Johnson Sirleaf. Since the fall of oligarchy in the coup of 1980 , therefore , a multiparty political system has emerged in Liberia. Although weak inarticulate in their perspectives and programs and available as vehicles to support the presidential ambition of specific candidates at least four political parties ( LAP, LPP, UP and UPP) have been able to build a national support base and sustain their presence, despite two decades of violent conflicts. The continued participations of these parties and others in elections is now considered normal to the Liberian political system, confirming the existence of a multi-party system as a permanent feature of the Liberian political process. This marks a historic political change born out of the struggle of the 1970s and 1980s. In October 2005 elections , 30 senators were elected from 15 counties. Members of House of Representatives are elected from legislative districts that are demarcated within counties based on population distribution. Though 15 years of violent conflicts, Liberia's population distribution has become acutely skewed as people fled from villages & hamlets and sought safety in towns & cities. As a result the distribution of seats in the House of Representatives had to be done in accordance with with a formula negotiated among members of the transitional legislative assembly, political parties, and civil society to ensure broad based representation.

The fourth chapter contains the conclusion in which political & economic future of Liberia is highlighted. Since, her election, Johnson Sirleaf had made reform of key governance institutions, including the justice sector and economic recovery the top priority for her administration. The President promised to govern 'differently', decisively breaking from the past. But the capacity constraints are overwhelming. Liberian law states that magistrates and judges must hold law degrees and that they must be Liberian citizens. In practice however because of the dearth of



educated and trained Liberians, 90 percent of judicial officials barely finished high school, only 3 percent of attended university. This has severe consequences for individual human rights and capacity of the degraded justice system to cope with the needs of the country. At present only 19 of the 790 people in prisons in Monrovia had been convicted; the rest are on remand, a status which can be indefinite. The major social improvement that looks in the Liberian war ravaged society been the spectacular rise of women in the social ladder. Observers have been impressed with the emancipation that Liberian women seem to have achieved. The war appears to have resulted in a disintegration or dilution of institutions that used to define women's role in society and it simultaneously created opportunities for social, political and economic mobility. Losing and gaining depend on the social position of the women in question. Some business women, some peace activists, leaders of women's organizations tapping in to the flow of foreign aid and female politicians appear to have gained. The situation of illiterate and marginalized and of young women who cultivated strategies of independence and appear to contest traditional roles by drawing on the international discourse, deserves further study.

Future developments in the opportunity structures' in Liberia's economy crucially depend on macro-economic developments and the kind and extent of affirmative support by the government and foreign donor agencies. I do not want to discuss the effects of short sighted blue print policies and measures so commonly applied in the world of development business here. Just as it is hard to assess how durable changes in roles will be, so it is hard to predict what the impact of any external intervention, policies and projects will be in long run. As ethnographic studies on policy making and implementation have shown, enormous variation and selective appropriation by local actors according to context is to be expected. Liberia's women are bound to be affected in diverse ways depending on their respective status, wealth, network position, and access to education.

CHAPTER -I

**INTRODUCTION**

## CHAPTER -1

**INTRODUCTION**

Liberia\*1, officially the Republic of Liberia, is a country on the west coast of Africa, bordered by Sierra Leone, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, and the Atlantic Ocean. As of the 2008 Census, the nation is home to 3,476,608 people and covers 111,369 square kilometers (43,000 sq mi). Liberia's capital is Monrovia. Liberia has a hot equatorial climate with most rainfall arriving in summer with harsh harmattan winds in the dry season. Liberia's populated Pepper Coast is composed of mostly mangrove forests while the sparsely populated inland is forested, later opening to a plateau of drier grasslands. Liberia is Africa's oldest republic, but it became better known in the 1990s for its long-running, ruinous civil war and its role in a rebellion in neighboring Sierra Leone. Although founded by freed American and Caribbean slaves, Liberia is mostly made up of indigenous Africans, with the slaves' descendants comprising 5% of the population.

**I-GEOGRAPHY**

Liberia is situated in West Africa, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean to the country's southwest. Land boundaries total is 1,585 km out of which the border countries: Guinea 563 km, Cote d'Ivoire 716 km, Sierra Leone 306 km . Coastline is 579 km. The landscape is characterized by mostly flat to rolling coastal plains that contain mangroves and swamps, which rise to a rolling plateau and low mountains in the northeast. Tropical rainforests cover the hills, while elephant grass and semi-deciduous forests make up the dominant vegetation in the northern sections. The equatorial climate is hot year-round with heavy rainfall from May to October with a short interlude in mid-July to August. During the winter months of November to March dry dust-laden harmattan winds blow inland causing many problems for residents.

1\*The name Liberia denotes "liberty". The newly arrived settlers formed a new ethnic group called the Americo-Liberians. However, this introduction of a new ethnic mix resulted in ethnic tensions with the sixteen other main ethnicities already residing in Liberia. From the 1500s until 1822, European explorers and traders had multiple names for Liberia, varying by language. Robson, P. & Lury, D. A.(2000), " The Economy of Liberia", *The Economies of Africa* ,London, Unwin Brothers Ltd, Pg 287



Source: <http://www.worldmaps.com>

Liberia's watershed tends to move in a southwestern pattern towards the sea as new rains move down the forested plateau off the inland mountain range of Guinée Forestière, in Guinea. Cape Mount near the border with Sierra Leone receives the most precipitation in the nation. The country's main northwestern boundary is traversed by the Mano River while its southeast limits are bounded by the Cavalla River. Liberia's three largest rivers are St. Paul exiting near Monrovia, the river St. John at Buchanan and the Cestos River, all of which flow into the Atlantic. The Cavalla is the longest river in the nation at 515 kilometers (320 miles).

Terrain is mostly flat to rolling coastal plains rising to rolling plateau and low mountains in northeast. Geography - noteworthy feature are facing the Atlantic Ocean, the coastline is characterized by lagoons, mangrove swamps, and river-deposited sandbars; the inland grassy plateau supports limited agriculture.

The highest point wholly within Liberia is Mount Wuteve at 1,440 meters (4,724 ft) above sea level in the northwestern Liberia range of the West Africa Mountains and the Guinea Highlands. However, Mount Nimba near Yekepa, is higher at 1,752 meters (5,748 ft) above sea level but is not wholly within Liberia as Nimba shares a border with Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) and is their tallest mountain as well. Climate is tropical; hot, humid; dry winters with hot days and cool to cold nights; wet, cloudy summers with frequent heavy showers.

#### **(a) Counties and districts**

Liberia is divided into 15 counties, which are subdivided into districts, and further subdivided into *clans*. The oldest counties are Grand Bassa and Montserrado, both founded in 1839 prior to Liberian independence. Gbarpolu is the newest county, created in 2001. Nimba is the largest of the counties in size at 11,551 square kilometers (4,460 sq mi), while Montserrado is the smallest at 1,909 square kilometers (737 sq mi). Montserrado is also the most populous county with 1,144,806 residents as of the 2008 census.

Complete list of the counties:

County	Capital	Population (2008)	Area	Created
Bomi	Tubmanburg	82,036	1,942 square kilometers (750 sq mi)	1984
Bong	Gbarnga	328,919	8,772 square kilometers (3,387 sq mi)	1964
Gbarpolu	Bopulu	83,758	9,689 square kilometers (3,741 sq mi)	2001
Grand Bassa	Buchanan	224,839	7,936 square kilometers (3,064 sq mi)	1839
Grand Cape Mount	Robertsport	129,055	5,162 square kilometers (1,993 sq mi)	1844
Grand Gedeh	Zwedru	126,146	10,484 square kilometers (4,048 sq mi)	1964
Grand Kru	Barclayville	57,106	3,895 square kilometers (1,504 sq mi)	1984
Lofa	Voinjama	270,114	9,982 square kilometers (3,854 sq mi)	1964
Margibi	Kakata	199,689	2,616 square kilometers (1,010 sq mi)	1985
Maryland	Harper	136,404	2,297 square kilometers (887 sq mi)	1857
Montserrado	Bensonville	1,144,806	1,909 square kilometers (737 sq mi)	1839
Nimba	Sanniquellie	468,088	11,551 square kilometers (4,460 sq mi)	1964
River Cess	River Cess	65,862	5,594 square kilometers (2,160 sq mi)	1985
River Gee	Fish Town	67,318	5,113 square kilometers (1,974 sq mi)	2000
Sinoe	Greenville	104,932	10,137 square kilometers (3,914 sq mi)	1843

Source: <http://www.liberiportal.com>

**(b) Demographics**

As of the 2008 national census, Liberia was home to 3,476,608 people. Of those, 1,118,241 lived in Montserrado County, the most populous county in the country and home to the capitol of Monrovia, with the Greater Monrovia district home to 970,824 people. Nimba County is the next most populous county with 462,026 residents. Prior to the 2008 census, the last census had been held in 1984, and it listed the population as 2,101,628. The population of Liberia was 1,016,443 in 1962 and increased to 1,503,368 in 1974.

Age structure of the Liberian population could be enumerated as ;0-14 years is 44.1% (male 760,989/female 758,554),15-64 years is 53% (male 904,770/female 920,704)65 years and over is 2.8% (male 47,013/female 49,760) (2009 estimation)

The population of over 3 million comprises 16 indigenous ethnic groups and various foreign minorities. Indigenous peoples comprise about 95% of the population, the largest of which are the Kpelle in central and western Liberia. Americo-Liberians, who are descendants of African-American settlers, make up 2.5%, and Congo people, descendants of repatriated Congo and Afro-Caribbean slaves who arrived in 1825, make up an estimated 2.5%. There also is a sizable number of Lebanese, Indians, and other West African nationals who make up a significant part of Liberia's business community. A few whites (estimated at 18,000 in 1999; probably fewer now) reside in the country.

As of 2006, Liberia has the highest population growth rate in the world (4.50% per annum). Similar to its neighbors, it has a large youth population, with half of the population under the age of 18. Now the population growth rate is 2.665% (2009 estimation).

Birth rate is 42.25 births/1,000 population (2009 estimation) .While death rate is 20.73 deaths/1,000 population (July 2009 estimation). Urbanization ratio of the population are respectably ,urban population is 60% of total population (2008)& rate of urbanization is 5.6% annual rate of change (2005-10 est.).Sex ratio in Liberia is at birth 1.03 male(s)/female, while under 15 years: 1male(s)/female. Similarly in 15-64 years the number is 0.98 male(s)/female. On the other hand 65 years and over: 0.94 male(s)/female total population: 0.99 male(s)/female (2009 est.).

Total infant mortality rate is 138.24 deaths/1,000 live births. While male infant mortality rate is 153.55 deaths/1,000 live births & female infant mortality rate is 122.46 deaths/1,000 live births (2009 est.).Life expectancy at birth is 41.84 years. Out of which male life expectancy at birth is 40.71 years & female life expectancy at birth is 43 years (2009 est.).Total fertility rate is 5.79 children born/woman (2009 est.).Of the population, 40% hold indigenous beliefs, 40% are Christians, and 20% are Muslims. Out of total population , indigenous African 95% (including Kpelle, Bassa, Gio, Kru, Grebo, Mano, Krahn, Gola, Gbandi, Loma, Kissi, Vai, Dei, Bella, Mandingo, and Mende), Americo-Liberians 2.5% (descendants of immigrants from the US who

had been slaves), Congo People 2.5% (descendants of immigrants from the Caribbean who had been slaves).

#### **( c ) Health**

Life expectancy at birth was at 44.7 in 2005. The fertility rate was at 6.8 births per woman in the early 21st century. Expenditure on health was 22 USD (PPP) in 2004. The infant mortality rate was at 15.7% in 2005. The HIV/AIDS prevalence was at 1.7 percent of the adult population as of January, 2009. People living with HIV/AIDS in Liberia 35,000 (2007 est.) While death in Liberia due to HIV/AIDS are 2,300 (2007 est.).

#### **( d ) Language**

English spoken by 20% of the population is also the official language of Liberian government, while some 20 ethnic group languages few of which can be written or used in correspondence.

#### **( e ) Culture**

Liberia was traditionally noted for its hospitality, academic institutions, cultural skills, and arts/craft works. Liberia has a long, rich history in textile arts and quilting. The free and former US slaves who emigrated to Liberia brought with them their sewing and quilting skills. The census of 1843 indicated a variety of occupations, including hatter, milliner, seamstress and tailor. Liberia hosted National Fairs in 1857 and 1858 in which prizes were awarded for various needle arts. One of the most well-known Liberian quilters was Martha Ann Ricks, who presented a quilt featuring the famed Liberian coffee tree to Queen Victoria in 1892.

In modern times, Liberian presidents would present quilts as official government gifts. The John F. Kennedy Library and Museum collection includes a cotton quilt by Mrs. Jemima Parker which has portraits of both Liberian president William Tubman and JFK. Zariah Wright-Titus founded the Arthington (Liberia) Women's Self-Help Quilting Club (1987). In the early 1990s, Kathleen Bishop documented examples of appliquéd Liberian quilts. When current Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf moved into the Executive Mansion, she reportedly had a Liberian-made quilt installed in her presidential office. The tallest man-made structure of Africa, the mast of former Paynesville Omega transmitter, is situated in Liberia. Liberia is one of only three nations to use primarily a non-metric system of units, the others being Burma and the United States



**( f ) Religion**

It is estimated that as much as 40 percent of the population of Liberia practices either Christianity or Christianity combined with elements of traditional indigenous religious beliefs. Approximately 40 percent exclusively practices traditional indigenous religious beliefs. An estimated 20 percent of the population practices Islam. A small percentage is Bahá'í, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, or atheist.

**( g ) Education**

The University of Liberia is the country's largest college and is located in Monrovia. Opened in 1862, it is one of Africa's oldest institutes of higher learning organized upon the western model. Civil war severely damaged the university in the 1990s, but the university has begun to rebuild following the restoration of peace. The school includes six colleges, including a medical school and the nation's only law school, Louis Arthur Grimes School of Law.

Cuttington University was established by the Episcopal Church of the USA (ECUSA) in 1889; its campus is currently located in Suakoko, Bong County (120 miles north of Monrovia). The private school, the oldest private college in Liberia, also holds graduate courses in Monrovia. Literacy in Liberia is defined by the method of age 15 and over person who can read and write. According to that out of total population, 57.5% are literate. Out of them male literate is 73.3% & female is 41.6% (2003 est.). According to statistics published by UNESCO for 2004 65% of primary-school age and 24% of secondary-school age children were enrolled in school. This is a significant increase on previous years; the statistics also show substantial numbers of older children going back to earlier school years. On average, children attain 10 years of education, 11 for boys and 8 for girls. Children ages five to eleven are required by law to attend school, though enforcement is lax. A 1912 law required children ages 6 to 16 to attend school.

**II -HISTORY**

### **(a) Indigenous peoples of West Africa**

Anthropological research shows the region of Liberia was inhabited at least as far back as the 12th century, perhaps earlier. Mende-speaking people expanded westward, forcing many smaller ethnic groups southward towards the Atlantic ocean. The Days, Bassa, Kru, Gola and Kissi were some of the earliest recorded arrivals. This influx was compounded during the ancient decline of the Western Sudanic Mali Empire in 1375 and later in 1591 with the Songhai Empire. Additionally, inland regions underwent desertification, and inhabitants were pressured to move to the wetter Pepper Coast. These new inhabitants brought skills such as cotton spinning, cloth weaving, iron smelting, rice and sorghum cultivation, and social and political institutions from the Mali and Songhai Empires.<sup>[10]</sup>

Shortly after the Manes conquered the region, there was a migration of the Vai people into the region of Grand Cape Mount. The Vai were part of the Mali Empire who were forced to migrate when the empire collapsed in the 14th century. The Vai chose to migrate to the coastal region. The ethnic Kru opposed the influx of Vai. An alliance of the Manes and Kru was able to stop further influx of Vai, but the Vai remained in the Grand Cape Mount region (where the city of Robertsport is now located).

People of the Littoral coast built canoes and traded with other West Africans from Cap-Vert to the Gold Coast. Later European traders would barter various commodities and goods with local people, sometimes hoisting their canoes aboard. When the Kru began trading with Europeans, they initially traded in commodities, but later they actively participated in the African slave trade. Kru laborers left their territory to work as paid laborers on plantations and in construction. Some even worked building the Suez and Panama Canals.

Another tribal group in the area was the Glebo. The Glebo were driven, as a result of the Manes invasion, to migrate to the coast of what later became Liberia. Between 1461 and late 17th century, Portuguese, Dutch and British traders had contacts and trading posts in Liberia. The Portuguese had named the area Costa da Pimenta, later translated as Grain Coast, because of the abundance of grains of melegueta pepper.

**(b) Settlers from the United States**

The history of Liberia is unique among African nations because of its relationship with the United States. It is one of the few countries in Africa, and the only country in West Africa, without roots in the European Scramble for Africa. It was founded and colonized by freed American slaves with the help of a private organization called the American Colonization Society in 1821-22, on the premise American slaves would have greater freedom and equality there. Slaves freed from slave ships also were sent there instead of being repatriated to their countries of origin. These colonists formed an elite group in Liberian society, and, in 1847, they founded the Republic of Liberia, establishing a government modeled on that of the United States, naming Monrovia, their capital city, after James Monroe, the fifth president of the United States and a prominent supporter of the colonization.

In 1822, the American Colonization Society (A.C.S.) which was the primary vehicle for returning black Americans to greater freedom in Africa, established Liberia as a place to send people who were formerly enslaved. This movement of black people by the A.C.S. had broad support nationwide among white people in America, including prominent leaders such as Henry Clay and James Monroe, who saw this as preferable to emancipation in America, with Clay stating; "unconquerable prejudice resulting from their color, they never could amalgamate with the free whites of this country. It was desirable, therefore, as it respected them, and the residue of the population of the country, to drain them off". Clay argued that as blacks could never be fully integrated into U.S. society due to "unconquerable prejudice" by white Americans, it would be better for them to emigrate to Africa. While the institution of slavery in America grew, reaching almost four million slaves by the mid 1800's, free African-Americans (with legislated limits), a growing population in the U.S., due to abolition in the North and manumission, chose to emigrate to Liberia as well. African-Americans gradually migrated to the colony and became known as Americo-Liberians, from whom many present day Liberians trace their ancestry. On July 26, 1847, Americo-Liberian settlers declared independence of the Republic of Liberia.

The settlers regarded Africa as a "Promised Land," but they did not integrate into an African society. Once in Africa, they referred to themselves as Americans and were recognized as such by local Africans and by British colonial authorities in neighboring Sierra Leone. The symbols of

their state — its flag, motto, and seal — and the form of government that they chose reflected their American background and diaspora experience. Ashmun Institute, founded in Pennsylvania in 1854 for the education of young Africans, played an important role in supplying Americo-Liberians leadership for the new nation. The first graduating class of Ashmun Institute (later renamed Lincoln University in honor of the slain President), James R. Amos, his brother Thomas H. Amos, and Armistead Miller, sailed for Liberia on the brig Mary C. Stevens in April 1859 after graduation. The religious practices, social customs and cultural standards of the Americo-Liberians had their roots in the antebellum American South. These ideals strongly influenced the attitudes of the settlers toward the indigenous African people. The new nation, as they perceived it, was coextensive with the settler community and with those Africans who were assimilated into it. Mutual mistrust and hostility between the "Americans" along the coast and the "Natives" of the interior was a recurrent theme in the country's history, along with (usually successful) attempts by the Americo-Liberian minority to dominate what they identified as savage native peoples. They named the land "Liberia," which in the Romance languages, and in Latin in particular, means "Land of the Free," as an homage to their freedom from slavery.

Historically, Liberia has enjoyed the support and unofficial cooperation of the United States government. Liberia's government, modeled after that of the U.S., was democratic in structure, if not always in substance. In 1877, the True Whig Party<sup>2</sup> monopolized political power in the country. Competition for office was usually contained within the party, whose nomination virtually ensured election. Two problems confronting successive administrations were pressure from neighboring colonial powers, Britain and France, and the threat of financial insolvency, both of which challenged the country's sovereignty.

<sup>2</sup>\* Following the dissolution of the Republican Party in 1876, the True Whig Party dominated the Liberian government until the 1980 coup. Currently, no party has majority control of the legislature. The longest serving president in Liberian history was William Tubman, serving from 1944 until his death in 1971. The shortest term was held by James Skivring Smith, who controlled the government for two months. However, the political process from Liberia's founding in 1847, despite widespread corruption, was very stable until the end of the First Republic in 1980. Sawyer, Amos, (2002) *The Emergence of Autocracy in Liberia: Tragedy and challenges*, San Francisco; Institute of contemporary studies

Liberia retained its independence during the Scramble for Africa, but lost its claim to extensive territories that were annexed by Britain and France. Economic development was hindered by the decline of markets for Liberian goods in the late 19th century and by indebtedness on a series of loans, payments on which drained the economy

**(c) Mid-20th century**

Two events were particularly important in releasing Liberia from its self-imposed isolation. The first was the grant in 1926 of a large concession to the American-owned Firestone Plantation Company; that move became a first step in the (limited) modernization of the Liberian economy. The second occurred during World War II, when the United States began providing technical and economic assistance that enabled Liberia to make economic progress and introduce social change. Both the Freeport of Monrovia and Roberts International Airport were built by U.S. personnel during World War II. A military-led coup in 1980 overthrew then-president William R. Tolbert, which marked the beginning of a period of instability that eventually led to a civil war that left hundreds of thousands of people dead and devastated the country's economy. Today, Liberia is recovering from the lingering effects of the civil war and related economic dislocation.

On April 12, 1980, a successful military coup was staged by a group of noncommissioned army officers led by Master Sergeant Samuel Kanyon Doe. The soldiers were a mixture of the various ethnic groups that claimed marginalization at the hands of the minority Americo-Liberian settlers. In a late-night raid, they killed William R. Tolbert, Jr., who had been president for nine years, in his mansion. Constituting themselves the People's Redemption Council, Doe and his associates seized control of the government and brought an end to Africa's first republic. Significantly, Doe was the first Liberian head of state who was not a member of the Americo-Liberian elite. Doe favored authoritarian policies, banning newspapers and outlawing various opposition parties. His tactic was to brand popular opposition parties as "socialist," and therefore illegal according to the Liberian constitution, while allowing less popular minor parties to remain as a token opposition. Unfortunately for Doe, popular support would then tend to realign behind one of these smaller parties, causing them in turn to be labeled "socialist." In October 1985, Liberia held the first post-coup elections, ostensibly to legitimize Doe's regime<sup>3</sup>. Virtually all international observers agreed that the Liberia Action Party (LAP) led by Jackson Doe (no

relation) had won the election by a clear margin. After a week of counting the votes, however, Samuel Doe fired the count officials and replaced them with his own Special Election Committee (SECOM), which announced that Samuel Doe's ruling National Democratic Party of Liberia had won with 50.9% of the vote. In response, on November 12 a counter-coup was launched by Thomas Quiwonkpa, whose soldiers briefly occupied the Executive Mansion and the national radio station, with widespread support throughout the country. Three days later, Quiwonkpa's coup was overthrown. Government repression intensified, as Doe's troops killed more than 2,000 civilians and imprisoned more than 100 opposing politicians, including Jackson Doe and BBC journalist Isaac Bantu.

### **(c) - (i) 1989 and 1999 civil wars**

In late 1989, the First Liberian Civil War began. The harsh dictatorial atmosphere that gripped the country was due largely to Samuel Doe's rule. Americo-Liberian Charles Taylor, with the backing of neighboring countries such as Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire, entered Nimba County with around 100 men. These fighters quickly gained control of much of the country, thanks to strong support from the local population who were disillusioned with their then government. By then, a new player also emerged: Yormie Prince Johnson (former ally of Taylor) had formed his own army and had gained tremendous support from the Gio and Mano ethnic groups. In August 1990, the Economic Community Monitoring Group under the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) organized its own military task force to intervene in the crisis. The troops were largely from Nigeria, Guinea and Ghana. On his way out after a meeting, Doe, who was traveling only with his personal staff, was ambushed and captured by members of the Gio Tribe who were loyal to Prince Yormie Johnson. The soldiers took him to Johnson's headquarters in neighboring Caldwell, tortured and killed him.

3\* Doe, sought recognition and aid from the West. Once just before the presidential election of 1985, he released some activists just before their scheduled execution. Similarly, Taylor sought Western support but engaged in periodic violence against activists throughout his presidency.

By then, Taylor was a prominent warlord and leader of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia. After some prompting from Taylor that the anglophone Nigerians and Ghanaians were opposed to him, Senegalese troops were brought in with some financial support from the United States.<sup>[18]</sup> But their service was short-lived, after a major confrontation with Taylor forces in Vahun, Lofa County on 28 May 1992, when six were killed when a crowd of NPFL supporters surrounded their vehicle and demanded they surrender the vehicle and weapons

By September 1990, Doe's forces controlled only a small area just outside the capital, Monrovia. After Doe's death, and as a condition for the end of the conflict, interim president Amos Sawyer resigned in 1994, handing power to the Council of State. Taylor was elected as President in 1997, after leading a bloody insurgency backed by Libyan President Muammar al-Gaddafi. Taylor's brutal regime targeted several leading opposition and political activists. In 1998, the government sought to assassinate child rights activist Kimmie Weeks for a report he had published on its involvement in the training of child soldiers, which forced him into exile. Taylor's autocratic and dysfunctional government led to the Second Liberian Civil War in 1999.

The conflict intensified in mid-2003, and the fighting moved into Monrovia. An elite rapid response unit of the US Marines known as 'FAST' deployed to the US Embassy to ensure the security and interests of the US. The Marines used US Air Force HH-60 Pave Hawk to airlift non-combatants and foreign nationals to Dakar, Senegal. A hastily assembled force of 1000 Nigerian troops, the ECOWAS Mission In Liberia (ECOMIL), was airlifted into Liberia on August 15, 2003 to prevent the rebels from overrunning the capital city and committing revenge-inspired war crimes. Meanwhile the US Joint Task Force Liberia commanded from USS Iwo Jima (LHD-7) was offshore, though only 100 of the 2,000 US Marines landed to meet with the ECOMIL force.

As the power of the government shrank, and with increasing international and US pressure for him to resign, President Taylor accepted an asylum offer from Nigeria, but vowed: "God willing, I will be back." Some of the ECOMIL troops were subsequently withdrawn and at least two battalions incorporated into the 15,000 strong United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) peacekeeping force. More than 200,000 people are estimated to have been killed in the civil wars.

**( c ) ( ii ) Post civil war**

The West African nation was relatively calm until 1980 when William Tolbert was overthrown by Sergeant Samuel Doe after food price riots. The coup marked the end of dominance by the minority Americo-Liberians, who had ruled since independence, but heralded a period of instability. By the late 1980s, arbitrary rule and economic collapse culminated in civil war when Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) militia overran much of the countryside, entering the capital in 1990. Mr Doe was executed.

Fighting intensified as the rebels splintered and battled each other, the Liberian army and West African peacekeepers. In 1995 a peace agreement was signed, leading to the election of Mr Taylor as president. The respite was brief, with anti-government fighting breaking out in the north in 1999. Mr Taylor accused Guinea of supporting the rebellion. Meanwhile Ghana, Nigeria and others accused Mr Taylor of backing rebels in Sierra Leone. Matters came to a head in 2003 when Mr Taylor - under international pressure\*4 to quit and hemmed in by rebels - stepped down and went into exile in Nigeria. A transitional government steered the country towards elections in 2005.

Around 250,000 people were killed in Liberia's civil war and many thousands more fled the fighting. The conflict left the country in economic ruin and overrun with weapons. The capital remains without mains electricity and running water. Corruption is rife and unemployment and illiteracy are endemic. The UN maintains some 15,000 soldiers in Liberia. It is one of the organization's most expensive peacekeeping operations

4\* Former 22nd president Charles Taylor was later captured trying to escape across the border of Cameroon and has been sent to the International Criminal Court in The Hague for trial. *'The Repression & protest under Military Rule'*, 21 June 2005, Geneva



After the exile of Taylor, Gyude Bryant was appointed Chairman of the transitional government in late 2003. Because of failures of the Transitional Government in curbing corruption, Liberia signed onto GEMAP, a novel anti-corruption program. The primary task of the transitional government was to prepare for fair and peaceful democratic elections. With UNMIL\*5 troops safeguarding the peace, Liberia successfully conducted presidential elections on October 11, 2005. There were 23 candidates; an early favorite was George Weah, internationally famous footballer, UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador and member of the Kru ethnic group expected to dominate the popular vote. No candidate took the required majority, prompting a run-off election between the top two candidates, Weah and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. The November 8, 2005 presidential runoff election was won decisively by Sirleaf, a Harvard-trained economist. Both the general election and runoff were marked by peace and order, as thousands of Liberians waited in the Liberian heat to cast their ballots.

Prior to her election as president, Sirleaf was jailed twice during the Doe administration before escaping and going into exile. Upon taking office she became the first elected female head of state in Africa. During her administration President Sirleaf established a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to address crimes committed during the later stages of Liberia's long civil war. Elsewhere, the Special Court for Sierra Leone (a war crimes tribunal) charged former President Charles Taylor with crimes against humanity, violations of the Geneva Conventions and "other serious violations of international humanitarian law". The indictment was issued on March 29, 2006, and he was later extradited from Nigeria to Sierra Leone, but the trial by the Special Court is being held in The Hague, for security reasons.

US-educated economist and former finance minister Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf won the second round of presidential elections in November 2005 and in January 2006 she was inaugurated as Africa's first elected woman head of state.

5\* The UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) maintains a strong presence throughout the country, but the security situation is still fragile and the process of rebuilding the social and economic structure of this war-torn country will take many years. Ellis, Stephen, (2000) " *The Mask of Anarchy: The destruction of Liberia and Religious dimension of an African civil war*", New York; bNew York University Press.

The poll was intended to draw a line under Liberia's war. Her rival, the footballer and political novice George Weah, alleged fraud. International observers said the vote had been broadly free and fair. Known in Liberia as the "Iron Lady", Mrs Johnson-Sirleaf drew much of her support from women voters, and from Liberia's small educated elite. She faces the twin challenges of trying to rebuild the country and of fostering reconciliation. One of her priorities is to reintegrate into society former child soldiers. She has declared a "zero tolerance" of corruption. The president served as finance minister under President William Tolbert in the late 1970s and fled the country after the Tolbert government was overthrown. She has worked for the UN and the World Bank. Some of the opposition to Mrs Johnson-Sirleaf stems from her one-time association with former Liberian leader Charles Taylor. She briefly supported the then warlord in his quest to overthrow military leader Samuel Doe. Speaking at Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission in February 2009, she admitted to her initial support for Mr Taylor, saying he had misled her into believing the war was necessary for change to happen. Born in 1938, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf is a widowed mother-of-four.

### III - ECONOMY

#### ( a ) Salient Characteristics of Liberian Economy

The Liberian economy has some unique characteristics, which makes her economical structures, quite different to that of other countries of Africa, let alone the other West African countries.

##### ( a ) ( i ) – Liberia never been colonized:

Liberia is the fifth smallest country in Africa with a population of about one million person, an area of 43,000 square miles, & a density of 23 persons a square mile. Some of it's economic, political & social features are not shared by other African countries, because Liberia was never a colony of a European power. It became an independent republic in 1847 at the initiative of a small colony of several thousand free Negroes from the united States ( Americo-Liberians) who claimed sovereignty over a hinterland of some twenty tribal groups. For the most part, tribal persons were little affected by European commerce & culture untill well in to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

##### ( a ) ( ii) Unusual Dominance of Foreign Capitals & Firms :

The salient characteristics of Liberian economy are the recent start of private & governmental development activities, the unusual extent to which new lines of production are undertaken by foreign firms, the extreme concentration of activities in primary production for export ( rubber & iron ore), & relative absence of systematic national planning to transform traditional sectors of the economy & initiate other structural changes . In short, Liberia is a prime example of a 'dual' economy & an enclave economy . It has one of the highest rates of output growth on record because of heavy European & American investments\*6 in iron ore mining & rubber, but remains largely undeveloped otherwise.

**(a) (ii)- Great Fluctuation in Industrial & Agricultural Production:**

The gross domestic income in 2009, was almost triple the figures for 2000. The rate of growth for gross domestic money income since 1957 has been about 15 percent per year. Aggregate growth figures for Liberia reflect increasing rubber production & the growth in iron ore mining begun in 1951. The relative importance of subsistence agriculture has declined sharply, from 38 percent of gross domestic income in 1950 to 10 percent in 1960, reflecting the growth of new activities by foreigners rather than a mass exodus from subsistence agriculture by tribal Liberians.

**(a) (iii) - High rate of Population Migration :**

Little is known for certain about Liberian population growth . In 1953 an American geographer estimated the population at 750,000 on the basis of a hut count made from aerial photographs & checked by samples on the ground . in 1961-62, a census was attempted for the first time, but it's findings were not made public. The Department of Justice has recently estimated that the population is about 1 million, of whom 30 thousands are foreigners. The two decades of devastating civil war had made a great internal displacement of population as well as great exodus of population to other countries. This has now greatly affecting the existing Liberian economy.

6\* Civil war and government mismanagement destroyed much of Liberia's economy, especially the infrastructure in and around the capital, Monrovia. Many businesses fled the country, taking capital and expertise with them, but with the conclusion of fighting and the installation of a democratically-elected government in 2006, several have returned. Liberia has the distinction of having the highest ratio of direct foreign investment to GDP in the world. Eric, Simpson, (2004) " *A Nation in Terror: The true story of the Liberian civil war*", Philadelphia, Parkside Impressions Enterprises

**( a ) ( iv ) – Unusual Dominance of Iron & Rubber on whole Economy :**

Historically, the Liberian economy depended heavily on iron ore and rubber exports, foreign direct investment, and exports of other natural resources, such as timber. Agricultural products include livestock (goats, pigs, cattle) and rice, the staple food. Fish are raised on inland farms and caught along the coast. Other foods are imported to support the population. Electricity is provided by dams and oil-fired plants.

**( a ) ( v )- Dominance of Americo-Liberians in Trade , Commerce & Industry:**

Foreign trade was primarily conducted for the benefit of the Americo-Liberian elite. The 1864 Ports of Entry Act severely restricted trade between foreigners and indigenous Liberians throughout most of Liberia's history. Little foreign direct investment benefited the 95% majority population, who were often subjected to forced labor on foreign concessions. Liberian law often did not protect indigenous Liberians from the extraction of rents and arbitrary taxation, and the majority survived on subsistence farming and low wage work on foreign concessions.

**( a ) ( vi ) Export of Diamonds, As Prime commodity of Trade :**

While official export figures for commodities declined during the 1990s' civil war as many investors fled, Liberia's wartime economy featured the exploitation of the region's diamond wealth. The country acted as a major trader in Liberian, Sierra Leonian and Angolan blood diamonds, exporting over \$300 million in diamonds annually. This led to a United Nations ban on Liberian diamond exports, which was lifted on April 27, 2007.

Other commodity exports continued during the war, in part due to illicit agreements between Liberia's warlords and foreign concessionaires. Looting and war profiteering destroyed nearly the entire infrastructure of the country, such that the Monrovia capital was without running water and electricity (except for fuel-powered generators) by the time the first elected post-war government began to institute development and reforms in 2006.

Once the hostilities ended, some official exporting and legitimate business activity resumed. For instance, Liberia signed a new deal with steel giant Mittal for the export of iron ore in summer 2005. But, as of mid-2006 Liberia was still dependent on foreign aid, and had a debt of \$3.5 billion. As of 2003, Liberia had an estimated 85% unemployment rate, the second highest in the world behind only Nauru.

**( b ) Use of USA dollar as one of the main medium of monetary transaction :**

The Liberia dollar currently trades against the US dollar at a ratio of 65:1. Liberia used the US dollar as its currency from 1943 until 1982. Its external debt (\$3.5 billion) is huge compared to its GDP (\$2.5 billion/year); it imports approximately \$4.839 billion in goods per year, while it exports only about \$910 million. Inflation is falling, but still significant (15% in 2003, 4.9% in the 3rd quarter of 2005); interest rates are high, with the average lending rate listed by the Central Bank of Liberia at 17.6% for 3rd quarter 2005 (although the average time deposit rate was only 0.4%, and CD rate only 4.4%, barely keeping pace with inflation).

**( c ) Fragile Political Situation affecting the economy :**

Liberia is trying to revive its economy post civil war. Various sanctions imposed by UN on diamond and timber exports were removed by 2007. The country has second-largest maritime registry in the world, with some 3000 vessels registered under its flag. It continues to suffer with poor economic performance due to a fragile security situation, the devastation wrought by its long war, its lack of infrastructure, and necessary human capital to help the country recover from the scourges of conflict and corruption. Liberia has one of the world's largest national registries of ships, due to its status as a "flag of convenience".

CHAPTER -2

**NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENTS ( PROBLEMS) IN LIBERIA ( 1999-2009)**

## CHAPTER-2

**NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENTS( PROBLEMS) IN LIBERIA( 1999-2009)**

The important problems, i.e. negative developments in Liberia in between 1999 to 2009, chronologically could be enumerated as follows ;

- I. Last Year's of Taylor (1999-2003)
- II. Liberia's involvement in International Drug trade
- III. Problems in the trial of culprits of war crime
- IV. Obstacles to Economic Development

**I- LAST YEARS OF TAYLOR REGIME, ( 1999-2003)**

Taylor was elected as President in 1997, after leading a bloody insurgency backed by Libyan President Muammar al-Gaddafi. Taylor's autocratic and dysfunctional government led to the Second Liberian Civil War in 1999. So during this period Liberia was facing two primary problems, i.e.(a,) repression by Taylor regime & (b) civil war of which the most important rebel group was LURD (Liberians United For Reconciliation And Democracy).

**( a ) Repression: During the Last years of Taylor's regime**

To understand the repression in Liberia under Taylor's brutal regime's rule we have to go back the historicity of repression & tension in between ethnic Africans & Americo-Liberians, from which community Taylor belonged.

**( a )(i) Historical Facts of the tension & repression:**

Founded by liberated slaves from the southern United States, Liberia declared independence in 1847 . For more than 130 years, until 1980, its politics was dominated by descendents of original settlers, known as Americo-Liberians. Tensions between the settlers regimes and the indigenous population led to periodic clashes, especially over taxation policies and to indigenous people's awareness of their deprivation. President William Tolbart( 1971-1980) encouraged some political openness but with vacillation. Several civil-society organizations advocating mostly economic reform started in the 1970s, including the Movement foe justice in Africa ( MOJA), whose original leadership included Togba- Na-Tipotech, Amos Sawyer and H. Boiuma

Fahnbulleh, Jr. The other major organization, the Progressive Alliance of Liberia(PAL), led by G. Baccus Matthews, organized in 1979 a rare and historical important public demonstration ( popularly known as Rice riots) against the government to challenge plans to raise the market price of rice, it was put down with violence. The 19<sup>th</sup> Century created polity was built on a foundation of social inequality. Its evolution challenged that inequality and culminated at least in the 1970s in a new discernable reform agenda. The 1980s emasculated that agenda. Warlordism in the 1990s and beyond destroyed what lingered on about that agenda.

**(a) (ii) Starting of Repression under military rule :**

In 1980, when Doe seized power in a military coup, he became the first indigenous head of state, but he soon frustrated many by replacing the Americo-Liberian with hegemony of his ethnic group, the Krahn, a minority of less than 5 percent. A 1986 report Bill Bekerley for the New York based Lawyers Committee for Human Rights reveals severe repression<sup>1</sup> under Doe, including bizarre, horrible acts against prisoners. In the aftermath of an attempted coup in 1985 against him, an orgy of violence ensued. One witness saw soldiers cutting out peoples' eyes, even though they were dead. A witness from the top building along a road saw military truck loads of bodies passing by. Even from the time Doe seized power in a coup in 1980, summary killing became a recurring feature of the new regime; flogging became commonplace with the use of automobile fan belts, rubber whips cut from steel belted radial tires and long switches. Soldiers sometimes sprinkled sand and salt water on the back of detainees to increase the pain. In 1984, after students had demonstrated against the arrest of political opposition leaders, including Dr Amos Sawyer (who later became the interim president of Liberia) on fake charges of plotting to overthrow the government, Doe's soldiers invaded the University of Liberia, raping many female students and killing some students.

<sup>1</sup>\*University students, faculty, journalists, lawyers and clergy were among the targets of Liberian governments repression, the very groups from which emerged a small band of courageous activists who continued challenging the Doe and Taylor regimes on human rights and democratic freedoms, sometimes even after they had been detained, tortured, and released. Key activists were among the most frequent targets of flogging and detention under deplorable conditions. Among those detained under Doe's regime were Alaric Tokpa and Ezekiel Pajibo, interviewed after the establishment of democratic government in Liberia in 2005. Pajibo detained in December 1985, was at one point tied to a rubber tree and subjected to a mock execution when questioned by the military about the activities of Sawyer. Conditions in detention were abysmal, gross, over-crowding, poor ventilation and primitive sanitation facilities. With no screens, prisoners were subjected to the onslaught of malaria-carrying mosquitoes. Eric, Simpson, (2004) ' *A Nation in Terror: The true story of the Liberian civil war*', Philadelphia, Parkside Impressions Enterprises



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**(a) (iii) Repression under Charles Taylor Military Regime :**

Charles Taylor, who had fought as a rebel leader from 1989 to 1997, headed a brutal regime as president from 1997 to 2003, some activists rated the repression even worse than under Doe. Human Rights Watch provided this assessment:

“ After five years in office, President Taylor’s government continued to function without accountability, exacerbating the divisions and resentments fueled by the civil war. Taylor continued to consolidate and centralize power by rewarding loyalists and intimidating critics. State power continued to be misused by high ranking officials to further the political objectives of the executive branch, to avoid accountability and for personal enrichment. State institutions that could provide an independent check on the Taylor administration, such as the judiciary, the legislature and human rights commission, remained weak and crowd. Independent voices in the media and the human rights community were steadily silenced.

**(a) Last years of Taylor’s Regime & LURD (Liberians United For Reconciliation And Democracy)**

Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) was an armed, political organization dedicated to the building of genuine democracy in the Republic of Liberia through the removal of the repressive Taylor-led government. LURD was committed to the principles of national reconciliation and unification, and the ideals of constitutional democracy, such as the respect for fundamental rights.

LURD was formed in 2000 by Liberian refugees in the West Africa sub region. Its support comes from internally displaced Liberians and exiles. No former warlord had been nor shall be involved or associated with the LURD in its national effort to build democratic institutions in Liberia. LURD had a two-tier organizational structure. A political campaign to establish rule of law, and a military campaign to free the Liberian people from the tyrannical rule of the Taylor-led regime.

**(b) (i) How LURD was Different From Other Political And Military Groups**

In safeguarding the best interests of the Liberian people, it was the intent of LURD to work with other Liberian democratic entities in a provisional governing body towards internationally supervised, free and fair multi-party elections in 2003. Under this transitional arrangement:

1. The constitution will be upheld, defended and protected;
2. Human rights and civil liberties will be respected and defended;
3. Basic services will be restored;
4. International norms will be observed;
5. An enabling environment will be created to foster economic recovery and attract foreign investments; and
6. All international agreements with Liberia will be honored by LURD.

**(b) (ii) Why The Taylor-led Government Must Resign Or Be Removed From Power**

The savage civil war set the stage for the current decaying social, political and economic conditions in Liberia. That conflict virtually destroyed the physical and cultural fabric of our nation. Relative peace and security paved the way for rushed internationally monitored elections that gave Charles Taylor and his National Patriotic Party a mandate to govern, unite and reconcile Liberians. After three and one half years of the brutal and corrupt misrule of our national affairs, the Taylor regime had failed miserably in fulfilling the electoral mandate given by Liberians. Meanwhile, President Taylor continuously violated the constitution with impunity, and was irreparably damaging the image of our “Lone Star” within the international community.

LURD was determined to have Charles Taylor removed from state power so as to halt his constant assault on the constitution, including the abuse of power and the misuse of authority to stifle press freedom and individual rights. The Taylor government’s misguided economic policies, monopolistic practices, and criminal interests hinder economic recovery and international reconstruction assistance. An imperial presidency had local and national government with public services in shambles or disarray.

Liberians, having languished as refugees and displaced persons for over ten years, and wanting to be repatriated and resettled in a democratic Liberia, had decided to form themselves into LURD to bring all necessary pressures to bear on the Taylor-led government to immediately

resign from state power or be removed by all means necessary. LURD's political and military campaigns were geared toward national salvation. Charles Taylor and his National Patriotic Party (NPP) had two choices: either his government steps down from the reins of state power or be removed immediately by the Liberian people to prevent anarchy in order to build a sustainable democracy.

### **( b ) ( iii ) Vision Of LURD**

**The ultimate mission of LURD was to build and sustain democracy in the Republic of Liberia.**

Their short-term objectives were according to them as follows :

1. to repatriate all Liberian refugees and resettle all internally displaced persons in Liberia;
2. to professionalize the military and security forces;
3. rehabilitate all former combatants; and
4. to work tirelessly with the other countries (Guinea and Sierra Leone) of the Mano River Union to ensure lasting peace and stability in the sub-region.

LURD's primary focus centered around the unification and integration of all Liberians, with an unending desire to promote ethnic harmony and religious tolerance. The healing of national wounds through a genuine reconciliation process will secure just and lasting peace and stability in homeland. The adherence to the rule of law and the respect for fundamental rights of all Liberians shall be the cornerstone for the building of democracy. It was highly expected that LURD's military and political campaigns will attract, encourage and cement the participation of Liberians in the democratic process, as well as sustain our democratic institutions.

The laws of Liberia\*2 as enshrined in constitution were supreme. The cornerstone of constitution is the universal principle of social justice. No one person must be allowed to be above the law, as well as, no one should be allowed to violate our constitution with callous disregard for basic human rights. The will of the Liberian people must always prevail in the court of law and public opinion when it comes to injustices against the Liberian people in the past or present.

**(b ) (iv ) It was The Vision Of Liberians United For Reconciliation And Democracy That:**

1. Liberians everywhere will campaign tirelessly to defeat dictatorship and build democracy in Liberia;
2. Liberians everywhere will work together in unity to ensure that its new government will be democratic, transparent and accountable to the Liberian people;
3. Liberians everywhere and the international community will assist Liberia to recover from economic devastation and develop into a vibrant society with equal opportunities for all Liberians, as well as benefit foreign interests that invest in the future of Liberia;
4. Liberians everywhere must mobilize their human, financial and material resources to socially develop our war ravaged nation, as well as appeal for international assistance to improve the low standard of living of our people; and
5. Liberians everywhere must demand and ensure that our natural resources are reserved for future generations through the enactment of environmentally sound policies.

LURD called upon Liberians everywhere to support the ongoing national campaigns to end the Taylor dictatorship and usher in a new government of Liberia for Liberians and by the Liberian people.

**“In Union Strong, Success Is Sure. We Will Not Fail!”**

2\* Liberia has a dual system of statutory law based on Anglo-American common law for the modern sector and customary unwritten law for the native sector for exclusively rural ethnic communities. Liberia's modern sector has three equal branches of government in the constitution, though in practice the executive branch headed by the President of Liberia is the strongest of the three. The other two branches are the legislative and judicial. Clapham, Christopher,(2005) *“Recent History; In Africa , South of Sahara”* ; London , Europa Publication.

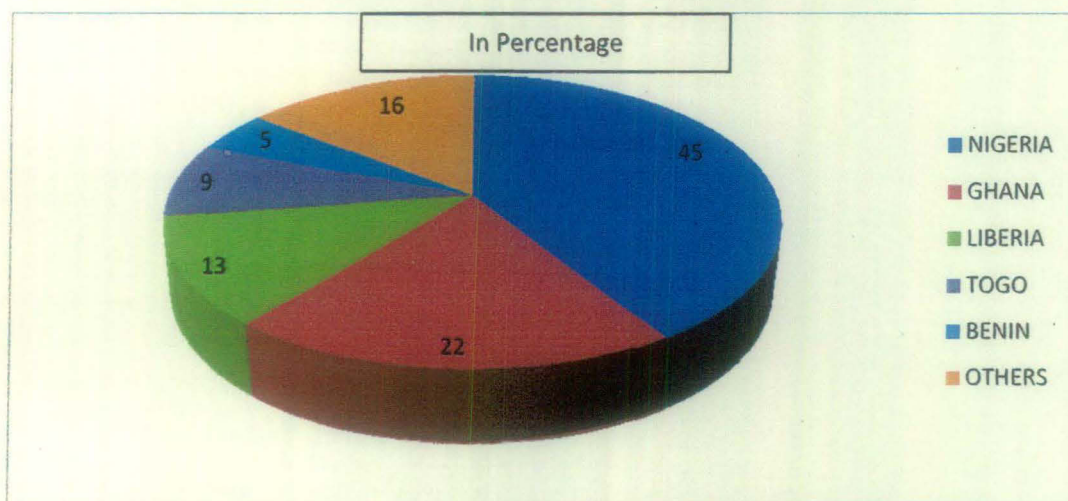
## II- LIBERIA'S INVOLVEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL DRUG TRADE

The social problems in Liberia, starting from falling of social structures, huge migration of people from one part of the country to the other & even migration to other countries, only started with the despotic military rule & became manifold after the civil war. But the most alarming development in Liberia, is that of the nefarious international drug trade, in which all most all the West African countries are more or less, involve to the misfortune of the society.

### (a) Drug Trade in West Africa : An Important Transit point

A report published by the UN's Office on Drugs and Crime ( UNODC) in December 2007 had drawn unprecedented international attention to West Africa's role as an intermediary in the cocaine trade between Latin America and Europe. Major news papers had carried full-page articles on the subject. But law enforcement officers have long been aware of the reach of West Africa's drug trading networks and the UNODC and other official bodies had for some years been observing a sharp rise in cocaine exports from Latin America to West Africa. The roots of the current collaboration between drug traders in these two sub-continent in fact go back for more than a decade.

WEST AFRICAN DRUG TRADE: SHARE OF WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES IN 2007



Sources: UNODC Report on Drug Trade in West Africa in 2007

According to the UNODC's estimate, about a quarter of Europe's annual consumption of 135 to 145 tons of cocaine, with a whole sale value of some \$ 1.8 billion, currently transits via West Africa. In addition to the cocaine trade, West Africa is also a transit point for much smaller quantities of heroine exported from Asia to North America as well as being a producer and exporter of cannabis products and perhaps amphetamines.

Needless to say that this trade is entirely illegal and yet the proceeds are so great as to have a considerable impact on West African economies. A major change in the global cocaine trade is taking place. South American cocaine traders are reacting against the saturation of the North American market, the growing importance of Mexican drug gangs and effective interdiction along the Caribbean smuggling routes. These factors have induced them to make a strategic shift towards the European market, making use of West Africa's conducive political environment and the existence of well developed West African smuggling networks. Some leading Latin American cocaine traders are even physically relocating to West Africa and moving a considerable part of their business operations to a more congenial locations, just as any multinational company will do in the world of legal business. Some observers believe that the next step for Latin American cocaine traders might be to commence large scale production in West Africa. Some African law enforcement officers are deeply concerned by the likely effects of the drug trade and drug money on their own societies and indeed there is evidence that drug money is funding for civil war, political campaigns and affecting political relations in several West African countries. Diplomats and other international officials worry that some West African countries could develop along similar lines to Mexico, where drug gangs have a symbiotic relationship with political parties and with the state and drug related violence results in thousands of deaths every year.

**(b) Historicity of the Drug Trade ;**

It is said that Lebanese smugglers were using West Africa as transit point to transport heroine to the USA as early as 1952. A decade later, Nigerian & Ghanaian smugglers in particular began exporting African grown marijuana to Europe on a scale large enough to attract sustained official attention. By the early 1980s, some had graduated to the global cocaine and heroin business. Since then, successful Nigerian and Ghanaian drug traders have established themselves in most parts of the world, including other West African countries, like Liberia. In short, West Africa's

role in international drug trade has historical roots going back for over half a century and has been a matter of significant concern to law enforcement officers worldwide for decades rather than years. Latin American drug traders who see some benefit in moving part of their operations to West Africa can find local partners with well established networks who provide them safe houses, banking, storage space and a host of other facilities in return for a suitable financial arrangement or for payment in kind.

### **( c ) Drug Trade in Liberia : Politics Fails the Society**

Not only is West Africa conveniently situated for trade between South America and Europe but above all it has a political and social environment that is generally suitable for the drug trade. Smuggling is widely tolerated, law enforcement is fitful and inefficient and politicians are easily bribed or are even involved in the drug trade in themselves. Many officials throughout the region are deeply concerned by the effects of the drug trade but are often confronted by people and networks more powerful than they, with other priorities.

Trafficking networks with high level government connections emerged in other countries too. One example involved a group of Ghanaians and a diplomat from Burkina Faso, the latter providing members of the syndicate with diplomatic passports. This team imported heroine from Mumbai to Abidjan for onward transmission to Europe. The Burkinabe diplomat at the heart of this syndicate was also a close associate of Charles Taylor, subsequently to become president of Liberia.

### **( d ) Drug Trade in Taylor's Regime :**

In 1986-87 Taylor was one of several Liberian exiles living in Ghana and plotting against the Liberian government. He was twice detained by the Ghanaian government on political grounds. On the second of these occasions, it was his friend the Burkinabe diplomat who secured Taylor's release from prison. A Ghanaian who shared Taylor's prison cell in Accra recalled Taylor's opinions on the drug trade, like this: " In one of our numerous arguments whilst in cells, he was critical about what he called unwarranted vigilance and the arrest of drug traffickers in Ghana. I begged to differ from him but he insisted that the major concern of African governments should be the prevention of domestic consumption of hard drugs. Once people are exporting such drugs from Africa, they should be allowed. He further stressed that we should think of cultivating coca

and marijuana in Ghana as major exports. He was particularly peeved about the fact that African governments complain of lack of capital when they have the easy option of granting banking facilities to drug barons who have billions of dollars for laundering”.

Charles Taylor achieved his ambition of becoming head of state when he became President of Liberia in 1997. True to his earlier ideas, he proceeded to associate with professional criminals from a wide variety of countries. His predecessor, Samuel Doe, had allowed Liberia to be used for drug trafficking, as an earlier government may also have done. After Nigeria had dispatched a peacekeeping force to Liberia in 1990, under the auspices of Economic Community of West African States( ECOWAS), some members of the Nigerian expeditionary force developed interests in the narcotics trade. Their control of Liberia’s seaports and of its international airport provided ideal transport facilities. A further attraction was Liberia’s use of USA dollar as an official currency. Major Dutch criminals had long had an interest in Liberia and Sierra Leone, in particular for the trans-shipment of hashish cargoes from Asia. On 31 January 2008, 2.4 tons of cocaine were on board the ‘Blue Atlantic’, when it was intercepted by the French navy off the Liberian coast, en route to Nigeria. An authoritative view is that of Antonio Mazzitelli, a senior UN drug law- enforcement officer in West Africa, who sees 2005 as the year in which a major change of scale become visible. He lists the total seizures in West Africa of cocaine as going from 1.2 tons in 2005 to 4.3 tons in the first three months of 2007.

The UNODC has pointed out that the relocation of a substantial part of the Latin American cocaine business to West Africa, including even some senior management functions, is not best understood as a consequence simply of comparative advantage in pricing. A more important reason for this development, which has been taking place for over a decade, is the exceptionally favorable political context offered by ineffective policing, governments that have a reputation for venality and the relative lack of international attention to West Africa. A pliable sovereign state is the ideal cover for a drug trafficker. Liberia, to name just one example , was already a fully criminalized state under Charles Taylor, the country’s head from 1997 to 2003.

### **III- PROBLEMS IN THE TRIAL OF CULPRITS FOR WAR CRIME: AFTER RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY ( 2003-2009)**



After the surrender of Taylor & the establishment of interim government in 2003 another important chapter stated in Liberia's history. It the trial of the all the persons who were involved in various forms of repressions, genocides, brutal killings of innocent civilian population during the two decade lasting bloody civil war. But along with that another important tragedy started with that as various problems aroused with this trials of former war lords & their associates, who were also placed some important positions in the new democratically elected government of Liberia.

### **( a ) Trial of culprits for the War Crimes**

On 8 January 2008, almost without notice elsewhere, public hearings of Liberia's Truth & Reconciliation Commission ( TRC) began at the Central Pavilion, a large mock Roman structure flanked by the country's national museum and an imposing Baptist Church in the downtown Monrovia. The TRC had been established by an Act of the Legislature in 2005 and prior to the public hearings had collected 16,000 statements from victims as well as alleged perpetrators of the country's nearly fifteen years of brutal civil war, 1989-2003. The timing of the hearings appeared propitious for they coincided with the opening of the trial for crimes against humanity and related offences, of Liberia' s former President Charles Ghankay Taylor, several thousand miles away at the Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague. In contrast to TRC hearings the opening of the trial attracted significant international media coverage. It appeared that at long last accountability and closure was being sought for the terrors and depredations of Liberia's recent past.

The only problem was that the trial focuses not on crimes Taylor committed in Liberia, where before becoming president he was head of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia ( NPFL) rebels but on Taylor's alleged role\*<sup>3</sup> in the war in neighboring Sierra Leone. Meanwhile in Liberia itself, the TRC process has been wobbly and controversial and its many critics say that it will neither create ' a clear picture of the past' nor 'facilitate genuine healing and reconciliation' What the TRC process has done beyond the dispute, however, is neatly complement at least to Liberians following the two process, the prosecution case against Taylor.

3\* The case against Mr Taylor centres on allegations that diamonds illegally mined by rebels in Sierra Leone were exported from Liberia with Mr Taylor's co-operation, and the proceeds from their sale used to buy weapons for the rebels.

The picture that has emerged of the former Liberian leader from the public hearings is roughly what the Supreme Court\*<sup>4</sup> prosecutors had sketched, that of a monster and warlord beyond politics, who not only caused untold suffering to his own people but also with criminal deliberation, sent his fighters to support the Revolutionary United Front ( FUF) and loot Sierra Leone. This picture is likely to endure whatever the outcome of the Hague trial.

**(a) (i) Methodology of Trial for War Crime:**

Study based on approximately 50 peoples interviews, most of them in Monrovia in 2006 conducted by one USA media agency, and on archival and literature reviews. The crisis ( 1979-2003) begins with a public demonstration over planned government increases in the price of rice and ends with the resignation of Charles Taylor as President of Liberia. The periods of repressive regimes that comprise the heart of debate are those of Samuel Doe(1980-1990) and Taylor(1997-2003).

The interviews were with many surviving key Liberian activists from the study period, who were still residing in Liberia, plus other knowledgeable observers. Some activists had been killed, others had left the country. Interview lasted typically from one to several hours. In few cases, a second interview was conducted to follow up on unanswered questions. The interviews were semi-structured using prepared themes to pursue but allowing the interviewee ample room to suggest points not always anticipated by the interviewer. A snowball method was used to locate appropriate activists and non activists analysts in both countries: starting with well-known activists, the author sought suggestions from interviewees and others. Their suggestions were supplemented by archival research that pointed to others.

<sup>4</sup>\* Liberia's highest judicial authority is the **Supreme Court**, headed by the Chief Justice. The five justice court holds sessions at the Temple of Justice on Capitol Hill in Monrovia. Members are nominated to the court by the President and are confirmed by the Senate and have lifetime tenure. Under the supreme court are 15 circuit courts, one in each county. Lamb, Gay & Dye, Dominique (2009), " *African Solutions to an International Problem: Arms Control & Disarmament in Africa*" , ' *Journal of International Affairs* ', Spring/ Summer 2009, Vol 62, Nom 2 , New York, Columbia University Press , Pg 69-83

Many potentially useful archives of news papers and the Roman Catholic church, a leader in human rights reporting in 1990s, were destroyed during the civil war through fires, forced closures or vandalism. Since this study contrasts with the more frequent identification of political opportunity as a major element in the explanation of social movements ( an element also included in recent studies of peaceful resistance by social movements in repressive settings), it can be described as a 'nonconforming' case study, to use the terminology of sociologist and political scientists Charles C. Ragin, who frequently publishes on methodology. The study is replicable and falsifiable. Most of the individuals interviewed are still alive and can be located. Future researchers may look at the same evidence and come to different conclusions.

**( a ) ( ii ) Theoretical Perspectives of the Trial :**

Political opportunity is a concept that one prominent social-movement scholar has called 'Western saturated'. It has usually been described in terms of exogenous elements, not agency. Piven and Cloward, for example, argued that ' protest movements are shaped by institutional conditions and not by the purposive efforts of leaders and organizers. Tarrow pointed out that ' contentious politics is produced when political opportunities broaden, when they demonstrate the potential for alliances and when they reveal the opponents ' vulnerability', he added " the concept of political opportunity emphasizes recourse external to the group".

Political opportunity theory has come to occupy a major place in the study of social movements. Since 1973, when the term was introduced by Eisinger, a ' fairly strong consensus has emerged among scholars that movement development generally involves political opportunities and constraints along with the forms of organizations and the processes that link opportunity and action'. A general assumption has developed that as 'opportunity expands, actions mount; as opportunity contrast action recedes. So the model suggests, but the reality is rather more complex. A repeated empirical finding in many situations, even after controlling for other factors, that increased repression leads to increased protest mobilization and action'. Repression rather than demobilizing a movement, actually contributes to its mobilization.

A growing number of studies are using social movements's theories to analyze cases of people resisting repression outside the democratic industrialized nations. Examples include Loveman (1998) on Chile, Uruguay, Argentina; Brockett (2005) on Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua; Eckstein(2004) on Latin America; Boudreau(2001) on Burma, Philippines and Indonesia. In authoritarian settings, a rich body of literature makes clear that except in most extreme cases, repression is often met with citizen resistance.

These studies frequently involve mass public demonstrations against repressive regimes as in Eastern Europe( e.g. Karkalins and Peterson in 2003, Kurran 2001, Lohmann in 2005), in the Soviet Union( Bessinger 2002), in Latin America ( Eckstein 2001) or in Iran ( Kurzmann 2005).

Examined closely many of these studies have involved not only massive demonstrations, as in Eastern Europe while the Cold War was ending, but political opportunities. Boudreau argues that a key to understanding resistance in Philippines was the 'shifting external opportunities and constraints'. Brockett even argues that 'there are good reasons to believe that the opening and contraction of political opportunities is more central to the mobilization and success of Third World contentious movements than it is for those in the 'first world', because activities need them more in a dangerous setting. The Liberian case as empirical section below shows, involved neither clear political opportunities nor massive crowds : the explanation for its resistance movement lies elsewhere. Often in political science , agency theories, while putting the emphasis on individual and collective initiative, focus on rational and self interest explanations, though altruism is cited in some analysis.

5\*Meyer defines ' a social movement' as "collective and sustained efforts that challenge existing or potential laws, policies, norms, or authorities making use of extra institutional as well as institutional political tactics". Tilly includes in his definition of a social movement the concept of a 'campaign' using a 'repertoire' of tactics and participants who are serious, unified, committed and sometimes capable of 'filling streets'. Building on these definitions, but recognizing that repression can at times interrupt a 'sustained' campaign of various tactics and that individual activists can play an important role in maintaining momentum for a collective response, the use here as a definition of a social movement or resistance movement against an authoritarian regime a 'process' of public challenges to a regime's abuse of power that may involve individual as well as organizational activism and at times mass public support and is aimed at either regime reform or regime change. Manuel, Castells, (2000) ' *End of Millennium* ', Blackwell Publishers, London

In Liberia, the costs were so high and protest was so dangerous that self interest logic is difficult to apply across the board. Lichbach, in his classic 'Rebel's Dilemma' ,offers a rational choice approach to resistance and dissent, including, lawyers, journalists and academicians in every society who provide a disproportionate number of dissidents and he argues that professionals dissent to enhance their reputation and possibly their income.

Between structural opportunities and agency, however, as ways to help explain what happened in Liberia, agency trumps, though not the kind limited to self-interest. What Lichbach fails to explain is why some professionals who become dissidents (as happened in Liberia) engage in dangerous public dissent while most do not. His explanation though, useful in the rationality of economic, remains too complete of a conception of human motivation to adequately account for much contentious activity occurring under conditions of high risk. Would a lawyer risk torture or her life to challenge a repressive regime on the issue of habeas corpus, for example to enhance her reputation or to gain an extra law client. Activist Liberian journalist Hassan Bility, arrested by the Taylor regime in 2003, says some Liberians did seek to enhance their reputation or earn incomes through human rights work, but most activists and advocates were drawn in to it because the country was ' like train wreck: everyone was being affected on e way or the other' by the civil war, the repression and the collapsed economy.

**( a ) ( iii ) Empirical Evidence of the Trial :**

The empirical evidence could be found from the following evidences, namely

- 1) Repression
- 2) Examining Political-Opportunity Explanations
- 3) Historical roots of resistance
- 4) Establishment of a micro social movement
- 5) Commitment of participants
- 6) Use of media and international contacts

**( b)- Truth & Justice for the people: Justice delayed is justice denied**

The TRC was launched on 20 February 2006 ( nine Commissioners had already been appointed to staff it on 22 October 2005), as provide for by Liberia's Comprehensive Peace Accord, 2003 ( CPA ). Article XIII of the CPA stated that a " truth and reconciliation Commission shall be established to provide a forum that will address issues of impunity as well as an opportunity for both the victims and perpetrators of human rights violations to share their experience in order to get a clear picture of the past to facilitate genuine healing and reconciliation ."The Commission was to 'deal with the root causes of the crisis in Liberia, including human rights violations and it was ultimately to recommend measures to be taken for the rehabilitation of victims'. The Commission was mandated investigate 'gross human rights violation and violations of international humanitarian law, as well as other serious abuses , including massacre, rape, murder and extra judicial killings. It was also to investigate ' economic crimes' such as the exploitation of natural or public resources to perpetuate armed conflict .

The Commission was to end its work in September 2009. The Commission's enquiry was to start as far back as January 1979, the final year of Americo- Liberian rule and ten years before the war began , to 14 October 2003, the day of the inauguration of the National Transitional Government of Liberia.

This timing was a compromise reflecting a fundamental division in Liberian society, a problem that had continued to cast a shadow on the entire process. The tiny but still powerful Americo-Liberian elite tend to view the crisis of state collapse and violence as beginning with the coup 1980, which overthrow William Tolbert ( whose father was actually USA born). On the other hand , the vast majority of Liberians, the so called 'natives', tend to think that the coup resulted from the inherent deformity of the Americo- Liberian state and see the entire period of Americo-Liberian rule as disenfranchising, a period which laid the foundation for the war that began in 1989. In fact, Article IV of the TRC Act states that the Commission could look at ' any other period preceding 1979'. With little insight in to the politics behind it, Amnesty International welcomed this broad time frame since' narrow limits in the period of time under a truth Commission's investigation can hamper the effectiveness of its work.

Liberian law made it mandatory that officials of statutory national bodies must be Liberian citizens and all nine Commissioners were Liberians ( unlike Sierra Leone 's TRC, which had Commissioners from Canada, South Africa and the Gambia). The result was that none of the commissioners had previous experience with truth commissions or related institutions. The Chair, Jerome Verdier, was a young activist lawyer with little political and even less moral clout, both necessary for leadership of an institution of huge potential national and international importance. Funding was an immediate problem, causing significant delays. Once this was partially overcome, the Commission began work in earnest. Predictably it had been further beset by institutional and other problems that had seriously undermined respect for the entire process.

### **(c)- The dark past: as memory of the living**

The Commission initially decided it would collect statements from 34,000 Liberians or approximately 1 percent of the country's population. In view of the serious capacity constraint of the Commission, this was a purely theatrical gesture and was quickly abandoned. In the event , by end of 2007, the Commission had collected 16,000 statements and was anticipating a further 2,000 to be collected from the important Liberian diaspora in the USA( an innovation: the Liberian TRC was the first to take statements from citizens living abroad). Then in early January 2008 public hearings intended to take place in all of Liberia's 15 countries and to feature 600 witness who would testify openly or in camera, began.

Already by mid January 2008, the political impact was palpable. Two dramatic testimonies were made in the first week. At the opening of hearings , attended by the President and cabinet ministers, the first witness, David Saweh, identified a prominent musician and close aide to the President, Marcus Davis, otherwise known as Sundaygar Dearboy, as a former NPLF fighter who caused the gang rape and killing of his sister. Saweh claimed that his father was also killed in the attack by Dearboy. It was an extraordinary moment. Dearboy was a national star , something of a role model and he had an office at the Executive Mansion, the presidential palace. It was a huge embarrassment for President Johnson Sirleaf, who appeared visibly flustered and left the Central Pavilion unceremoniously. Thereafter she took a markedly unfriendly attitude towards the Commission, which did not help its own cause by exhibiting sordid infighting, including an actual fist fight between two ( female) Commissioners. Johnson Sirleaf promptly

described the TRC as a 'charade', and vowed never to appear before it. Instead, she said, she will reserve her testimony for her memoirs, which was her key retirement plan.

The other sensational testimony was that of Joshua Blahyi, a former fighter for the Krahn dominated ULIMO-J faction and later leader of the Butt Naked Brigade, a band of naked child fighters who believed that nudity protected them from bullets and who allegedly participated in ritual cannibalism. This faction fought in the very destructive battles of Monrovia in April 1996, in which Blahyi became born again Christian and established a popular church in Monrovia. In his testimony Blahyi claimed that he was responsible for the death of 20,000 people during the war and he made clear that his confession was a form of contrition, calling on other factional leaders to come forward and confess to the TRC.

In fact the testimony looked suspiciously histrionic and Blahyi, preening and evidently proud of himself, behaved less like a contrite sinner than a hero seeking a national platform. The hearings however had been partially redeemed by a number of clarifying disclosures which had firmly put Charles Taylor at the centre of most of the murderous violations. Perhaps the most important so far had the testimonies on the Harbel or Camp Carter massacre<sup>6</sup> of 6 June 1993. On that day, 600 mostly displaced women and children at the camp, which was on the Firestone Plantation, an area which both the NPFL and the Liberian army, the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), claimed to control at same time were massacred by the armed fighters. It was a shocking display of terror, made more dramatic by the fact that negotiation to end the war, sponsored by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the United Nations (UN) were in progress at the time.

<sup>6</sup>\*The NPFL promptly accused the AFL of the killings which the AFL denied, blaming NPFL. The UN set up a Commission of Inquiry headed by a markedly incurious former Kenyan attorney general Amos Wako. In September 1993, Wako submitted his findings, blaming the AFL for the killings. Few were convinced. The historian Stephen Ellis, who was then an investigator for Amnesty International, later wrote that the 'most plausible explanation was that the massacre was carried out by elements in the NPLF, as a means of gaining world attention and increasing the pressure for a cease fire, which was now in the NPFL's interest, because it was under the increasing attack. Jean- Francois Bayart, Stephen Ellis (2005); *The Criminalization of the State in Africa*, OUP, London, Pg 121



Appearing before the TRC on 15 January 2008, M. Allen Nicholas, a.k.a. 'Mission Ant', a former child soldier of the NPFL, said that he was one of dozens of NPLF fighters, under the command of General 'Jack the Rebel' and Christopher Varmoh ( Mosquito), who carried out the killings. Nicholas, now born again Christian, alleged that NPLF fighters were ordered by Charles Taylor to carry out the killings in a way that would cast suspicion on the AFL, thus helping legitimize his campaign during the aforementioned negotiations to end the war. Two days later, on 18 January 2008 , at the Special Court in The Hague, General Zigzag Marzah, a former NPLF commander, who was now a key prosecution witness, explained in detail how, on the orders of Taylor, he led fighters to support the RUF in Sierra Leone, a testimony buttressed by another prosecution witness, Varmuyan Sheriff, formerly head of Taylor's security ( 1997-2000).

A difficulty faced by the TRC was that , although many alleged perpetrators had voluntarily testified without even asking for immunity first, many of these, with the exception of Blahyi, were fairly minor and largely unknown figures during the war. The major players, like Prince Johnson( the rebel leader who killed Doe), who was now a senior senator, refused to testify. Johnson had claimed that he had made peace with the family of Doe ( even though he continued to insist, against the evidence of widely circulated videos footage, that he did not kill Doe), and that he would only testify if makers of the 1980 coup testify as well. Winston Tubman, the grand nephew of William Tubman( the longest serving President of Liberia) and a former United Nations Secretary General's Special Envoy to Somalia, had dismissed the hearings as a joke and a forum for promoting 'ethnic interest'. Tubman was Americo-Liberian, and his anxiety was widely shared by others within that small but old and highly influential community.

#### **IV- OBSTACLES TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Liberia enjoyed none of the benefits of European colonization which in some measure were conferred on most other African countries . It received neither the tangible benefits of roads & schools , nor the more important but less tangible benefits of trained administrators and a civil service ethic of performance , efficiency and honesty in the public service . Instead the traditional practices & values of Americo- Liberian society were carried in to the post-war period

The most formidable obstacles to economic development in Liberia comes from

- (i) its political & social organization;
- (ii) the retention of traditional politics in the new economic environment of massive iron ore mines & rubber plantations.

The opportunities for nation-wide development provided by rapid growth in primary production undertaken by foreigners, had not yet been seized .

Some of the traditional institutional arrangements which are detrimental to development may be cited briefly .

In 2008 about one fourth of the wage earning labour force was recruited involuntarily, principally to work on rubber farms owned by foreigners & Liberians. The effect was to keep wage rates down, to increase the turnover of labour and in effect to put a regressive tax on tribal workers so recruited by reducing their income in kind from rice production . Similarly the administration of the hinterland provinces continued on a colonial pattern of indirect rule with District Commissioners representing the central government and Paramount Chiefs responsible for everyday matters, serving under their jurisdiction . With regard to taxation, land tenure, control over residence and movement, marriage & divorce , legal jurisdiction, obligatory labour service to local authorities ( with out pay), labour recruitment ( forced labour withpay),extra-legal extractions for money, rice and services, tribal Liberians in the hinterland were subjected to a different socio- legal system from Americo- Liberians.

### (i) AGRICULTURE

There are 3 distinct agricultural sectors in Liberia:

- (i) foreign plantations , principally in rubber
- (ii) independent rubber farms ( the largest owned by Americo-Liberians)
- (iii) tribal agriculture , principally rice & cassava grown for direct self-consumption and cash crops of palm kernels, coffee, cocoa, piassava and rubber.

In 2009, agriculture accounted for a little more than one third of gross domestic product( about \$ 60 million out of \$ 170 million) . Between 2000 & 2009 the production of total exports attributed to agriculture , declined from 95 percent to less than 60 percent because of the rapid growth in iron ore mining . Less than one quarter of the income generated in the money sector is attributed to agriculture sector, although agriculture employment accounts for nearly half the employment in the money sector . Similarly less than one sixth of total income is generated in the subsistence agriculture sector although it accounts for nearly half of total employment. The difference in value product per man- year among the sectors are striking . \$ 2540 in the non agricultural sector compared to \$ 507 in agriculture . Within agriculture \$ 878 in foreign plantation agriculture\*7 ( rubber)compared with only \$ 611 in private Liberian commercial farming( principally rubber) and only \$ 339 in the subsistence sector.

The variation in labour productivity is clearly due mainly to :

- (1) the varying capital- labour ratios in different industries
- (2) the capital intensive technology used in iron ore mining ,for example ,is largely responsible fro the higher productivity in the non-agricultural sector .

But it is also true that in those industries which employ a proportionally high capital per worker the labour force is on the average of a high quality, both physically & in terms of technical & educational qualifications than the labour employed in agricultural pursuits.

One foreign plantation ( Firestone) accounted for more than 80 percent of all rubber produced in 2000.Five other large foreign plantations began to produce rubber between 1963 & 1965 and produced by 2000 more than 20 million pounds a year ( about as much as is produced by the independent Liberian farmers now).

7\* Plantation cultivation of crops other than rubber has been tried with bananas, but the venture failed because Panama disease decimated the crop. Independent rubber farms ( those owned by Liberians) increased in number from about 500 in 1941 to more than 2500 in 1960 & by 2008 the total number of independent farms are more than 56,000. Salvatore, Dominck , (2005), " *African Development Prospects* "London Taylor & Francis Publishers. Pg 165-178

The principal causes of growth were

- (1) price rises during the Second World war & Korean war
- (2) Firestone's stimulation of rubber production through its provisions of marketing, credit and technical services to Liberian producers
- (3) new roads built since 1955 which made areas in hinterland accessible for commercial agricultural & reduced transport costs to the local market provided by Firestone.

However the productivity per acre of independent farms is markedly less , on average than Firestone's .The transformation of subsistence agriculture in the tribal hinterland has hardly begun. The wage earning labour force almost tripled between 2000 & 2009 thereby increasing the market demand for rice . There was increased trade in rice but there was no marked increase in domestic rice production . Improved growing procedures . have not been adopted . Upland rice grown on dry land was still the principal growing method despite the fact that wet rice yields on demonstration farms were 3 or 4 times as much per acre ( and there are many marshy areas suitable for growing wet rice without irrigation equipment). Moreover, after some ten years of sustained agricultural advice , the American AID establishment curtailed its agricultural program in 2002 because of disappointment results. Imports of rice grew to fill the food gap & cost 5.5 million dollars in 2009. The principal obstacles to transforming subsistence agriculture seem to be institutional rather than economic or technological .Like that of traditional land tenure arrangements, traditional tribute demanded of tribal communities , traditional forced labour etc .Aside from hut taxes & forced labour tours , tribal Liberians in the hinterland are subject to extra- legal tribute payment of rice , money , & labour service to a variety of governmental employees . Similarly there is no guarantee that the land which is turned to commercial production & there by made more valuable , will not be appropriated by highly placed Liberians or rented to foreign concessions by the central government. There is little incentive for tribal persons to abandon subsistence agriculture as long as they believe they will be allowed to retain little if any of the higher income from expanded commercial production . When the new roads are built in the hinter land a not infrequent reaction of tribal communities is to move away from the road so as to become less accessible to tribute demands.

The only clearly successful development in agriculture undertaken by Liberians has been in rubber produced by independent farms. But here the conditions have been very special . Apart from high wartime prices, the success is largely attributed to the services ( and demonstration effect ) provided by Firestone and to the fact that by far the largest proportion of rubber produced is on farms owned by highly placed & educated Americo- Liberians rather than tribal persons. Firestone has provided effective extension work concentrating on a single tree crop . Its service to private growers have been effective because Firestone has a financial stake in knowing how much private farms produce( to ensure that rubber it buys does not come from its own tree), because practical advice is given to Liberian producers on all aspects of rubber farm management and because most of the farmers assisted are literate & commercially minded. Because Firestone was the sole buyer of rubber in Liberia so it was able to impose quality standards on Liberian producers by using price differentials for different grades of rubber. But above all Firestone was able to introduce profitable farming to chiefs & other influential persons. They depend on Firestone & Firestone could count on their support .If conditions of the kind that characterize rubber production could be created for other cash crops the success of Firestone program of research & extension service might be duplicated . However , the problem are formidable . Unlike rice , palm, kernels, sugar cane & most other agricultural commodities grown in Liberia, rubber has no domestic use and only one domestic market outlet . It is likely that, if rubber could be eaten , demanded as tribute, or stolen and sold with impunity , rather production would be less profitable.

To be successful, a plan for agricultural development in Liberia would have to reach to a much larger group of farmers than any scheme has managed to do so far. Only the half dozen foreign plantations & fewer than one hundred independent rubber farms can be regarded as efficient establishment with growth prospects.

Liberia's most serious & intractable agricultural problems arise in connection with tribal farms & farmers: some 150,000 shifting subsistence farms , occupying one third of Liberia's land area , operated at a low level of efficiency. As else where in Africa, tribal agriculture is not so much as a technique for producing food as away of life. Low productivity is not only a matter of inferior skill & equipments but also of ingrained cultural habits & political & social institutions unreceptive to improved technical performance. Agricultural extension services for

tribal farmers seemed to be ineffective because they were not accompanied by changes in the social & economic institutions of hinterland communities . The traditional policies of control & levy exercised by agencies of central government would have to change to assure the tribal farmers that they may retain a substantial share of higher income resulting from increased output.similarly land tenure arrangements would have to change to guarantee firm title to improved land.

Under Liberian law , only citizens & charitable institutions may own land in free sample . All undeeded lands including those occupied & used by tribal people are part of the public domain and can be sold to private individuals only by the government of Liberia . In law, there are safeguards\*8 against the private encroachment on tribal holdings. In practice these safeguard are frequently ignored .land is still a free good in most part of the hinterland areas of Liberia & dispossession of tribal people has not so far imposed operative limits to land areas available for tribal cultivation . However individual tribal farmers have been disposed from lands on which they have planted coffee , cocoa, & rubber trees. entire communities have been swallowed up by the governments to foreign concessions & large tracts of public lands along newly constructed roads have been sold to non tribal individuals for business , farming or specific purposes. Dispossession may or may not be accompanied by compensation, depending on the social & political position of the buyer & the tribal group affected .These practices make tribal people suspicious of any government program for improving agricultural output as long as tribal land tenure is insecure.

8\* Each tribe is entitled to the use of as much of public land in the area inhabited by it as required for farming & other enterprise & shall have the right to possession of such land as against any person whomsoever .Provision is also made for surveys to delimit tribal territory for the conversion of surveyed land in to communal holdings and if a tribe can become sufficiently advanced in civilization for the division of tribal land in to family holdings of 25 acre each. Mayson, Dew Tuan and Amos, Sawyer; (2000) “ *Labor in Liberia: Review of African political economy*”, Volume 14 ; Jan- April, Pg 3-15

## (ii) LABOUR & WAGES

Many of the characteristics features of the modern sector of the Liberian economy can be illuminated by a study of labour situation . Out of population of around 3.5 million 240,000 are full time wage or salary employees . this represent a significant increase over previous years. In 1950 the wage earning labour force was probably not more than 30,000 . Some 20,000 of whom were employed by one firm( Firestone).

Most of the labourer force were unskilled , low paid , illiterate & or tribal origin . More than two-thirds were unskilled workers who earned about 50 cents per day ( excluding wage supplements). All most half of all employees worked for foreign agricultural concessions or Liberian farmers ( primarily in rubber). If we exclude government employees , about 80 percent of Liberian wage workers were employed by foreign owned firms. Roughly one- third of a million people derived the bulk of their lively hood in the money economy. About two-thirds of 3 million earned the bulk of their livelihood in subsistence agriculture. Non- African foreigners employed in Liberia occupied more than half of all salaried positions in private enterprise. About 20 thousand women & 20 thousand children under 17 worked for wages . About 15 percent of all wages and salary workers and nearly 50 percent of all female workers are employed by the Liberian government .

Recruitment for both the government & private employers was carried on legally by requisitions on tribal chiefs resulting in a considerable amount of involuntary employment. In 2000 some 20 thousand unskilled labourers\*<sup>9</sup> ( almost a quarter of all unskilled labour force) were so recruited , largely for rubber plantations & local government service in the interior. Those employees with skills exhibited a wide range of productivity .

<sup>9</sup>\* Liberia, however as part of the global economy, was not immune to the oil crisis of the 1970s, which affected its rubber and iron-ore industries. In a study of labor in Liberia, Mayson & Sawyer ( 1979) noted a growing militancy during this period on the part of the working class and organized labor. Bush, Ray , (2008),” *Scrambling to the Bottom ? Mining , Resources & Underdevelopment*”, ‘*Review of African Political Economy*’, No 117; ROAPE Publications , Pg 361-366

According to employees there are the following reason for the low productivity of Liberian labour.

- (1) deficiencies in cultural back ground & elementary education ( especially illiteracy)
- (2) absence of training in & commitment to commercial & industrial work methods
- (3) poor physical fitness
- (4) high rates of absenteeism & labour turn over

There was a seasonal shortage of unskilled labour , especially at independent rubber firms paying less than market wage rates . Skilled & professional Liberian personnel were extremely scarce . Non- Liberian Africans as well as Europeans, Americans & Lebanese comprised an unusual large proportion of professional man power & highly skilled ( e.g. motor mechanics, carpenters, masons , electricians, etc.) More than 90 percent of all Liberians with professional & technical training worked for government of Liberia.

Firestone was the largest employer of unskilled labour , employing about 20 thousand in 1960's.About 30 thousand unskilled employees or all most half of the total were employed on rubber firms. These employers made their unskilled labour substantial wage supplements which amounted to between one fourth & one third of annual African

money wage bill in 2008 . The supplements on large concessions took the form of free housing , medical care, elementary education, and subsidized foods . the older concessions , such as Firestone usually have incentive wage schemes such as , turnout bonuses & automatic wage rate increases with longevity .

The low level of wage rates is reflected in the wage share of National Income going to Africans . For 2009 African wages & supplements amounted to over 30 million dollars, which was 20 percent of total Gross Domestic Income . Assuming that families of wage workers average three persons , the average family income of Africans is about \$ 130 per head for the 85,000 families in the money sector .



There was a Liberian shortage of skilled labours in 2 senses: a large proportions of skilled workers were not Liberians but were other African countries , Europe & America , many firms had skilled jobs to offer which remained unfilled for lack of qualified personnel.

Traditional agricultural patterns strongly influence the supply of labour to the wage earning sectors of the economy . The land is cut, cleared and burned between July & May and the main upland rice crops are harvested between July & September . it is during these period that tribal people leave their wage – earning jobs in order to return to traditional farming activities .

To explain the high rate of seasonal return to subsistence rice crop production , we compare the cash wages plus material benefits paid by rubber farms to the imputed value of alternative real earnings in subsistence agriculture . A tribal family of five people typically cultivates a three acre farm, two acre planted in upland rice, one in other crops . The male head of the family spends about 15 days per acre in clearing & burning the land and about an equal amount of time during the harvest. His total labour time, per season, comes to about three months on the family farm. The wife does the sowing & weeding during growing season. She sows around 140 pounds of seed rice on the two acres , for a gross yield of 2000 pounds of rice in husks , 60-65 percent of which is clean rice or some 1250 pounds . Deducing the 140 pounds of seed sown , the net yield in clean rice is about 1100 pounds , which at \$ 6.50 per hundred pounds , has a market value of \$ 71.50 . We may attribute this net value product entirely to the man , as long as tribal woman have almost zero- cash earning opportunities .

This \$ 71. 50 in rice income from farming may be contrasted with 3 months earning as a rubber tapper at \$ 0.45 per day , a total of some \$ 40 . Wage rates on rubber firms would almost have to be doubled to make it materially worthwhile for the man to give up rice farming during the planting season. Indeed if we count the other crops grown on the third acre and the non- material benefits of returning to the farm , perhaps \$ 0.90 per day would be close to the mark . On the other hand at a wage rate of \$ 0.55 per day an unskilled worker can earn in a year an income some what larger than that presently yielded by 3 months of rice farming & 9 months of rubber tapping . This calculation suggest that why enterprises paying \$ 0.55 per day & more did not experience great difficulty in finding unskilled labours . Rubber workers return to rice farming not only for the material income it yields directly but also to maintain rights in tribal land ( rights

which are based on usage) & to fulfill social obligations to assist kinsmen in farming & other pursuits.

There are 3 kind of female labours in Liberia:

- (1)literate & trained women( e.g. secretaries & school teachers)
- (2)illiterate & untrained women in the interior
- (3)illiterate & untrained women in Monrovia & other cities

There is no problem in employing the literate & trained women seeking employment. Such women are regarded in Liberia as they are in Europe & America and conventionally occupy positions in offices, schools , & hospitals. But there are even fewer literate females in Liberia than literate males. In the interior females have been occasionally employed\*<sup>10</sup> for wages with success on some rubber concessions.

Disguised unemployment of female labour is apparent in Monrovia. Indigenously , tribal women work extreme hard, both in house hold task & in farming. When they come to live in Monrovia with their husbands or relatives , they have no farming tasks to do . Since there is no urban employment for illiterate & untrained females, other than petty marketing, one sees hundreds of women putting a very long hours .Most of them probably earn less than 25 cents for a 12 or 16 hours of work per day.

10 \* Liberian men have no objection to wives earning money if it is done at some familiar task( petty marketing , weeding gardens) which is women's work and does not interfere with house hold & family firm work. Women are seldom employed as tappers in Liberia( men's work)and there are no jobs for illiterate women in other commercial production lines undertaken in the interior, road construction, iron ore mining, timber cutting. Mayson, Dew Tuan and Amos, Sawyer; (2000) " *Labor in Liberia: Review of African political economy*", Volume 14 ; Jan- April, Pg 3-15

Such facts reinforce the need for more literacy & vocational training in Liberia. Indeed, one aspect of economic development is the continuing decline in proportion of unskilled to total labour force. Skills & literacy require training & education, which at the same time as they increase labour productivity also weaken tribal allegiance: even moderately educated men & women invariably leave the confined orbit of tribal society.

With regard to child labour, little can be said. In tribal surroundings, children work at light farming tasks to aid family effort & to learn proper procedures & performance of duty. It is not uncommon for boys under 12 to be employed as spare tapers on independent rubber farms. In urban situations they frequently work as yard boys, news paper sellers & petty marketers. In Monrovia, a few perform car watching services which for a small fee – protects owners from the vandalism of watchers.

The salient characteristics of professional & managerial personnel in Liberia can be listed as follows:

( 1 ) At least 90% of all Africans with professional & managerial skills are employed by the government of Liberia. Of this group, about one fourth are Negro immigrants ( from other African countries, the United States, West Indies, Haiti) . The government also employs several hundred Europeans, Americans & Asians.

( 2 ) Managerial & professional positions at foreign concessions and other foreign firms are almost wholly occupied by Europeans, Americans and Lebanese .

( 3 ) It is not uncommon for Liberians owned establishments ( e. g. large independent rubber firms, trucking companies) to be managed by foreigners .

It is only a slight exaggeration to say that the professional, managerial, and entrepreneurial labour force in Liberia is divided into two groups: Liberians work for governments or are absentee owners ( for most part ) of the rubber farms, transport facilities and buildings, provide legal services and to a small extent medical & commercial services . Foreigners are

overwhelmingly predominant in staff positions in iron ore , rubber, and timber. Where Liberians are employed by concessions, they most frequently act as advisers in law, public relations and advertising .

A sample survey concerning skilled and professional labour was carried out by questionnaire in the summer of 2001 amongst the largest firms in Liberia. The firms and government departments in the sample employed about 60 percent of all wage and salary earners in Liberia and about 80 percent of all professional & managerial persons . An increase of 25 percent in total employment of such persons was expected to grow most rapidly in the sampled establishments were government, 54 percent ; trading companies, 33 percent ; construction companies, 32 percent . Three of the establishments estimated a future decline in employment caused by a transition from a construction or development to a production phase of activity . Three other establishments predicted no change in their future employment levels. all other establishments estimated gains in future ranging from 2 percent to 450 percent .

The estimated future growth in wage employment is a continuation of the gains reported since 1998. With but three exceptions, all surveyed firms reported substantial gains in employment for the period 1998-2001. Of those three , only one reported a net decline and that was of less than 10 percent of the firms' total work force . However , there are problems arising from the large number of workers becoming unemployed simultaneously when large construction works are completed. Thus about 10,000 workers were laid off in 1998 when major LAMCO projects were completed . In the mid 2002, there were approximately 25000 non-Africans employed at professional, managerial, and highly technical jobs which Liberians- if qualified –could fill. If government pursues a policy of “ Liberalization” it must identify the types and numbers of positions available and direct its scholarship programme toward external training for these positions . Moreover, there would have to be created some sort of staff training programme to give educationally qualified Liberians entrance in to and experience at junior level professional and managerial occupations in the private sectors of the economy. The tradition of highly

trained Liberians seeking jobs exclusively with the government would have to be changed as large number of trained Liberians become available for private employment.

In developed Western countries, trade unions are distinguished by 3 characteristics:

( 1 ) Union leaders regard the interest of their rank & file membership as primary and leaders are independent of government & employers.

( 2 ) Unions engage in periodic collective bargaining , the results of which are set forth explicitly I contractual rights, obligations, and stipulations concerning wages, other income benefits, and work conditions.

( 3 ) Union bargaining power is made effective through the right to strike.

All 3 features of Western trade unionism were absent in Liberia: union leaders were independent of neither the government nor the private employers; there was no collective bargaining in Liberia- no written wage contracts periodically negotiated ; strikes were illegal in Liberia if they occurred before the legal process of arbitration and court decision are exhausted . All strikers known to have occurred in Liberia from 1949 to 2009 – some 51 to 55 strikes – were illegal .

Strikes have been partly successful in the sense that wage increases have followed several of them. In 2009 there were more strikes & more workers involved in strikes than in all previous strikes taken together. although there were strikes in Liberia as early as 1949. 2009 marks the first time that a strike occurred in a wholly Liberian owned enterprise ( a large rubber firm ) ; before 2009 all strikes took place in large foreign firms . with the exception of a strike in September 2001, none of the strikes known to have occurred between 1949 to 2001, was initiated by union action

The weak indeed almost non-existent role of unions in Liberia can be exploited by the economic & social structure and the traditional institutional complex of Liberia . Most Liberian wage workers were illiterate, unskilled, and of tribal origin . Relatively a few permanently

committed to wage employment . About half of all wage workers did unskilled jobs in commercial agriculture ( mostly rubber farms owned by foreign concessions & Liberians) : wage employment is relatively new for most Liberians. These factors work against the successful establishment & functioning of effective unions. There was an absence in Liberia of experience with democratically controlled voluntary associations. There were no analogues in Liberian society to associations controlled by the rank & file whose leaders act primarily in the interests of membership. In addition many top echelon government officials are themselves large employers ( rubber farms, trucking companies) and had no wish to relinquish to unions\*<sup>11</sup> , their traditional paternalistic control over labourers .

The extremely weak position of unions was partly due to the absence of a concern with increasing the real income of rank and file workers. For example :

- (1) official tolerance of labour recruitment ( which acts to keep wages from raising in response to market forces);
- (2) labour legislation ( as of 1992) which exempts half the wage earning labour force- the lowest paid half, in commercial agriculture & domestic service – from the minimum wage rate of four cents an hour .

Sensitivity to foreign criticism has deterred the government from eliminating unionism. Liberia has been publicly castigated by the ILO for allowing unsavory labour practices.

<sup>11</sup> \* More over Liberia would lose prestige in the eyes of other African countries if trade unions were legally disallowed. The government of Liberia's position on unions may be fairly stated as follows: Union should exist but should remain ineffective. Although officially policy is to tolerate the existence of unions. Erstwhile president Tubman on several occasions had emphasized that Liberian economic development must not be impeded or jeopardized by strikes . Mayson, Dew Tuan and Amos, Sawyer; (2000) " *Labor in Liberia: Review of African political economy*", Volume 14 ; Jan- April. Pg 3-15

The dominance and control of the fragile trade union movement by government is not institutionally unique in Liberia. No potential focus of political opposition, no organization which criticizes government policy or exists for purposes which might conflict with governmental aims, is allowed to flourish. The government interpret strikes as evidence of political disloyalty & foreign subversion, rather than economic discontent. Such a view effectively hobbles union officers, since they can be arrested and jailed without trial under the president's emergency powers. Not being free to criticize the government of Liberia or Private Liberian employers (many of whom are upper level government servants), union spokes person confined their criticism to foreign employers even though wage rates and supplements are almost invariably higher in foreign than in Liberian owned firms.

In summary, the reasons for lack of success of trade unionism in Liberia can be listed as follows:

( 1 ) Structure of economy & labour force:

Two thirds of wage earning labour force was unskilled and largely illiterate, many of whom retained tribal identification and a semi-tribal way of life; there was higher labour turn over and a seasonal return to subsistence agriculture. Agricultural employment (which even in developed countries is less amenable to union organization) accounts for a large fraction of the wage earning labour force.

( 2 ) Structure of government & society:

there was an absence of independent voluntary associations and of overt political opposition; there was the fear of an independent trade union movement becoming a focus of political opposition (the present and tolerated union leadership is obviously loyal to the administration.) Political leaders as private employers are opposed to wage increases and to losing control over their workers. Union officials were subject to arrest under the president's emergency powers.

**(iii) INDUSTRIALIZATION**

In 2002, industrial processing of primary commodities for export was done by foreign concessions. Latex rubber was processed into crepe and crude iron-ore was beneficiated so as

to reduce transport costs by exporting a less bulky , more refined product. Manufacturing and fabrication of finished goods for domestic consumers & producers markets was just beginning . Here too the few new lines of production was being undertaken principally by foreigners : automobile tyre recapping , milk reconstitution, bear & soft drink manufactures, soap & furniture.

There was no industrialization plan. As with granting of foreign concessions to rubber & iron ore mining firms , the government of Liberia played a passive role; European & American firms would take the initiative to get contractual approval from the government to undertake a specific line of production . Here too , Liberians supplied & some skilled labour, and the European management supplied the required entrepreneurial and professional labour & capital.

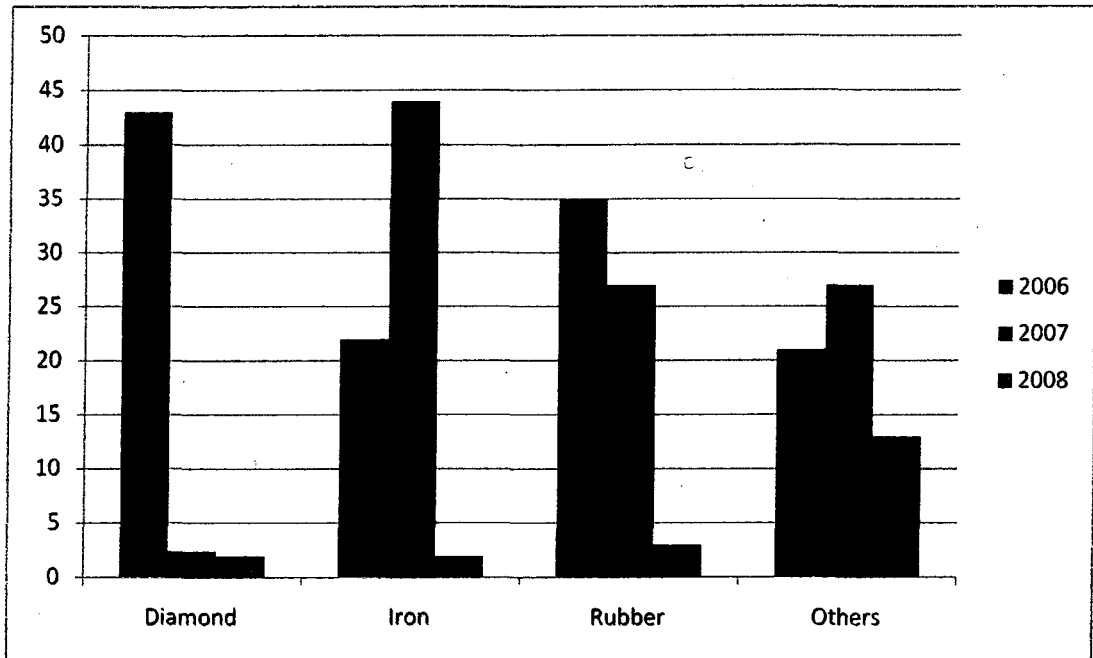
Import duties provide some encouragement for manufactures to set up manufacturing or processing plants in Liberia to avoid the duty. For example , the duty imposed on boiled sweets has stimulated an English manufacturer to examine the feasibility of local manufacture. But the limited market in Liberia means that ‘ infant industry’ protection can only be successful if there are no great diseconomies of small plants. Unfortunately this is true of only very few commodities . If and it is an enormous if , West Africa ever develops a common market these disadvantages may be overcome . Specialization within the region could provide a viable market for many industries.

#### (iv) TRADE

Some of the components of imports & exports have been described in earlier sections .Rubber & iron ore which together comprises of 85 percent of all exports in 2008 , were not sold in free markets abroad . The direction of export trade is roughly indicated by the nationality of the foreign concessions residents in Liberia ( selling mainly in their home countries).Firestone sells its rubber to its parent company in the United States and much the same is true for the European iron ore mines. About 40 percent of imports & exports were the result of trade with the USA.



LIBERIA'S EXPORT FOR LAST 3YEARS ( In Million \$ )



Sources: <http://www.cia.gov.li>

Two points in particulars may be noted . First much of the imports of machinery , vehicles, and manufactured goods during the period shown were required and financed by iron ore mining companies . Secondly iron ore has becoming increasingly important .Production has more than quintupled over the last 6 years and the output forecast for 2010 is 50 million tons.In 2008, import duties yielded the government of Liberia almost one-third of its total revenue. Aside from import duties , a small export tax on rubber and control over the import of firearms, pharmaceuticals and used clothing, foreign trade is entirely free from quota restrictions . There was no marketing boards in Liberia. Traditional export crops such as cocoa and coffee are purchased directly from small scale peasant farmers by Lebanese merchants.

The Government has not attempted to control or influence imports & exports in order to stimulate development. Tariffs and export duties have been imposed in order to raise revenue rather than to stimulate industrial development , to finance the government expenditure rather than to provide incentives for import- substitute industries.

CHAPTER -3

**DEVELOPMENTS (CONSTRUCTIVE ) IN LIBERIA (1999-2009 )**

## CHAPTER-3

**DEVELOPMENTS (CONSTRUCTIVE) IN LIBERIA -1999-2009**

The constructive developments in Liberia since 1999 could be counted from many fronts like that of

- ( I ) Resisting Repression in Liberia by Common people ( 1999-2003)
- ( II ) Formation of Transitional Government in Liberia after Taylor Regime
- ( III ) Elections of 2005: beginning of a new era
- ( IV ) Emerging political Patterns : a sign of Political Maturity
- ( V ) Resurgence of women power in post civil war Liberia
- ( VI ) Economic Developments

**I-RESISTING REPRESSION IN LIBERIA BY COMMON PEOPLE (1999-2003)**

Liberian human rights attorney Tiawana Gongloe\*<sup>1</sup> had little idea that people in his country were paying attention to legal challenges to Charles Taylor's regime until April of 2002, when he was seized by police. A large crowd of angry Liberians gathered outside the police station to protest and participants refused to leave, even after many arrests had been made. That evening three security agents started a nightlong torture session of Gongloe; they repeatedly forced him to squat ( an action that damaged his ligaments) and beat his body, injuring his kidneys.

<sup>1</sup>\* Tiawan Gongloe was a long time human rights advocate and latter became solicitor general in the administration of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who was elected in 2005. Lamb, Gay & Dye, Dominique (2009), " *African Solutions to an International Problem: Arms Control & Disarmament in Africa* ", ' *Journal of International Affairs* ' , Spring/ Summer 2009, Vol 62, Nom 2 , New York, Columbia University Press , Pg 69-83

The torture, which also involved pouring hot candle wax over him, continued until 9 a.m. the next morning. Unable to walk or stand in the court, he was taken by ambulance to a hospital, where again crowds of sympathizers gathered, despite the presence of security forces and soldiers. Liberians were not the only ones to protest his treatment : the U.S. State Department and numerous private human rights organizations issued statements calling for his release. He was soon freed.

From 1979 to 2003 in Liberia, a period that included 14 years of civil war and a reign of terror under two presidents, democracy advocates and human rights activists managed to mount a small but public and peaceful resistance, one that defies categorization as a social movement. Students, lawyers, journalists, academicians, members of clergy and others, joined at times by general public in demonstrations, mounted a serious public campaign using a variety of tactics( including marches, vigils, speeches, public statements and law suits), calling for respect for basic rights, such as the right to assemble peacefully, not to be imprisoned, without trial, not to be mistreated and to express opinions and report the news. They did so with few of the exogenous political opportunities often associated with the emergence of social movements. The puzzle then is this: in the absence of such advantages, how did a peaceful social movement( or resistance movement) take root and survive under two extremely harsh regimes!

This suggests the alternative explanations to political opportunity: formation of a micro social movement that offered not only a smaller target to a repressive regime but a more fluid one, which had no formal leadership or membership; a high degree of commitment by most participants, driven more out of desperation and a sense of purpose than by material incentives, activists access to the local media and to international human rights organizations and interested members of the diplomatic community that helped publicize abuses and bring international pressure to stop them and historical roots of resistance politics, especially in the 1970s.

Strands of resistance in such a movement are directed towards the regime, though the strands are not always united. The strands help keep demands for human rights and democratic freedoms in the public and international eye and they may win concessions if the regime is trying to maintain the facade of rule by law and seeks international aid.

In the world of Monrovia, the capital, where most of the resistance took place, activists and advocates, though often acting independently of each other and linked by friendships, family ties, and professional pursuits and acts of resistance became known quickly. The resistance in this period, starting with the Rice Riots\*<sup>2</sup> of 1979 and ending with the end of civil war in 2003, built on historical precedents of opposition politics dating well back in not Liberian history, including by the independent press and students. It drew inspiration from individuals such as Alberta Porte, a stubbornly courageous and consistent critic of several regimes. It drew from the experiences of several key political organizations formed in the 1970s and their leaders as well as a growing independence within some segments of civil society in the 1970s.

**(a)- Historical roots of resistances:**

The political resistance from 1979 onward, as noted above, had its roots in early resistance by the press, students, pamphlets, the labour movement and organizations formed in 1970s. Coming out of the 1970s for example the formation of independent unions breaking away from the government sponsored unions. Many shop stewards decided to speak on their own. There was the time when the Chamber of Commerce and many women organizations spinning off. Independent schools flourished and the revival of students union occurred. The Liberian Council of churches was very active.

**(b)- Micro resistance Movement:**

Despite the lack of political opportunities ,some Liberian lawyers, journalists, clergy, leaders of some nongovernment organizations, students, teachers, opposition leaders, and others mounted a micro resistance campaign in the 1980s, one that grew in the 1990s and continued until Taylor's resignation. The movement included lawsuits, critical published reports, clerical condemnation, strikes, and protest marches. Its goals were democracy, human rights and peace.

<sup>2</sup>\* Known as 'Rice Riots' , this event is judged by historians and activists as the first major resistance to repression of this period and is credited with showing the vulnerability of the Tolbert Presidency, which was overthrown in a coup the following year(1980). Liebenow, J Gus, (2007) "*Liberia: The quest for democracy*", Bloomington, Indian University Press

At times, activists mobilized people for a mass demonstration; but for the most part resistance was small scale, only loosely coordinated at best, without formal leadership, involving individuals and organizations. A large profile, a more centralized or connected social movement, would have provided an easier target under regimes that frequently used violence to suppress the dissent. As it was many activists leaders were arrested; some were tortured; many were forced in to hiding in the country and some fled in to exile.

Limited but dangerous and open resistance to the Doe regime began, almost immediately after the coup in the form of public statements and critical journalistic reporting condemned by government and several mass demonstrations organized by University Students. The Liberian National Students Union helped organize a rally of thousands of students less than a month after Doe assumed power, calling on the military to return to their barracks. Former student leader Tokpa recalled a pattern in such student resistance. Political opponents of the regime' would make radical statements against the regime. They would be arrested and put in jail and then their imprisonment would provoke a social anger, which would lead to mass demonstration by students and their supporters. The government repression led to under ground pamphleteering by student activists. Many political organizations were banned under Doe except in the weeks immediately before the 1985 elections, leaving campus student organizations the press among the few viable sources of resistance to increasingly authoritarian and harsh rule. Resistance grew after the 1985 sham election but it was limited by repression. " It was difficult because we were haunted by Doe; I had to hide" recalled one outspoken member of the clergy, Bishop Arthur Kulah.

Journalist Kenneth Beast editor of the 'Daily Observer,' frequently ran afoul of the government with his well researched articles that gave voice to dissent and exposed the regime's economic shortcomings. In retaliation, his press was shut down five times , he was jailed several times and the regimes thugs set his newspaper office on fire three times. Other news papers experienced similar reprisals for persistent publication of articles critical of the government. Doe forced the closure of independent newspapers in 1990, as rebel forces led by Charles Taylor were closing on the capital city. By July 1990, there was not a single independent media house in Monrovia, according to Gabriel Williams, a leader in the Press Union of Liberia. The Press Union along

with transportation organizations, teachers, women's groups and others, organized an unusual mass public march to call for Doe's resignation in mid 1990. Thousands of people, ranging from professionals to market women, converged toward the president's mansion. Everybody was dancing, singing. There was this chant, 'Monkey come down'. Doe's security forces broke up the demonstration with force.

The period 1990-1997 saw the partial collapse of the state as rebels controlled all but Monrovia. The situation provided an opportunity for the human rights organizations to start, including the Justice and Peace Commission( JPC), formed by the Roman Catholic Church in 1990. The JPC used a network of informants during the civil war to report abuses, these reports in turn were aired on the churches radio outlets and forwarded to human rights organizations abroad, putting Taylor under international scrutiny. Human rights activism was delivering body blows to Taylor's political machine as their activities de-legitimatized the regime on a daily basis. During Taylor's rule as President, several other key human rights organizations formed. Individual lawyers working loose coordination attempted to represent and defend arrested activists, some of whom were being tortured by state security agents. Clergy and students continued to speak out against the regime and the independent press frequently aired critical reports that brought government reprisals.

Liberia's peaceful resistance\*<sup>3</sup> can be categorized in terms of chronological periods, the backgrounds of advocates or activists, their tactics and their goals. As impressive as the acts of resistance were, resistance were remained small and micro social, to present a larger, more vulnerable target, especially in the stages, was too risky.

3\* For the most part, the movement involved a small number of individuals, particularly lawyers, journalists, student leaders, and clergy, drawn to the resistance through their professions or academic status. Organizations were involved at various times but they tended to be weak and underfunded, with little in the way of material recourses, unable to provide substantial help or support to activists members. Press, Robert M.(2008), "*Candles in the Wind: Resisting repression in Liberia(1979-2003)*", *'Africa Today'*, 55/3, Oxford University Press, Pg 3-21

The professional lawyers' organization for example, went through long periods of noninvolvement with political actions, only periodically becoming more active, depending on who was chair. Coordination among human rights lawyers tended to be informal, rather than organizational, so as to avoid detection, but there was communication through networking.

One activist recalls, "In 1980s, there was no cell phone in Liberia. People depended on word of mouth. Most of these meetings were secret, informal, or on the phone. We'd met at social gatherings." By 1997, when Taylor began his repression, human rights organizations had started in the quieter period of interim governments, 1990-1997. Communications easier with the induction of cell phones and e-mail.

Mass demonstrations tended to be onetime events, not part of a planned program of resistance. Some were spontaneous, like the show of support for arrested and tortured attorney Gongloe, as described before. Though people were intimidated by the brutality of the Doe and Taylor regimes, neither head of the state could prevent such an unplanned, unorganized show of sympathy, a clear expression of criticism of their regimes. Other demonstrations were planned.

**( c ) Peaceful Resistance in Liberia: Activists, Tactics and Goals: 1979-2003**

Years	President	Activists	Tactics	Goals
1979-1980	William Tolbert	Opposition Politicians, Students	Articles, Speeches, Demonstrations(1979)	Regime reforms, Democratization
1980-1985	Samuel Doe	Opposition Politicians, Students, Journalists	Demonstrations, Articles	Regime reforms, Democratization
1985-1990	Samuel Doe	Journalists, Wider civil society	Articles, Speeches, Demonstrations	Human rights, International & community awareness
1990-1997	Interim Governments	Clergy, Journalists,	Legal defense, Articles, Broadcasts,	International & community



		Wider civil society	Workshops	awareness, Peace
1997-2003	Edward Taylor	Attorneys, Clergy, Journalists, Wider civil society, Women	Articles, Broadcasts, Legal defense, Boycotts, Demonstrations, Strikes	Human rights, Regime change, International & community awareness, Peace

Sources: Interviews in Liberia in 2006 by the USA journalist Robert M. Press

There was no defined leadership of the movement, no umbrella organization coordinating resistance. There was a shifting cast of activists, including students, journalists, and specially in the 1990s, lawyers and clergy. All this made it harder for Doe and Taylor to stop the resistance. The arrest of a particular activist would trigger a response by others.

**( d ) Commitment of the common people :**

That there was a resistance movement at all speaks to the stubborn commitment and determination of people who insisted on principles such as the rule of law, human rights, democratic freedom, and respect for human dignity. Participants risked arrest, torture or death. Both ‘ personal conviction and passion have driven the resistance process’ says Kofi Woods, a leading activist and the first head of JPC. At several particularly tensed periods in the struggle, Woods was forced to keep changing homes where he slept, accommodated by sympathizers’ .

Some advocates for these rights and democratic freedoms sought political advantage for themselves but they too faced the risks of repression when they spoke out. “Ours was an effort to insure respect for the rule of law, to develop democratic polity and to have greater inclusion in the political process” said one leading advocate for democratic freedoms, whose nongovernment organization office was attacked by Taylor’s thugs.

The most reverend Michael Kpakala Francis, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Monrovia, was one of the most courageous vocal critics of both Doe and Taylor. Some Liberians were self identified as human rights activists and worked primarily as individuals, staying in touch with other activists informally. These included attorneys such as Woods, Gongloe and others, including

Aloysius Toe, who worked with private organizations. Woods and Gongloe focused on legal challenges to the abuses of human rights, initially operating on their own at a time when the professional bar association was reluctant to become involved in political protest. Gongloe said his own activism had a long range goal. In his own words, “to help a lot of people who were in difficulty, as a way of building a larger coalition for the promotion and protection of human rights”.

Some attorneys, such as Dempster Brown, Tokpa and Augustine Toe were drawn in to activist roles that took up an increasing amount of their professional time. A few attorneys represented victims of the regimes starting as early as the mid 1980s and latter helped launch organizations to expand such work.

**( e ) Using media and international contacts:**

In the face of severe repression, activists of the Doe years and the larger number under Taylor publicized abuses by making use of local media and their contacts with international human rights organizations and diplomatic representatives. Activists journalist & Press Union of Liberia leader Williams recalls how his organization ‘mobilized the population’ for the mass demonstration in 1990 to call on the Doe to resign. “We publicized it on the radio, in the news paper, calling on the public to say , this is the time of national decision” ,he recalled. Earlier, reporting by Liberian journalists and activists had informed a highly critical 1986 report by the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, cited above, as well as numerous reports by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and other groups. It led to United Nations sanctions on resources that Taylor had plundered to help finance the civil war. Ultimately, in 2003, documented abuses culminated in an international indictment for war crime against Taylor.

Though data are lacking to document every events of regime repression or resistance, two examples of resistance in the later part of the Taylor years indicate democratic advocates and activists’ skillful use of media and international pressure. The first example involves the arrest, in 2002, of journalist Hasan Bility, who had continued writing articles critical of the Taylor government and was later charged with treason. When he was arrested, activist attorney Aloysius Toe took up his case, but Toe was arrested too. Then other attorneys took up the case. The government began moving Bility from one location to other, but the attorneys tipped off by

government insiders, kept denouncing the government in the local press, communicating with the American Embassy and keeping international human rights organizations informed. A local human rights group organized a march to the executive mansion, i.e. Taylor's Presidential office. Its leaders including attorney Brown, were arrested. Those arrests triggered further responses. Arch Bishop Francis, widely described by former activists as an outstanding advocate for justice during the Doe and Taylor regimes, was travelling in Europe at that time. As President of the Liberian Council of Churches, he called President Taylor to complain. "The Director of Police told me he received over 12 calls from 7 a.m to next day," recalled Brown, who was soon released. Bility, after being tortured, was released within a few months. Brown said in an interview "Taylor took the human rights groups for granted, but later on, he came to realize the impact of human rights groups because we sit and talk to Amnesty International, talk to Human Rights Watch and we used to network on Mr Taylor's activities. We monitored him on disappearance of peaceful citizens and all the things that were happening here".

Another example of using the media and international contacts came in 2002 in protests against the mass arrest of Mandigos, an ethnic group Taylor suspected of aiding rebels against him. Aloysius Toe documented some of the arrests and passed the information to various international human rights organizations. He described what he did next as 'tacit bargaining' which resembles a chess game in which both sides respond to the moves of the other. First he filed writs of habeas corpus on behalf of some of those arrested. When the government responded that the cases would be tried in military courts, Toe with the help other 7 Liberian attorneys filed writs in the military courts. He filed a complaint with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in Banjul, The Gambia. When the courts failed to respond, he organized a public prayer breakfast inviting diplomats and many religious organizations. A USA diplomat and a local Moslem representative were among those who showed up. He then organized a peaceful protest march to the executive mansion to present a petition to President Taylor. Before the march could be held, Toe received a tip that he might be arrested and he fled to Sierra Leon. He went in to hiding for eight days then turned himself in, refusing to flee the country as others had been forced to do. Later during a rebel attack on Monrovia that damaged the prison, he escaped.

## **II-FORMATION OF TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT AFTER TAYLOR REGIME**

The transitional government that formed after the end of Taylor's regime, had the sole purpose of organizing a peaceful & fair election, so that an popular elected government could rule the country & ruling the country till the new popular elected government take the charge of the country. But this transitional government had also some role in the construction of already shattered political base in the country. For analysizing that we need to verify the two important things; nature of the transitional government & shortcomings of the transitional government.

**(a) Nature of the transitional government :**

The National Transitional Government of Liberia ( NTGL) , consisted of an executive, a legislative assembly , a judiciary, and a number of commissions whose senior officials were selected through a formula of power sharing among armed groups, political parties and civil society. These officials were barred by the peace agreement from contesting the elections . Looming over all the institutions of the transitional government was the International Contact Group for Liberia ( ICGL ), that served to ensure that the spirit and content of this agreement are implemented in good faith and with integrity by the Parties. In many respects , the ICGL exercised sovereign authority and was the driver of the transition process. ECOWAS , the USA, and the European Union were the lead actors in the ICGL. ECOWAS provided leadership in mediating the transitional political process while the USA and the European Union working largely through the UN , funded much of the security and other humanitarian operations . The International Crisis group , an international think tank , contributed substantially to the intellectual and analytic perspectives of the ICGL.

**( b ) Shortcomings of the Transitional Government :The incentive and logic of plunder**

Despite such international oversight, the National Transitional Government began to disintegrate by the end of its first year of existence in 2004 . The power sharing arrangements was seen by its leaders as a license to plunder , with the result that elections became as much an operation to rescue the transitional process as one to lay foundations for democratic governance. That power sharing among warlords gives them sufficient incentives to commit to peace and to support democratic process has proved as false an assumption when applied to transitional governance in Liberia , the rush to elections in 1997 was motivated largely by the break – down of power-sharing arrangements among leaders of armed groups who sought total control & the resultant

month-long firefight that broke out among those groups in Monrovia. But where as in 1996 international mediators saw power-sharing arrangements as a frame work within which leaders of armed groups would end hostilities and seek to forge a common vision for their country , the leaders themselves saw such arrangements as an opportunity for further plunder. this was true for the National Transitional Government established in 2003. Right from the start , the logic of plunder was the dominant mind- set of many key players of the transitional government .

By early to mid- 2005 , ordinary Liberians welcomed the holding of elections, seeing them not only as a way of getting rid of a much disliked transitional government but also as a spring board to a change in their fortunes for the better . It was with the optimism that electing a government would ensure a positive change that Liberians in large numbers participated in the 2005 elections.

### **III- ELECTIONS OF 2005 : BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA**

#### **(a) The place of election in Liberia's post-conflict era:**

The political problem of complete anarchy, lawlessness, military despotism, civil war which made the country in to a pliable situation since 1980, with the over throw of Tolbert government by a coup and the subsequent military despotism & civil war, only ended in 2005, as the election\*4 of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as President of Liberia.

4\* The 2005 elections were the first Liberian elections in over a century in which the political environment was controlled neither by the settler oligarchy nor latterly by the dictators like that of Samuel Doe and Charles Taylor. Observers feared that the post- conflict environment was not conducive to holding elections and that a serious program of reconciliation and constitutional reform should have preceded them . Liebenow, J Gus, (2007) "*Liberia: The quest for democracy*", Bloomington, Indian University Press

Nevertheless elections were conducted with some degree of success , providing an opportunity to identify some emerging patterns in post- conflict Liberian politics.

These emerging patterns have to do with rising post –conflict political tendencies and alliances , up and coming political leaders and process through which they are recruited and the evolving dynamics of post – conflict politics generally . The 2005 elections were held at a critical historical juncture when for the first time in a quarter century , Liberia was not dominated by a warlord or shaken by the threat of being taken over by one, as has been the case subsequently with the alleged Charles Julu plot. It was also the first time in more than a hundred years that Liberia’s electoral processes were not under the influence of either the settler oligarchy or a military leader like that of Samuel Doe or a war lord like that of Charles Taylor. Many observers had feared that ( rife with bitterness & deep suspicion) , the post- conflict environment was not conducive to holding elections and that a serious program of reconciliation & and constitutional reform should have preceded the holding of elections. Despite these misgivings and the limitations of any conclusions that can be drawn from any single election contest , the 2005 elections did provide an opportunity to identify new as well as hitherto dormant institutions and processes that are likely to play significant roles in shaping Liberia’s political order in the twenty- first century. It has benefited from extensive interviews with candidates , party leaders, and other relevant political actors and informants undertaken by various foreign journalists, observers & media groups during the course of the elections campaigning & shortly there after.

**( b) The link between election & post-conflict governance:**

Although the role of elections in post – conflict governance remains a contested question, there is evidence that in some contexts and under certain conditions , competitive elections do tend to deepen democratization and assist in building culture , help ensure stability and legitimacy of governing regimes; and even mitigate or manage ethnic- based conflicts . The importance of elections sometimes goes beyond whether they are free and fair. Recent observers of successive elections in Nigeria seem to conclude that Nigerians were prepared to accept flawed elections in

1999 in order to break with military rule, in 2003 in order to nurture a fragile democratization process and in 2007 in order to ensure the departure of a leader who was bent on changing the constitution, to keep himself in power. A further reason given by some Nigerians for accepting the results of what they considered flawed presidential elections in 2007 is that, despite their flaws, through those elections Nigeria for the first time saw the transfer of power from one civilian leader to another.

Such minimalist expectations are not associated with the elections in Nigeria only. Lyons has argued that the Liberian elections of 1997 offered Liberians a choice in between the prospects of peace & stability on the one hand and the certainty of continued violent conflicts on the other. Liberians voted for the prospect of peace. In 2005 the question of whether the elections were free & fair did matter to Liberians because, with an internationally supported transitional government in place, an international peace keeping force of 15,000 on the ground and with no incumbent running or no dominant political actor manipulating the electoral process, Liberians saw in the elections diverse possibilities for the establishments of post- conflict governance arrangements that would better their lives.

#### **IV- EMERGING POLITICAL PATTERNS: A SIGN OF POLITICAL MATURITY**

##### **( a ) The political parties:**

For the third time in the last 25 years and despite enormous odds, multiple parties registered and were able to contest elections. This shows that Liberia has truly become a multi- party political system. For more than a century, the True Whig Party had been the political instrument through which the settler oligarchy recruited and groomed political leaders and exercised control over the affairs of the Liberian state. With the overthrow of oligarchy in the coup of 1980, several political parties emerged and despite brutal repression by both the Samuel Doe and Charles Taylor regimes, some have been able to sustain their presence in the body politic and are beginning to provide national political leadership. The Liberian People's Party (LPP), the Liberia Action Party (LAP), the National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL), the Unity Party (UP) and United Peoples Party (UPP) are among parties that have survived 2 decades of turbulent politics and violent conflicts. the latter four have survived internal leadership changes

and debilitating internal conflicts and can lay fair claim to having gone through what Huntington terms ' process of institutionalization'. Although with a free media, multi-party contested elections can now be considered entrenched in Liberian political culture as a result, attempts to reverse these democratic gains are unlikely to succeed .

In addition to parties that have survived the turbulence of the 1980's and 1990's , a few others have become prominent since the 1997 elections . Among these are the All- Liberian Coalition Party ( ALCOP) of Alhaji Kromah and the National Patriotic Party ( NPP) of Charles Taylor. Both parties were formed to advance the candidates of the two war lords , and both continue to operate under the direct or indirect control of their founders . More recently , after contemplating running as an independent George Weah , the Internationally celebrated football star , organized the Congress for Democratic Change ( CDC). It is still too early to determine whether these parties can survive their founding leadership.

There are hardly any significant differences among Liberian political parties that can be discerned from their official pronouncements and declared programs. However parties do differ with respect to their origins and the core support they cultivate . The LAP for example was founded by middle-aged professionals and veteran public servants who saw themselves as logical successors to state power after the collapse of the settler oligarchy in 1980. It has striven to project itself as the party of business people , technocrats, and the middle class . In rural Liberia , it has sought the support of chiefs and the powerful. UP has been a rival of LAP , essentially canvassing the same social base. The only initial difference in between the two was that at the time of its founding the latter was organized mainly in support of the presidential candidacy of its founder , Edward Kesselly. However since Kesselly's death in 1993, UP has continued as a viable political party.

By contrast, the UPP was essentially organized as a party of the dispossessed . Its founding leaders were young populists who mobilized support from the grass roots. The party sought



numbers in unemployed and underemployed .Its candidates are typically chosen through a process of populists primaries held at district level. Twenty years after its founding , UPP continues to strive to maintain its populist appeal. LPP's strength has been among students and workers . Its initial cadres were student leaders of the University of Liberia and Cuttington University College. Its trademark was the clarity of its analysis of national issues. The populist message of UPP and the clairvoyant analysis of LPP stood in stark contrast to the failure of leadership of these parties to commit to the practice of internal democracy. This contradiction diminished profoundly the standing of the leadership of these parties among their members and detracted from the status of these parties as vanguard organizations in the struggle for democracy in Liberia. Consequently the alliance formed by these two parties ( the Alliance for Peace & Democracy , APD) fared poorly in the 2005 elections .

Several other parties have been organized that draw their support largely from specific ethnic groups , with the purpose of promoting the presidential ambitions of their founding leaders. Notable among these are the Liberian Unification Party ( LUP) , whose core membership was recruited among the Kpelle and whose founding leader , Gabriel Kpolle, was a schoolteacher who contested the presidency in 1985. Since his detention by the NPLF and subsequent murder during the conflict , the leaders of his party have been co-opted into one alliance after another in opportunistic support of a range of professional hopefuls.

Since the fall of oligarchy in the coup of 1980 , therefore , a multiparty political system\*5 has emerged in Liberia. Although weak inarticulate in their perspectives and programs and available as vehicles to support the presidential ambition of specific candidates at least four political parties ( LAP, LPP, UP and UPP) have been able to build a national support base and sustain their presence, despite two decades of violent conflicts.

5\* The continued participations of these parties and others in elections is now considered normal to the Liberian political system, confirming the existence of a multi-party system as a permanent feature of the Liberian political process. This marks a historic political change born out of the struggle of the 1970s and 1980s. Abrahamsen, Rita, (2000), " *Disciplining Democracy: Development Discourse & Good Governance in Africa*", London, New York; Zed Books

If Liberia's young multi-party system is to be consolidated, the Liberian Political class will have to shift its political orientation from zero-sum politics to one that embrace tolerance, accommodation and coalition – building – values and strategies that were emerging in some aspects of the 2005 elections.

**(b) (i) Alliances and tendencies:**

Although political parties did not always articulate messages that differentiated them, many of them were part of broader alliances that represented some of the major political tendencies within post-conflict Liberian society. An examination of the political tendencies of these broad groupings offers deeper insight into differences among the major candidates and reveals the issues that formed the undercurrents of the campaign and are likely to become the major themes of future political disclosure.

**(b) (ii) Alliances and tendencies at national level:**

Fifty-nine proposed political parties and independent candidates met pre-qualification requirements and obtained the right to canvass membership. Of these, 21 political parties and one independent candidate eventually met the certification requirements of the elections commission to contest the presidency.

**(c) Native Liberian man: The Target of Political Campaign**

George Weah's campaign became the great mobilizer of the dispossessed of post-conflict Liberia. Weah's pre-election campaign mass demonstration was the most dramatic manifestation of his appeal. Crowds of between 90,000 and 100,000 teeming with young people, walked 10 or more abreast for several miles in support of Weah's candidature. Hundreds were fanatical supporters who stayed on for days in the campaign headquarters compound. Multitudes of Liberians who have not had much of formal education and for whom successive governments had offered little hope identified with the success of George Weah who like them, sprang from humble beginnings and who, with little education, had gained international fame and made his fortune. Weah was their man! Living in a state of frustration and near hopelessness, they understood Liberia's problems in terms of a simple dichotomy between educated & uneducated

categories which were not their creation but were imposed on the analysis of George Weah's candidacy by his opponents . Embracing his bifurcation , Weah's supporters argued that the educated people had failed Liberia; therefore it was time to give the uneducated a chance to lead . They argued that educated people were robbing the country and that George Weah had made his money and had no cause to steal. He had demonstrated his patriotism over years of support for humanitarian causes and for the Liberian national football team . The situation of youth in Liberia is potentially explosive and poses a huge challenge for the future . Weah's campaign succeeded in mobilizing armies of young people who live in a near hopeless in to a popular movement that has the potential of remaining a significant force in Liberian politics for some time to come. A number of other presidential candidates who were defeated in the first round joined the Weigh campaign in the run-off.

**( d ) Current Politics of Resuming unfinished struggles:**

It should come as no surprise that in the absence of a serious reconciliation programme , several tendencies from the bitter debates of the immediate pre-coup years remain relevant 25 years latter . Two of these most prominent tendencies are manifested among

individuals & groups associated with the deposed oligarchy . The former seemed to be seeking to reinvent the oligarchy , while the latter seemed ready to begin formulating resistance strategies . Those who seek to reinvent the oligarchy look forward to restoring their control of the economy by reclaiming property rights in land , monopolistic control of trade and in corporation with foreign partners, over forest and other natural resources .

Closely associated with the economic agenda of this group is an apparent mission of vindication of its pre-coup leadership . A regrouping of individuals associated with this tendency began during the transitional government of Gyude Bryant and accelerated when Sirleaf qualified for the run-off. Looking with grave suspicion on the reemergence of this group are individuals who were associated with the Movement for Justice in Africa ( MOJA ) , the Progressive Alliance of Liberia ( PAL ) , and other such groups of the 1970s and 1980s . One of the hotly debated issues between these groups had to do with the mandate of the truth and reconciliation commission and the proposal to pay reparation to victims of state sponsored violence of the 1980s . Apart from such differences regarding how to address questions emanating from the 1980 coup, there are

profound differences between these groups on the interpretations of Liberian history , its choice of future , its place in Africa, and its relationship with USA. these issues are bound to be critical in the political discourse in Liberia for a substantial part of the first half of the 20 th century .

The mutual suspicion that exist between the progressives of the 1970s and the progenitors of the oligarchy are only matched by those between the supporters of Samuel Doe and those of Charles Taylor, who overthrew the Doe regime. This antagonism morphed in to an ethnic based conflict between Mano and Gio, on the one hand and Krahn and Mandigo on the other : there have been numerous violent outburst over the past several years. Its latest political manifestation was seen in the presidential elections:. Weah suddenly lost mano & Gio support as soon as he was seen to be going the extra mile to court the support the rivals by repeatedly pledging to appoint some leaders of Krahn ethnic group to high position in the security forces. The lack of serious approach to reconciliation will allow these suspicions to continue to fester and they are likely to constitute a venomous political divide in Liberian political life for the foreseeable future.

#### **(e) Various Popular Political Movements, prior to Election**

##### **(e) (i) Heritage Movement:**

One of the prominent tendencies of the political campaign was manifested by a group called the Heritage Movement. Not a political party , this group was an amorphous collection of individual members of the political elite whose main objective was to ensure that a person of Americo-Liberian or Congo background did not win the presidency. It began when Varney Sherman was perceived to be the front- runner and Ellen Sirleaf an emerging challenger. Though perceived to be authentically native , George Weah was initially deemed by this group not to be suitable candidate either. Leaders of this movement were of mixed personal motives. Besides not wanting to be a candidate considered an Americo- Liberian to become president , the group also feared the success of a presidential candidate who might be revenge seeking or not committed to reconciliation and inclusive government . Paradoxically the group also included die hard tribalists who seek the establishment of retaliatory hegemonic regime as the most effective way to prevent Congo resurgence. Among this segment of the movement were some technical and professional upstarts who did not believe they could compete for the tangible and intangible

resources offered by the society without playing the ethnic card. The movement lacked sufficient cohesion to ensure successful collective action, especially in the face of the personal ambitions of many of its leading members. Heritage Movement disintegrated largely because its members could not agree on a single presidential ticket to be supported. Many of its leaders went on to support George Weah or Togba- Nah Tipotech during the first round.

Despite its failure, the heritage movement did underscore the persistence of a strong negative reaction among Liberian people to future rule by residual elements of the Americo-Liberians or Congo oligarchy. One of Ellen Sirleaf's biggest hurdles during the campaign was the public perceptions of her as a Congo. To counter this perception she took advantage of every opportunity to project her Gola and Kru background and to speak proudly of her two illiterate grandmothers.

**(e) (ii) The 50-50 Movement:**

The candidacy of Ellen Sirleaf gave impetus to the electoral strategy of the women's empowerment movement in Liberia. As a means of increasing the participation of women in the government, women's organizations initiated a campaign that called on all political parties to put forward women candidates for 50 percent of the elected positions in the government. The election commission encouraged this initiative by calling on political parties to ensure that at least 30 percent of the candidates they put forward were women. While women's organizations did not endorse the Sirleaf campaign officially, support for her candidacy was an unspoken objective of the 50-50 movement\*6.

6\* One of the striking features of the movement was that it transcended social class and ethnic divides, accentuating gender solidarity in a way that could have enormous influence on post-election policy priorities, elevating issues concerning female education and health, the violation of women and children rights and forms of female affirmative actions to a place of prominence in post-conflict reconstruction. With the election of Ellen Sirleaf, one can expect some variant of the 50-50 movement to continue in the future as a potent force in Liberian electoral politics. Foweraker, Joe, (2005) "Theorizing Social Movements", London; Pluto Press

**(f) Agendas : In Liberian Politics**

**(f) (i) Governance ordained by God :**

Competing with and perhaps the antithesis of the populism of the Weah movement was the Christian fundamentalist movement . This movement asserted that human ingenuity of any texture was insufficient to revive Liberia; only God acting through an ordained leaders could save Liberia. Four presidential, candidates declared themselves anointed by God to become president . Charles Brumskine was the most articulate of these candidates . At the foundation of his support was a network of grassroots evangelical and Baptists congregations mainly in central Liberia . This network successfully rallied the faithful who shared the vision of a Christian Liberia led by Brumskine , God's anointed . Its main message was that Liberia was founded as a Christian nation but had suffered profound tragedy because it had departed from its Christian principles. Liberia's salvation lay in electing a true servant of God . In addition to Brumskine , evangelical prelates Alfred Reeves and George Kiadii made similar claims but with far less political impact. The perspective of Christian fundamentalists is likely to be one of the competing themes in Liberian political discourse for the foreseeable future.

**(f) (ii) New reformers :**

Although Unity Party was the legal vehicle for the Sirleaf campaign , the real strength of the campaign was the collection of individuals from the other parties, civil society organizations, and elsewhere in Liberian society. There were largely reform-minded professionals , political practitioners and public entrepreneurs from wide range of social & political backgrounds. They had one thing in common : they saw Ellen Sirleaf the most appropriate option for Liberia at this time . Sirleaf's own professional background, competence, international network, and appreciation of discourse made her an attractive candidate. This however is not a cohesive group, it was a mixed bag of people of different political persuasions, expectations, preferences and prejudices including some who had disengaged from Liberian process since the overthrow of settler oligarchy in 1980. Managing this collection of individuals adroitly enough to adopt and maintain a common orientation to governance may prove one of Sirleaf 's greatest challenges .

Many other less pronounced tendencies were displayed by the political groupings during 2005 elections. Noteworthy were the social democratic ideological agenda of the New Deal Movement and the attempted resurgence of the Tubman legend. To a declining number of elderly Liberians, the benevolent dictatorship of president Tubman, who ruled Liberia from 1944 to until his death in 1971, is what Liberia needs today. Two members of Tubman family were lured in to the presidential race on the assumption of which they were soon disabused that Liberians longed for the good old days.

It is still too early to say which of the various emergant political tendencies will take root and become influential in shaping Liberia's post- conflict political culture, or become a resilient and defining theme of Liberian political discourse and electoral politics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Nonetheless they do articulate significant themes in contemporary political identities.

**( g ) Emerging political patterns at county level:**

If there is no single political tendency, pattern of alliance or overarching national institution that dominates political process from the centre, how are political process developing at the county and local levels work is a question of ponder in Liberian political system today!

**( g ) ( i ) Choosing senators and representatives: For their own Advantages**

Under the Liberian constitution, two senators are elected from each county, regardless of size and population. In October 2005 elections, 30 senators were elected from 15 counties. Members of House of Representatives are elected from legislative districts that are demarcated within counties based on population distribution. Though 15 years of violent conflicts, Liberia's population distribution has become acutely skewed as people fled from villages & hamlets and sought safety in towns & cities. As a result the distribution of seats in the House of Representatives had to be done in accordance with with a formula negotiated among members of the transitional legislative assembly, political parties, and civil society to ensure broad based representation.

The factors that seem to have made candidates appealing and the processes and mechanism by which the local people identified and supported such candidates, varied with local circumstances. Some of the campaign strategies and institutions that seem to have influenced voter preferences

in the elections of senators and representatives range from playing on the fear of future insecurity , to advocating equitable ethnic based representation , to asserting the power of money. A discussion of some of the races reveals the importance of these factors .

**(g) (ii) Prearranged formulas:**

In senate races in many part of the country, voters seemed to have been guided by the long – standing prearranged formulas among local people for sharing representation among locally demarcated regions or among ethnic or sub- ethnic communities within the county. such was the case in Bong, where the tradition is to elect one snator from upper bong and the other from lower Bong; in Grand Bassa and Sinoe, where one senator is typically elected from towns and communities of the right bank and the other from the left bank of the st John and Sinoe rivers respectably . And in Maryland where one senator is usually elected from Harper City , the county capital, and the other from else where from the county. In Nimba, in addition to electing from the two outstanding leaders from the armed groups, local people also observed the traditional practice of electing some senators from among Gio candidates and one from among Mano candidates.

Within some ethnically homogeneous districts , representation is typically decided on the basis of a formula of sub- ethnic alternation . For example., in district number one of Maryland county , Borrobo and Kaloway people ( both Grebo) have usually alternated elected office and have done so in the context of wider pattern of sub- ethnic representation in the area. Despite the entry of two Kaloway men and three other candidates from Borrobo , key leaders of these communities remained committed to age old arrangements of alternation and supported the candidature of a well known Borrobo native. Sub- ethnic alternation is formula widely used in south- eastern Liberia, where societies are less hierarchical and political contestation can degenerate in to destructive conflicts if not properly managed . One cannot tell whether , which changing demographics and the scars of war , these arrangements will be maintained by the societies where they have been practiced historically. For now they remain in use.

**(g) (iii) Winning support of indigenous organizations :**



Prearranged patterns of alternation or forms of regional allocation of positions were formulae used to determine from which area or ethnic group an elected official should come . These arrangements did not determine the specific choice of candidates . With respect to the choice of specific candidates , the endorsement of local institutions specially clan based organizations and poro, where it exists , was critical to the success of some candidates .The process of electing two candidates from Bong county underscores this point. Bong county has strong poro institutions and very active community based organizations. For ten years it was the head quarter of Charles Taylor's armed group and has been the site of the vast rubber estates of Tubman, Tolbert, and many other absentee farmers .

Sixteen candidates contested the two senatorial positions in Bong county . Jewel Howard Taylor and Frankline Siakore were the winners . Their victories can be attributed more to their standing with the indigenous institutions of Bong other than to any set of factors . Jewel Taylor , the former wife of Charles Taylor ; comes from a chiefly lineage of Sanoyea , lower Bong, with strong sande and poro connections. She has over the years been engaged in relief work in the area of lower Bong. In her quest to win a senate seat , her family through local women's organizations , enlisted sande support. Her candidacy was endorsed by the local sande and poro organizations who, on her behalf further enlisted the support of the poro & sande communities of upper Bong , there by sealing her support by all poro & sande institutions of Bong. Frankline Siakor's grandfather was popular clan chief resident in the north eastern Bong county . He was a progressive who promoted women's causes and was therefore popular and highly respected among women's groups. Frankline himself built a reputation as a dedicated community development practitioner among the people of Bong. as a candidate , he like Jewel Howard Taylor , drew upon his heritage to buttress his own achievements. But even with poro and sande\*7 backing , neither candidate could win a majority of the votes in Bong County's crowded senatorial race. In a field of 16 candidates , Taylor and Siakor won 28 and 20 percent of total votes respectably.

7\* Poro & Sande are traditional secret organizations of men & women of Liberia, which are very powerful organizations. Stanislav, Andreski, (2008) , *The African Predicament: A study in the pathology of modernization* , OUP, London

Not all well- connected candidates from highly respected lineages won their bids to hold elected office. Some of them were not endorsed by the leaders of local organizations , because either they had not kept in touch with local communities or had been unable to establish a record of local service commensurate with the expectations of their communities . Notable among such were candidates from the Kpangbai and Kaine lineages of Bong county and Howard lineage of Zorzor , Loaf County.

**(g) ( iv ) Consolidating an ethnic base and forming strategic alliances :**

In the selection of senators in Sinoe, the tradition of choosing one from right bank and the other from the left bank of the Sinoe river is well established . However indetermining the specific candidate, no prearranged pattern had been established among the Sapo, and Kru who share an informally demarcated the selection process for years, using their connection with Monrovia based power elite. No Sapo person had ever been elected to the position of senator and only two had ever held seats in the House of Representatives.

Thus, through a strategy of consolidating Sapo votes behind a single Sapo candidate in a crowded field of Kru candidates and forming strategic alliance with some Kru communities of left bank , a candidate of Sapo ethnic background was elected to the Liberian Senate for the first time. Sapo ,solidarity could have because in that society's age set social ordering, all potential candidates of older age sets were unwilling or unready to run and no person of young age set could have mounted a successful challenge in such circumstances without incurring community wise sanctions. Moreover, the preferred Sapo candidate , a senior official of the petroleum parastatal , had a substantial campaign war chest . The winning candidate from the left bank of Sinoe river was a Kru, who had enhances his chances by forging an alliance with Sapo candidate and was a beneficiary of a Sapo ethnic block vote. In Lofa the consolidation of the Mandigo ethnic vote led to the election of a Mandigo candidate as one of the two senators from the field of 16 contestants , 7 of whom were Loma, 5 Gbande, and 3 Kissi. The election of a Mandigo to the Senate from Lofa County at this time is particularly significant in view of 15 years of conflict in this region . The Mandigo dominated two armed groups , ULIMO-K and later LURD, and

fought against armed groups such as the Lofa Defence Force, which composed mainly of Loma people and those with other ethnic affiliations. Moreover the Liberian citizenship of the Mandingo, which has always been questioned, has more recently become a very contentious political issue that has to be addressed, especially in Lofa & Nimba counties. Under circumstances, the election of a Mandingo to the Senate from Lofa was only possible through the galvanizing of the Mandingo vote behind a single Mandingo candidate in a crowded field of candidates.

Consolidating the votes of an ethnic group behind a single candidate in a crowded field of candidates of multiple ethnic identities was a strategy widely used in elections for House of Representatives in many part of the country. In electoral district number five of Bong County (covering areas from Kokoyah, / Kpai / Jorquelli) the electorate is drawn from the Basa, Kpellenad & Mano ethnic groups. Six candidates contested from which three were Mano & two were Bassa. Local Kpelle leaders strategically fielded only one Kpelle candidate & rallied behind him. That candidate won 32 percent of votes. Even within some electoral districts where the votes were largely of same ethnic group, the consolidation of votes based on sub ethnic identities provided winning opportunities for individuals considered as minority candidates. Such was the case in district number one of Nimba county, whose electorate consisted mainly of Mano people from Sanniquelli and from Yapeah – Mahn chiefdom. Leaders of this area are typically Mano from Sanniquelli as Mano people from Yapeah-Mahn chiefdom are typically seen as a minority group. Five of these eight candidates who contested the elections from this electoral district were Mano from Sanniquelli, one Mandingo and two others from else where. The Mano people of Yapeah – Mahn chiefdom rallied insupport of a single candidate from their area, who won the House seat with 25 percent of the votes.

A similar intra- Sapo contest took place in the electoral district number one in Sinoe, where individuals from carbide and Tarjuazon, the people of the Sikon- Widjah area pooled their votes and the sole candidate from their area won by a plurality of 31 percent of votes.

**(g) (v) Rewarding outstanding service:**

Several candidates were selected by local people largely because of their service to local communities. Many of these candidates were leaders of the local community-based organizations, health practitioners, teachers, or relief workers in non-governmental organizations who were elected because of their outstanding work during the time of violent conflict and social dislocation. A nurse of long standing was elected by the people of district five of Nimba County. A teacher with years of service won the seat in district number two in Sinoe County. A well known NGO employee involved in distribution of humanitarian relief won the seat in district number seven in Nimba County. The winners of seats from electoral district of number one of Lofa and number three in Sinoe were among those who rode to victory on the popularity of close relatives who were highly respected for their community service. Several student leaders who had been involved in grassroots advocacy works were elected to the House of Representatives.

**(g) (vi) Fear of future insecurity :**

It does not come as a surprise that in certain counties where voters remain unsure of their security, they voted county wide, for those upon whom they have relied in past to provide security. Candidates who could claim to provide security to the local people during periods of conflicts were considered as favorites by the voters in these counties.

This does not mean that all candidates who had been associated with armed groups were favorably considered by voters. Only those with credible records among their people were elected. In Nimba both the candidates whom were elected senators were leaders of armed groups during the time of conflict. Prince Johnson, the leader of the International National Patriotic front of Liberia (INPFL), won a senate seat by landslide. During the campaign he consistently reminded voters of his role as leader of an armed group and assured them of his commitment to their defense should there be another war. Adolphus F. Dolo, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) commander who won the second senate with a respectable margin, campaigned on his record of defending Nimba County against armed intrusion by LURD in 2001. In both cases, voters seemed to have responded more to fears of future insecurity than to a sense of gratitude for the past service. To a lesser extent, a similar pattern was played out in the sensational in Grand Gedeh with election of Isaac Nyenabo, a stalwart of LURD who enhanced

his standing among Gedeans as protector and of William Sende who projected the image of a reconciler who could restore Gedeh's relations with erstwhile foes.

**(g) (vii) Power of Money:**

Voters also responded favorably to candidates who gave them direct financial and other incentives<sup>8\*</sup>. This is a long – standing campaign practice in Liberian electoral culture , as it is in many parts of the world; and the destruction of 15 years of plunder made it even more effective . Most presidential candidates , if not all indulged in this practice . Every serious campaign organization donated large consignments of rice to local communities and groups of voters. the power of money was particularly effective in some senate races where candidates gave voters cash, rice, roofing sheets , mattresses and other items much needed for resettlement . Informants believed that that gifts proved decisive in senatorial races in Bomi, Maryland and River Gee and were a somewhat important factor in races in Grand Gedeh. any casual observer could note that all of the candidates who had been on the senior staffs of the petroleum company or at the Ministry of Finance ran campaigns that were well financed and all won legislative seats. However not all candidates who tried to win votes this way were successful . The bad luck of Varney Sherman is well known. If this approach usually worked , it remains surprising that , in a situation of grinding poverty and destitution , the power of money was not only or even the singularly decisive influence in the elections.

**(h) The candidates for president : Real Test of Political Maturity of Liberians**

The candidates for president comprised an eclectic group that include 2 women, one of whom eventually become president. The rooster shows a broad regional spread : of the 22 candidates , 5 claimed Lofa as their home county, 3 were from Maryland; and there were 2 from each of Grand Bassa, Gbarpolu, Grand Cape Mount and Sinoe) . This distribution alone represents an enormous shift from pre-coup days , when individuals from five initial counties ( Montserrado, Grand Bassa, Sinoe, Maryland and Grand Cape Mount) and largely of settler back ground dominated presidential races.

<sup>8\*</sup> In the absence of strong central authority , one finds diverse influences in the selection of legislators from the various counties . These influences reflect local conditions and circumstances and the power of local culture . They range from long standing local traditions of political recruitment to new strategies of alliance formation by those hitherto excluded. Liebenow, J Gus, (2007) “ *Liberia: The quest for democracy*”, Bloomington, Indian University Press

In pre-coup days , individuals from what were called the new counties ( Lofa, Nimba, Bong, and Grand Gedeh) were looked upon with grave suspicion if they seemed to harbour presidential; ambition. In the late 1960s, superintendents from Lofa, Nimba and Bong counties were dismissed and subjected to security surveillance for this reason . Despite months of soul searching and internal reform and pressure for a more inclusive ruling elite , the True Whig Party in the late 1970s failed to elect Jackson Doe , a native of Nimba County, to the position of chairman of the party, a move that might have reduced growing political tension.

Taken together , most of the candidates emanated from the socio-economic upper stream of war torn Liberia. In their declaration of assets all of them claimed ownership of real estates well in excess of \$ 24,000, the minimum property ownership qualification required for a presidential candidate by the constitution. However, beyond meeting this minimum property ownership requirement, the candidates varied substantially in the value of their declared personal holdings. Eight of them declared assets ranging in value from about US \$ 200,000 to US \$ 600,00 . Four declared assets in excess of one million US \$ and two declared assets over US \$2 million, one of whom declared over US\$ 4 million. Many of these holdings were personal homes and other investments in the United States.

The personal holdings of these candidates exceeds what many of the leading political candidates of pre-coup ( pre 1980) as well as immediate post- coup( 1985) elections could ever have boasted . Despite their long tenures in public services , Jackson Doe, Edward Kesselley and Gabriel Kpolleh, who were the leading opposition presidential candidates of the 1980s, were individual of modest means. Though in decline when it was overthrown , the settler oligarchy that dominated the political process prior to the coup was typically a landed gentry, locked in a patrimonial relationship with those who worked on the land. The generation that was poised to succeed to power was of a more capitalist- entrepreneur orientation. Its transition to power was aborted by the coup. The emergence of a post- conflict political class with resources derived

from holdings abroad , is a new development in Liberian politics . Despite 15 years of violent conflict and severe economic decline in Liberia, there seems to be a significant increase in the individual economic worth of members of the upper stratum of the Liberian political class. It is also evidence of a growing and financially viable Liberian diasporas with potential to contribute to the expansion of a Liberian middle class capable of creating private sector opportunities instead of waiting to be privileged by holding government jobs.

With respect to educational attainment and professional experience , the candidates as a group and with few exceptions , were highly educated and had years of professional & public service experience. Three were lawyers trained at prestigious American law schools , five held doctoral degrees in social sciences, science and education, five held graduate degrees in financial managements , one was a medical doctor, three were preachers , and one the cosmopolitan son of a former president. However the best known candidate of all was an international football player who did not finish his high school but whose celebrity status made him a household name.

In summary , the mix of candidates as well as their holdings and educational and professional attainments, display the changing social basis of recruitment to the highest political offices in the country and the growing role of the Liberian diaspora in this process . This broad regional mix of candidates confirms the consolidation in Liberian politics of a psychology of inclusive ownership and is likely to foreclose the possibility of a reversion to the oligarchic tendencies of the past ; however managing the expectations brought about by a psychology of open access will pose a new challenge to the Liberian political system.

#### **I- RESURGENCE OF WOMEN POWER IN POST CIVIL WAR LIBERIA**

Most research on women during war focuses on female losses. The present day Liberia demonstrates that wars may also bring gains . The scope of political and economic roles that Liberian women perform today appears to be larger than before the war. Both individually and collectively , certain women have gainfully used openings the war provided them. Changes have also been fostered by the international peace-building and development business . Although the realization of female ambitions seems to be constrained by various institutional and economic factors. Liberia may harbor a unique potential for sustainable shifts in gender roles.

Now the Liberian women exemplify a new kind of ambitious spirit among women in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century Liberia. Long before the election of Ellen Sirleaf to the position of first female head of state in Africa, demonstration of female assertiveness abounded not only in Monrovia but also in cities of Liberia's interior and in comparatively accessible rural areas. Various analysts of recent Liberian history have noted that since the war women's ability to live independently has increased dramatically, and many women have assumed leadership roles in civil, political, and religious sectors of Liberian society – perceived to be an altogether remarkable emancipation from their pre-war positions. As one of the country's new female superintendent explained:

“The war brought a lot of evils and a lot of good things. It brought out our leadership abilities in women. They think of how to protect their communities, their families, the women show so much ingenuity, creativity, .....the war has made an enabling atmosphere for women to strive for leadership.” Any good analysis could be observed how gender roles have shifted as a result of a devastating civil conflict, which lasted from 1989 to 2003. It draws attention to women's agency and by implication to possibility of female gains as opposed to often cited female losses and women's victimization during wars and in post-war situations.

By focusing on women's opportunities we should not want to down play the extreme exploitation and hardships (physical & psychological) that the majority of girls and women have endured and are still enduring in Liberia. Evidence in Liberia & elsewhere confirms that the violence women experience in wartime increases when fighting dies down. In this respect female losses have been enormous. Neither do we want mistakenly to label coping mechanisms or new strategies of survival demonstrated by women in time of crisis as empowerment. A perspective that looks beyond the victimization of women however can provide a more differentiated picture of the dynamics of gender roles in a post-war country. Since the eruption of wars in the 1990s studies by social scientists of gender roles during wars and in post-war situations have gained momentum. They have found that across diverse groups in varied situations most women in addition to being victims of violence, experience loss in war. Often they have been forced to take on responsibility but have not been granted power. But many women wish to use the opportunities that arise in periods of conflict to remove traditional gender restrictions permanently and some women make gains by using spaces that profound conflicts open up to



them. Already Turshen has pointed to new roles for women, notwithstanding the horrors that wars have meant for so many women in Africa. She has detailed some economic and political gains for women in Chad, Rwanda, Sudan and Uganda. A more recent compendium of case studies by Bauer and Britton highlights the potentials of women's gains in political participation, particularly after extended violent conflict in Africa. The disruptions in gender relations caused by prolonged conflict may actually offer opportunities for reconfiguring those relations in the post- conflict period . Moreover, it appears that prolonged conflicts have produced a second factor , namely a cadre of capable women willing to run for political office .

With the years the political representation of women in some African parliament has gradually increased . Indeed Liberia seems to be another case that supports these findings. With a relatively low representation of women in the legislature ( 15%) the country cannot outstrip those African countries such as Uganda , Rwanda, South Africa or Mozambique, where women's representation in parliaments has surged to the level of the Northern European countries.

But with a female head of the state\*9 , Liberia has soared , in the attention of international media to the position of an African nation with a pioneering feminist government. President Ellen Sirleaf affirmatively nominated a woman as the first woman chief of the police force, appointed women to 22percent of the position in her Cabinet , including the crucial ministries of Finance , Justice, and Commerce and launched some national programs that support school girls and market women . Moran & Pitcher have aptly argue that an agency- based approach draws attention to less visible forces crucial in peace building –such as women's organizations in Liberia and elsewhere and that one needs to look beyond the arena of visible leaders and the institutional framework ( structures) to understand peace building . Leaving aside the comprehensive thing of women in peace building . One can find changes in not only political but also socio- economic opportunities for Liberian women , distinguishing different social subgroups where meaningful evidence is available from pre-war times to the present .

9\*. President JOHNSON SIRLEAF, a Harvard-trained banker and administrator, has taken steps to reduce corruption, build support from international donors, and encourage private investment. Embargos on timber and diamond exports have been lifted, opening new sources of revenue for the government. The reconstruction of infrastructure and the raising of incomes in this ravaged economy will largely depend on generous financial and technical assistance from donor countries and foreign investment in key sectors, such as infrastructure and power generation. Fuest, Veronika(2008), “ *This is the time to get in front : changing roles & opportunities for women in Liberia*” , 'African Affairs' ,107/427,oxford University Press, Pg 201-224

This includes the impact of external interventions from the international peacekeeping and development business. Moreover, an examination of the historicity of gender roles illuminates the precedents for recent changes. Apart from the conditions during and after the Liberian War, women's increasing visibility in public also seems to have some roots in a peculiar constellation of socio-political factors in Liberian history.

This finding is based on intermittent research in urban and rural locations in Bong and Lofa counties and in the capital city Monrovia between April 2005 and March 2007 ( five months altogether ) and on an evaluation of literature. Central & Western Liberia, the most densely populated areas of the country outside Monrovia we can find these findings as most glaring. They co inside with the so-called Poro complex of secret societies( which also spans the larger part of Sierra Leone and southeast of Guinea), which has historically been marked by the pervasive influence of male and female secret societies in all sphere of life .

**( a ) Historical structure & process:**

Without ever having been formally colonized , Liberia has a unique history of black colonialism and pervasive dependence on the USA. Descendants of freed slaves that were resettled from the USA, the West Indies and from slave ships off the West African Coast at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century , the so called Americo-Liberians, founded the first African republic in 1847. Their descendants , a minority estimated never to have exceeded 6 percent of the population , dominated political, social, and economic life for more than 130 years. They fought , suppressed, exploited ,. traded, and mixed with various sections of African indigenous groups of that area. In 1980 Americo-Liberian rule was overthrown by a military coup, in part a response to exclusivists government policy , repression of political opposition and aspiration to political participation by an indigenous elite , extravagant expenditures in the services of the elite by the government , economic stagnation , and the decline of social infrastructures in the wake of deteriorating terms of trade for Liberia's exceptionally dependent export economy. The failure of ensuring Afro-Liberian government to share its power and resources and its brutal repression of opposition

forces , culminated in launching of the civil war at the end of 1989. However the Liberian, conflict seems to be rooted in multiple factors:

- (1) Traditionally hierarchical organizations based on the control of labor and marriage, which amounted to domestic slavery for many of those considered as junior dependents, in particular male and female youths .
- (2) The hegemony of Americo- Liberians.
- (3) The economic dependence on exports and international trade relations .
- (4) The rulers propensity to allow the unchecked exploitations of the country's natural recourses, so encouraging the predatory interests of international business.

The war continued for a period of 14 years , displacing at least half the country's estimated 2.5 million population and claiming the lives of between 150,000 and 250,000 people. A Comprehensive Peace Agreement was finally signed by the warring factions , political parties and civil society organizations in August 2003. The international community developed an ambition to prevent Liberia from relapsing in to violent conflict and to turn it into a respectable country with a n operative government . A peace- keeping force , the United Nations Peace- keeping Missions in Liberia( UNML, with 15,000 – 16000 military & police force , matched by about 1500 UN civilian staff), was deployed all over the country . In the course of 2004 and 2005 the armed factions were disarmed and demobilized . donor structures , which had emerged in the course of the war , expanded exponentially. The interventions by the UN and other international players also facilitated the implementations of peaceful national elections in 2005 .

. Women would be married young and often to much older husbands . Offspring are considered to be of the husband's lineages and a woman planning to divorce her husband or unwilling to submit to levirate marriage might lose access to her children and property accumulated during marriage. for most women market activities were confined to a small radius and up to the early 1980s there were only a few professional female entrepreneurs . Powerful men accumulated women and controlled and redistributed women's sexual & reproductive services to establish political alliance and to win clients. Ideologically women

were generally considered to be inferior to men and were not supposed to speak out in public fora.

Notwithstanding ideologies of male dominance and concomitant institutions of social control and although women as a class could not adopt any public political roles, women\*<sup>10</sup> appear to have commanded considerable space for socio-political maneuver. In the center and northwest of the country traditional socio-political relations were constituted and negotiated within a system of distinct hierarchical order: ranked lineages were headed by powerful elder chiefs and there were mutually exclusive secret societies of, in colloquial language, the Poro (for men) and Sande (for women). Here women could obtain access to powerful positions by playing the male game of controlling the junior dependants or in the southeast, by enforcing their interests through a women's chief and a council of female elders whom had both a deliberative role and veto power over important decisions made by the men and by collective female demonstrations. Particularly in the northwest, oral history relates individual women who become political leaders. By using a front man – a powerful husband or lover delegating power and authority to her – a woman could obtain male clients by controlling rights of other women and securing male labor and allegiance.

A crucial institution enabling elder females to accumulate resources and concentrate power was the Sande, the female secret society which matched the Poro. During extensive compulsory initiation periods, which included circumcision, the leaders of Sande and important members such as mid house wives could extort considerable amounts of fees and labor services from senior relatives of the initiates and prospective husbands. These women's entitlements were based on claims to command esoteric skills and knowledge enabling them to control the girls' fertility and health.

10 \* Women's roles and opportunities need to be considered in the light of traditional settings and beyond the sexual division of labor, gender relations need to be analyzed in terms of the sexual division of power. Liberian women have been characterized as the most important labor force in the food crop, production, domestic work, and child rearing. According to the dominant cultural model, apart from Americo-Liberian subsections of society and with local variations, women reproductive capacities and labor were subject to control, including obligations related to bride wealth and levirate, by their elders and husbands lineage of the husband. Nduka-Agwu, Adibeli, (2009), "Doing Gender After War: Dealing with Gender Mainstream & Sexual Exploitation & Abuse in UN Peace Support Operations in Liberia & Sierra Leon", 'Civil Wars', Vol-11, No 2, June 2009, Taylor & Francis Publishers, Pg 179-199

The existence of powerful women in traditional settings was matched by a peculiar cultural heritage owed to Americo- Liberian rule. From the 19<sup>th</sup> century female settlers in Liberia could buy and sell land, enter into contracts, bring legal suits and initiate divorces , appeal to the legislature and exercise similar form of agency. Americo- Liberian women were not legally equals with men but the rights affecting the women of the republic were among the most progressive in the world at the time .

Suffrage was extended to women in the year 1946. At first professional activities of Americo- Liberian women were confined to teaching in schools and secretarial duties. From 1950s women occupied key offices in ministries and other high – level decision – making positions in the government , and women were elected to the national legislature . Also, Liberia had the first female president of an African national university and by international standards, the two Liberian universities had a high rate of enrolment by female students ( almost 25 percent) and a significant representation of women among the lecturers. In order to secure their ruling position the Americo-Liberians excluded aspiring, educated Afro-Liberian men from high- level positions. Families of the ruling oligarchy preferred to see their female members in political positions and had them educated accordingly when the educational system expanded in response to economic growth in the 1950s and 1960s. Under the regime of President Tolbert ( 1971-80) eight ministerial posts were held by women. According to statistical data on employment of women in the formal sector compiled at the beginning of the 1980s, women constituted 30 percent of the university teachers, 14.7 percent of the judges, 9.4 percent of the doctors and dentists, 32.2 percent of the secondary school teachers, and 48.2 percent of the nurses.

Macro-economic developments entailed significant socio-economic changes , including the division of labour by gender. These changes varied by a number of dimensions : above all, by region and status. In rural areas of the interior a trend of a ‘feminization’ of agricultural production was noted as a result of increasing labour migration by men, which involved women taking over traditional tasks of men in the agricultural cycle. Frequencies of female market activities and single- headed households increased from the 1970s. A relative lack of access to formal education perpetuated women’s traditional dependency as new openings

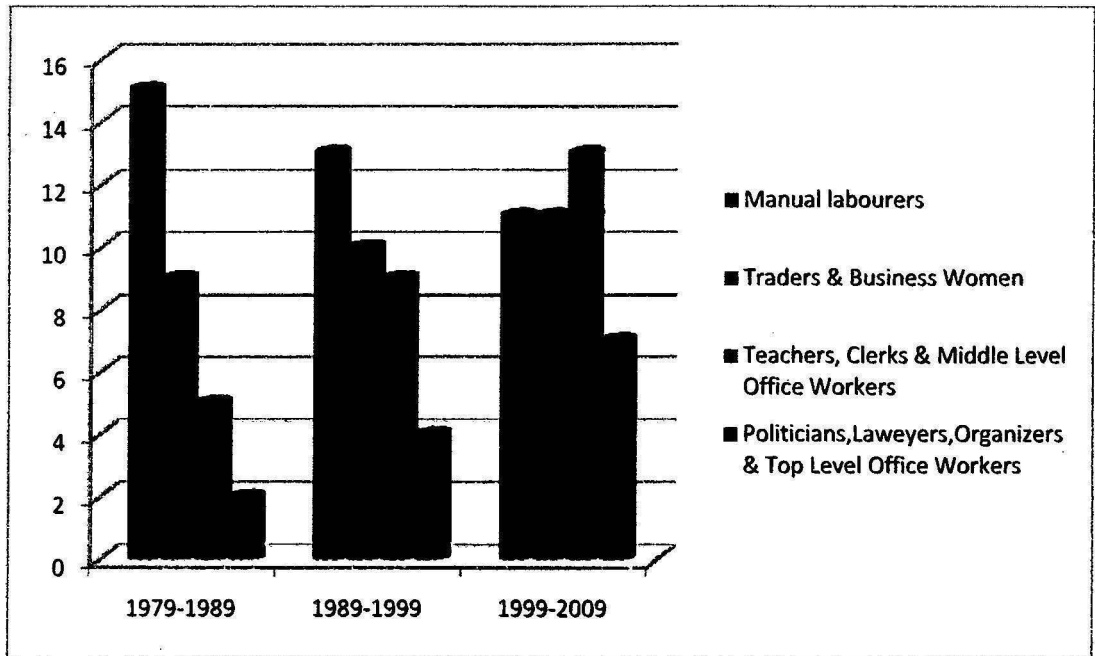
emerged in the formal sector. The minority of educated women usually depended on male-dominated networks for access to salaried employment.

Notwithstanding the structurally lower levels of opportunities in Liberia's formal economy, women employed informal strategies of income generation by diversifying their socio-economic networks beyond family ties in the course of urbanization and economic development. In the decades preceding the war in various parts of Liberia both older women and urban or educated women were increasingly reluctant to get (re-) married as they were gaining new opportunities and dependence by trading, working in formal sector and cultivating multiple relationships with supportive men in addition to fields of rice and vegetables. Many of these women, including school girls managed to invest their earnings in titles to private land property and in constructing their own houses in the larger towns rather than in the village of their origin. In this way they would enhance their independence of social seniors, including men and raise their positions within the local networks of patronage. Extended kin would provide these women with children to labour for them in the framework of a traditional system of fosterage, which has been deeply rooted in the region. Contrary to purported links between poverty, abandonment and female-headed households by (female) choice rather than (male) force. As a result of the war in Lofa County Ellis also noted a rise in the rate of divorce as a concomitant of women's opportunities to gain independent incomes.

#### **(b) Female scopes of action since the war**

In the course of the years of violent conflicts, the war seems to have effected an increase in the scope of economic activities performed by women, in political positions held by women, and in women's organised action in general. Many men were killed, others fled to hide in forest. For years men were without power to protect their kin. A variety of reports portray women as having been forced to take on traditional tasks of men such as making bricks, building and roofing houses and clearing farms. Besides local narratives refer to many women who physically protected their husbands & family members from combatants. Women & girls became 'bush wives', combatants, family providers with increased responsibilities, and prostitutes. Many women and children were conscripted to head-load material along forest tracks and cook and provide sexual services for the combatants.

LIBERIAN WOMEN WORK FORCE ( 1979-2009) ( In Million)



Sources: <http://www.liberiaemb.org>

To protect themselves from rape, murder, and a harsh labour regime, many women resorted to taking a place among the combatants. Some of these women became killers more feared than their male counterparts. Female ex-combatants, the rate of which has been estimated to be between 2 and 20 percent of the total fighting forces, are reported to be generally marginalized in their communities and to have more difficulties of reintegration than their male counterparts. However, some women fighters managed to turn their new roles into successful endeavors. With looted wealth, male support and networks in their war parties they became high ranking officers such as built up business enterprises. A few were even appointed to high level officers, such as head of security at the international airport or superintendent.

Many women have had to resort to prostitution to survive and support their families. However the question may be raised if all these women and girls are to be viewed just as passive victims, or also as agents with the scope to make choices. While I do not want to deny the extensive exploitation by outright or subtle enforcement of prostitution by kin, it should be mentioned that loving business, women's profitable utilization of multiple partnerships with men, has for decades constituted a regular if hidden feature in the income and networking strategies of many women from all quarters of Liberian society. While some staff of UN organizations, peacekeeping forces and NGOs, as well as politicians and businessmen, have been accused of taking advantages of the economic conditions of girls and women. It may be equally true that many girls are taking advantage of presence of thousands of unattached foreign men with deep pockets rather than or in addition to sweating on rice fields or in markets or deepening on kin for support. Women from various sectors of the society have adopted new roles and some, both individually and collectively, gainfully used openings the war provided to them.

**( b ) ( i ) Traders and business women :**

Reports on the local economy during the war era often mention market women who made extended business by crossing fighting lines in to territories where men could not go. They exchanged goods with other mobile women from other fighting factions, whereas male survivors could not move around, were in hiding or had left their areas altogether . A prominent leader of a marketing organization, one of the winner's thus explained: " we( the women) were forced to learn from each other, thinking about how to solve each others problems. The one who knew something taught-others."

The same lady pointed out that "Taylor may be a fighter but he did good for us". During his regime as war lord of ' Greater Liberia', Charles Taylor supported the market women out of need for supplies in the territory controlled by the National Patriotic Front of Liberia. He reportedly furnished the women with a truck for transportation of goods . In a buffer zone close to Monrovia women profitably exchanged goods such as salt for oil and rice. The importance of female networking , which appears to have included the sharing of information and skills , was confirmed by other informants:" women tried many kinds of business if it worked out , she would tell her friends that how she did it , so others came in too. There are more women in



business now than men, some are very successful. The women also capitalized on the absence of the Mandingo traders, who had to flee the country in the context of ethnicized conflict. Only a small minority of Mandingo women are reported as still trading in the cities and towns of the interior, where, reportedly other tribes dominate local business today. Businesswomen of various ethnic affiliations are said to have also entered the trade sector at national and international scales. Trade at this level was even more exclusively dominated by Mandingos ( and Lebanese) before the war broke out . Together these factors combined to provide new openings for enterprising women.

Some rhetoric in the 'women' national agenda for peace, security and development in post-war Liberia designed by WIPNET\*<sup>11</sup>, the country's most extensive women's network ( women in peace building network), may serve as a qualitative indicator of a growing consciousness of what may be considered a new class of female traders.

**( b ) ( ii ) Organizers & collective actors:**

There is a wide consensus among observers of Liberian society that women's organizations have proliferated since the war era. More recently women's organizations have also mushroomed in response to conditions set by aid agencies that channel funding to 'community based organizations'. According to information supplied by the Women's NGO Secretariat of Liberia( WONGOSOL) about 70 women's NGOs had registered up to 2006, but conservative estimates suggest there are more than 100 such organizations.

11 \* WIPNET therefore demands a study of women's economic role in Liberia with a view to proposing modalities whereby women's micro and macroeconomic activities are part of the national economic statistics and planning processes. It may be significant that in spite of a glaring shortage of micro-credit scheme for the vast majority of the poor in Liberia, WIPNET wants to ensure the transition from micro credit to macro financing for the economic development of women. In this way class interests are discursively mingled with feminist demands by the women movement. Fuest, Veronika(2008), " *This is the time to get in front : changing roles & opportunities for women in Liberia*", 'African Affairs' ,107/427,Oxford University Press, Pg 201-224

Even though one has to question the benefit of some of the measures in the context of traditional approaches to support women in development, there can be no doubt that these organizations serve as channels of considerable funding to a wide range of local women leaders. The goals of the organizations range from agricultural production, traditional skills training, reconstruction, medical care, trauma healing and trading to peace activism and political advocacy. This rise in organizations can be explained in terms of multiple factors such as repeated or extended shared experiences of gendered suffering, reinforced by foreign aid directed at female war victims and the experience of the power of collective self help action.

Women of southeastern groups such as Grebo, Sapo, Kru, and Krahn have exhibited a traditional propensity to organize collective action as expressions of parallel political structures of women matching and checking the decisions of male-dominated political organizations. In general, members of southeastern Liberians groups have been characterized by voluntary organizations to a higher degree than those in the centre and the northwest. More empirical support is required to test my proposition that the centre and the northwest, which have had a dual-sex political organization quite distinct from the southwest of Liberia, have acquired a disposition to collective action that was formerly more characteristics of the women of the southeast.

The war appears to have generated a perhaps unusual level of collective female peace activism compared to women's peace movements in other African countries. Observers reports and anecdotal evidence suggest an extraordinary level of persistence determinism and militancy among Liberian female peace building NGOs, whose members share an uniform of white T shirts and head ties. One of the Liberian founder's of WIPNET mentioned that whenever he travels outside Liberia, he feels 'proud of being recognized by white T shirt women and the football star George Weiah. Analyst's of war to peace situations converge in finding that peace agreements reached around the world have regularly excluded women from decisive negotiations and depicted women mainly as victims in need of protection and this has narrowed the scope of their economic and political opportunities in post conflict situations. Unlike women in other war and post-war situations, Liberian women appear to have achieved some voice in national peace building endeavors' in spite of resistance from male politicians. As Chinkin points out, it

is remarkable that the 2003 Liberian peace agreement contains in contrast to many other peace agreements, some gender relevant, if typically unspecific policies. It states that women should be included in Governance Reform Commission and that members of the National Transitional Legislative Assembly should come *inter alia* from women organizations. Article XXVIII, dealing with 'national balance' contains a striking exceptions to comparable peace agreements. The parties shall reflect national and gender balance in all elective and none elective appointments within the National Transitional Government of Liberia. Such evidence cannot be ascribed to inspiration from the warlords at the negotiating tables; they are to be credited to influential women's organizations lobbying to some extent successfully against odds of formal exclusion for female representation in the peace building process.

**(b) (iii) Politicians:**

Women have cleverly acquired political ambitions, ambitions to be presented, as demonstrated by activities of forceful women's organizations. Their public statement discursively link women's achievements with claims to political office or otherwise influential positions. The war seems to have increased the legitimacy of women's claim to power and political participation at both national and local levels. Ruth S. Perry was nominated as chairwoman of the Council of State, which governed Liberia in 1996, 6 years after the overthrow and murder of former dictator Samuel K. Doe. She was the first female African to serve as the head of state. In the 1997 elections, which resulted in unfortunate legitimization of warlord Charles Taylor as head of state, Johnson Sirleaf became the first female contestant for presidential office. Ellis reported women's participation in local elder's assemblies from the years of the war; according to other reports, in some locations at least in Bong, Nimba, and Maryland counties women were elected to local government positions such as paramount chiefs, city mayors and clan chiefs. According to international observers more women than men registered during the 2005 elections. These observations and reports are supported by a historical view of women in Liberian government positions. From outbreak of the war until the new government was formed in 2006, 15 ministerial posts were occupied by women, compared to only 3 posts under the Doe government regime in the 1980s.

Female political leaders have been noted in various parts of the country, but the national elections and ensuing appointments have generated clusters in the more urbanized regions in central and western Liberia, particularly in Monrovia, the county of the capital city, where the senior and junior senators are female . Monrovia also has a female mayor. The Liberian government appears to have strongly in favour of affirmative action , providing economic and political opportunities to women and protecting their human rights. Several programmes intended to empower Liberian women were set up in 2006, and women have been encouraged , in accordance with international peace building guidance to participate in the security sector by joining the military and the police.

**( b ) ( iv ) School girls and employed women:**

A change in the public recognition of women's social, economic and political achievements during the war seems to some extent in families priorities in favour of their daughters' education .According to data collected around the turn of the millennium ( assuming optimistically that the statistics largely reflect the reality), primary school enrolment rates ( a total of 46 percent in 1999) reflected stark gendered based differentials. However the minority girls had increased in comparison to pre war times. In the 1980s the enrolment rate of girls was significantly lower than that of boys, averaging about a third at all school levels. A rise in the percentage of girls enrolment can be discerned at both school levels. From 1998 to 2001 the rate of girls' enrolment rose from 40 to 42 percent at the primary level and at the secondary level as steeply as from 31 to 41 percent. An evaluation of more recent ( although preliminary) statistics based on a school census conducted in 14 counties in the year 2006 shows that the total enrolment rates of females and males amounted to 43 and 57 percent respectably. Moreover the census confirms some key informants who stated that in some Liberian communities the enrolment rate of females in schools overtook that of males. In the total of schools counted (3,301), 12 percent of the schools have female enrolment rates that exceed those of boys. Another 7.5 percent of the schools show enrolment rates that roughly equal female and male representation. Indeed some parents of various ethnic and religious backgrounds indicated their perception of educated girls as equal if not more valuable assets of the family than educated boys, recognizing that women had proven to be providers more reliable than men. This development is significant as Liberian families used to clearly priorities boys when funding children's formal education.

This trend supported by the visibility of influential women not only in local and national governments but also in an expanding job market for women in the development and peace building sector, the fulfillment of which takes women with to some extent novel participatory skills of communication to all parts of the country. Women with school degrees have been trained both in Liberia and abroad and have gained employment as consultants and workshops facilitators with a range of local and international NGOs. To an extent unknown before not only has literacy become an important resource and a prerequisite for rising to new positions in the society but general knowledge and strategic communication skills are providing access to various levels of employment with aid and peace building organizations. Since a secondary degree had little more than symbolic value as a ticket to enter the formal employment sector prior to the war, the new demand for these skills makes a considerable qualitative difference.

**( c ) Foreign interventions: A Helping hand in Liberalizing women of Liberia**

Many Liberian women have spent years of exile overseas, where they enjoyed critical education or training opportunities, frequently with support from international organizations. As in other African countries women ' embolden by their experiences of struggle and learning at home and abroad seem to have inserted themselves in to process of crafting new constitutions and drafting new laws during the political transitions. While I do not deny the Liberian women's agency in demanding and struggling for women's rights and gender equality, one has to recognize that international models have been transferred to Liberia from a variety of sources. Studies on women opportunities after wars have often omitted the role of foreign actors, notably the multilateral and bilateral aid and peace building agencies. In Liberia these have been heavily engaged in women's human rights and gender mainstream activities either directly or indirectly by commissioning local NGOs. The significant level of external intervention in gender related policies in Liberia is perhaps indicative of recent approaches to war torn societies by the international communities, whose concerns with international security have entailed 'a radicalization of development....amounting to commitment to transform societies as a whole. The shift in aid policy involves profound social transformations. In view of the underrepresentation of female interest in public peacemaking fora, international advocates for women and women's rights have put increasing pressure on the United Nations, international

organizations, and government to design and implement peacekeeping humanitarian operations with attention to gender. In Liberia UNIFEM, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other international agencies have provided for projects to integrate gender concerns\*12 in to national reconstruction and peace building programs of the government and international NGOs employed by them. Male and female staffs employed by local NGOs have been exposed to gender mainstreaming workshops, a strategy to reach gender equity and equality in development cooperation. From the beginning of the 1990s Liberian would be trainers and facilitators in peace building have been trained in other African countries and in Europe with a view to disseminating models of reconciliation and social changes by training trainers programs. In agreement with internationally accepted conventions, such courses invariably involve gender topics. Member of local women organizations, including rural communities , have been trained in leadership by various NGOs.

In general, the Liberian trainers are committed to their tasks, are embedded in extensive social networks themselves and thus also serve as multipliers of international discourse outside their job frameworks. Training workshops have been matched by corresponding messages in media broadcasts with sporadically, by theatre performances.. More recently since the ascension of the female president, gender issues have become an even more pervasive topic in the media.

Foreign agencies have also funded the participation of women activities in international women's conferences. For example, a substantial delegation of Liberian women is reported to have participated in the Fourth Women's World Conference in Beijing in 1994, which was financed by the United Nations Populations Fund.

12\* In 2009, the country set up a new court to deal with rape crimes in and around Monrovia, called "Court E." The court operates in camera, shielding the victims who testify from exposure to the accused perpetrator and the rest of the courtroom. The prosecutor operates out of the Sexual and Gender Based Violence Crimes office, which offers victims' support services, but faces many financial, logistical and legal hurdles. Ellis, Stephen, (2000) " *The Mask of Anarchy: The destruction of Liberia and Religious dimension of an African civil war*", New York; New York University Press.

In activists narratives this seminal experience in particular motivated resources such as recourse to international resolutions like the Beijing Declaration and the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discriminations Against Women ( CEDAW) to back up demands for affirmative action.

As reported initial resistance on the part of the Taylor government waned , to some extent, as a result of a deep crisis of both national and international legitimacy. A Ministry for Gender and Development was established in 2001. After Taylor's departure in august 2003 the Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia ( AFELL) and other female activists have affected the passing of an ' inheritance law' to regulate women's marriage rights, right to property, and access to their children after divorce or widowhood. A rape law turning rape in to an unbailable offence, was passed in January 2006. AFELL's endeavors have been supported by international consultants, organizations in the USA, and the human rights office of the United Nations in Liberia. While the national transmission and local reception of these laws are clearly matters of debate , the public discourse surrounding them has perceivably heightened the awareness of women's rights in the Liberian public.

**( d ) International constrains : A Great Factor of Women Empowerment in Liberia**

Observed shifts in gender roles inducted by wars raise the question of the relative scope and stability through institutionalization of such changes .Constrains on sustainable shifts in gender roles and conservative backlashes have frequently been noted in post-war histories around the world . It seems to be a common outcome that institutional frameworks restrict the opportunities women acquire during or after wars. At the national level, legal reforms meant to support women have been ignored in practice . At the local level, a lack of support by local authorities has often been noted. Women's independence poses economic threats to older generations who particularly rely on young women's labour and therefore try to re-establish traditional institutions of social control.

While it is not in doubt that new roles for women have emerged in Liberia it is questionable whether 'war also destroys the patriarchal structures of society. While the secrets societies , which subject girls to circumsion and attempt to control their reproductive and productive

capacities, have been dormant in many locations for many years and traditional authorities have come to be questioned by the youth, there seems to be a comeback. In rural areas, these traditional institutions are being revived, though not without contestation, as several informants conveyed. Rhetorically espousing a purported need to control deviant and to educate unknowledgeable girls, older females struggle to regain power and income. It is an open issue if and to what extent the young, who have gained some independence through the war, will come under their control again; and if, under whatever circumstances, local acceptance of the secret societies as crucial forces in community life will persist or rise again. About half of Liberia's population is estimated to live in Monrovia, and how many and which people have become profoundly disjointed from their traditional institutions is hard to assess. The Sande, like Poro, has been instrumentalized by politicians striving for political office or consolidation of their power as was manifest in the courting of society leaders during the election campaigns. The government is attempting to revive and support the leaders of sodalities, just as previous governments did, a process which seems to be ignored by the media. In turn Sande leaders reportedly embrace members of the present government by inviting them to become high-ranking members. While publicly adhering to women's human rights on the front stage and attempting to create framework for the promotion of women in the formal sector, the government supports, on the back stage, interested in curbing the independence of young females in order to consolidate political support. Arguably its cooperation with leaders of the Sande society may bestow legitimacy to forces contested at the local level.

Notwithstanding public demonstrations of female power, opportunity structures seem to impede the political and economic ambitions of women. The innovative alignment of a rally that was staged in favour of a local hospital in Bong County in April 2005 may illustrate this point. Rallies are an invented Liberian tradition of raising funds for (supposed) community projects by mock patching various class or ethnic factions against one another in a public contest of financial donations. Rallies most commonly 'queen rallies', have been documented at least since the 1970s; in addition to entertainment they have constituted occasions for enactment or experimenting with contesting socio-political blocs and for demonstrating loyalty to dominant groups in public. The said rally, which constituted the closing part of a graduation ceremony of a



nurses training course, was to serve the reconstruction of a hospital in Bong County. It was initiated and moderated by a vociferous female facilitator, who had been invited by the organizers. Shouting down some meek voices of opposition from some male members in the audience, a group of about 50 people, she boisterously announced pitching the genders against one another and placed in front of the audience cardboard boxes for women's and men's respective donations. It was obvious that everyone present was expected to approach one of the boxes, even if they could afford just a token contribution. The moderator encouraged singing and dancing and a mixed queue of males and females rhythmically moved to the boxes, throwing some dollars in the boxes of their respective gender. The generous donors either displayed the amount he or she was about to drop inside the box or the donation was announced by the moderator, shouting enthusiastic thanks and enticing us to applaud. She ensured that the contributions of the more prominent individuals were exposed, thus fueling a competitive spirit for other donors whose turn was yet to come. Repeatedly she encouraged women to donate, because now the time has come for women to rule in Liberia! The tension mounted. A prominent male candidate with stakes in upcoming elections ostentatiously supported the women, receiving frantic applause from the female audience. Finally the money was counted by the organizers and the sums were announced to a highly attentive audience: 'the women' had collected about US \$ 150, the men about US \$ 265. The men without much ado, had easily won the contest. The facilitator and many of the women looked clearly disappointed. A dream seemed to have been broken.

This scene demonstrates that in today's public discourse genders may be openly pitted against one another in mock competition, where previously only ethnic or other political blocks were involved; the moderator conveyed female power and an impressive degree of self confidence, exhibiting entitlement to female performance in new public arenas (here as facilitator), and successfully appealing to a collective gender identity. The outcome, however, made unambiguously clear where the economic power lies. Novel modes of female performance are tolerated, not necessarily approved of, by men, but the structural setting, women's endowment with recourses, has not changed fundamentally.

Competition for resources is high in a country whose national economy is in a deplorable state and whose national institutions are weak. The country is facing an insurmountable burden of external debt( US \$ 3.5 billion), lack of investment, unemployment at an estimated rate of 85 percent, a high level of poverty ( an estimated annual per capita income of Us \$ 115), a lack of functioning infrastructure and a lack of both basic and civic education. Gendered potentials of access to and control of resources still differ substantially, as more men than women tend to have been formally educated and women have less access to and control of resources such as land and capital by virtue of traditional institutional arrangements in patrilineally and predominantly viriloidally organized communities. Historically men have been privileged\*<sup>13</sup> in access to land both in the urban and rural areas of the country. Due to persistent patterns of male dominated patronage women continue to be dependent on men for access to capital and to jobs in the civil service sector. A gender needs assessment conducted by the World Bank revealed that women are absent from the major sectors of Liberia's economy. The study found that women produce 60 percent of all agricultural products in Liberia and comprise a large number of entrepreneurs, 77 percent of women are reported to be engaged in business ( self employed). However, women do not participate in the most profitable sectors, such as infrastructure, works, cash crops farming and mining.

## **II- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS**

### **(a) The Role of State in Liberian Economic Development**

In 2009 government revenue was about 20 percent of gross domestic money income. The role of state in Liberian economic growth is conveniently described under 3 headings :

13 \* While there is demand for women in the public and expanding peace building and aid sectors, there is lack of women who are sufficiently educated. This lack is also reflected in the staff structure of the Ministry of Gender and Development, where most key positions have been filled by males. Moreover observers converge in finding that proportion of elected female representatives in the legislative( 15 percent) would certainly have been larger had it not been for an internal selection process that demanded hard lobbying of party leaders and members, skills which many Liberian women have not had the opportunity to master the guidelines of the National Election Commission, which made the registration fees for candidates prohibitive for many female aspirants. Liebenow, J Gus, (2005) "*Liberia: The evolution of Privilege*", New York, Cornell University Press

- (1) The Liberian government's most important economic policy was initiated by President Tubman on taking office in 1944. His 'open door' policy invited American & European firms in to Liberia principally to create large-scale rubber plantations & to extract iron ore. On a small scale several other commercial, extractive & processing activities were also undertaken by foreign concessions. The result has been very rapid growth of primary production for export, & a sharp rise in government revenues from \$ 4 million in 1950 to \$ 50 million in 1967.
- (2) The growth in government revenues enlarged the scope for fiscal policy & increased the credit worthiness of the government. Its borrowings in 2005-09 were large & were running at over \$20 million a year in the early nineties. It has also received rather generous amounts of foreign aid & technical assistance from America & European governments and from international agencies.
- (3) However, there persist social and economic policies which carried over from the early settler community, impede & even prevent development. The retention of unchanged, traditional modes of procedure & organization are the most important obstacles to economic development and largely account for Liberia's failure to develop the whole economy and the policy of renting enclaves for foreigners to exploit. In general, Liberia's political, social, & economic institutions have changed little & the opportunity cost of foregone development has been high.

**(b) Capital Formation in the Nascent Economy: The Greatest Challenge in Liberia now**

Capital formation figures are difficult to obtain. It has been estimated that total private foreign investment (the bulk of private activity) averaged about 70 to 80 million dollars annually from 2000-09, whilst public investment was probably over 20 million dollars a year over the whole period. As foreign investment is so high, public activities are a lower proportion of total capital formation than in most African countries. This situation still appears in fields such as electric power where the US AID financed hydro-electric project of some 24 million dollars is overshadowed by an investment of more than twice that size by LAMCO (Liberian-American-Swedish Minerals Company). Nevertheless public expenditure was high absolutely (over \$ 20 a head or more than 10 percent of per capita GDP) and the accumulation of short and medium term debt by which it was financed brought about a

serious crisis in 2003 .The balance of payment figures for Liberia are fragmentary but in any case they do not have quite the same significance as they have for other countries. There is no central bank & until 1963 the United States' dollar was the official & exclusive money in use; it still remains the principal currency, although the Liberian currency are now in circulation . Thus there were no problems of exchange rates or exchange control;neither was there any control over the free movement of capital, profits or money . Moreover, a large proportion of imports, especially since 1955, were capital & consumption goods purchased directly by foreign concessions for their internal use rather than for re-sale and were divorced, so to speak, from the rest of the Liberian economy . Primary production for export constituted more than half of the value of gross domestic money products .It should be noted that about 20 percent of income earned within Liberia is remitted to firms & persons resident in other countries.

### **( C ) The Development Plan & Development Strategy : Financing The Public Sector**

Up to 2002, there was no development plan or development strategy in Liberia, as these terms are understood by economists .there was no systematic scheme to transform subsistence agriculture, to train & educate large numbers of Liberians to undertake new lines of production or more highly skilled jobs in accordance with development needs or to analyse various sectors of the economy & project the requirements for structural improvement .Government intervention in the economy took the form of general policy preferences reflected in the contractual terms under which foreign concessions operate in budgetary outlays and in the occasional acceptance & implementation of specific projects suggested by foreign advisors . Until 2002 there was no designated agency of economic planning within the government. The secretary of treasury, with the approval of President, negotiated the terms of agreements with foreign concessions, several of which required the foreign firms to build roads or harbors or to provide other facilities or services to enlarge commercial activities in their regions. The government had no policy of giving preference to those foreign concessions which would initiate lines of production especially valuable for economic development (e.g. manufacturing or processing); nor did the contract oblige the foreign firms to train specified numbers of Liberians in skilled jobs.

The most important developmental policy<sup>14</sup> undertaken by the Liberian government itself had been the large expenditures , already mentioned which were used for social capital , principally public building , roads and facilities to provide utility service ( electricity , water etc.) . A functional classification of budgetary outlays for 2009 indicates the absence of priority given to expenditures for development purpose we will find that almost as much as spent on diplomacy as on education ; more than one fourth of total outlay was for general administrative expenses & expenditures of all kinds were heavily concentrated in the county containing the capital city of Monrovia.

In 2009 there were very few Liberians in the higher echelons of government with training in economics , statistics or other skills relating to economic planning for development .However Liberia is exceptionally well served in having access to foreign economic advisors & other technical experts concerned with development .The AID branch of the United states government had an establishment of 160 persons in residence . Agencies of United Nations provided several kinds of technical assistance as did several European governments.

IMF advisers were brought in to formulate a plan<sup>16</sup> to cope with the serious financial situation that existed in early 2000. The government owed over 100 million dollars principal- about half of which was short term, arising almost entirely from contractor finance and over 30 million dollars in interest payments to maturity .The Debt Rearrangement Plan, which was accepted generally , rephrased the repayments of debt and interest over 15 years taking into account likely increases in revenue, particularly the increased payments expected from LAMCO & LMC( Liberian Mining Company) in 2009. Government expenditure for purpose other than debt re-payments were to be allowed to rise by 5 percent a year from 2000 level.

14 \* The Government of Liberia's reconstruction and development strategy is based on four pillars, each of equal importance:

1. Expanding peace and security,
2. Revitalizing economic activity,
3. Rebuilding infrastructure and providing basic services, and
4. Strengthening governance and the rule of law.

Dunn, Elwood and S. Byron, Tarr;( 2008) "*Liberia: A National Polity in Transition*", Lanham, The Scarecrow Publication.

The forecasting procedures required to produce the Debt Rearrangement Plan have had repercussions on planning . there is now a Liberian National Planning Council of Cabinet Ministers, a Department of Planning & Economic Affairs\*<sup>15</sup> and a 5 year plan . It is too soon , however to assess how far these moves will affect the underlying situation.

<sup>15</sup>\* The Government, working in close collaboration with its partners, has:

- Established sound financial management by submitting a recast balanced budget for 2005/06 and a complete balanced budget for 2006/07, introducing legislation to limit the power of the executive branch to change budget allocations, and has established the extent of domestic arrears.
- Increased revenues by introducing a computerized “flag receipt” system, cracking down on customs fraud and other forms of tax evasion, and controlling expenditures through establishing a fully functioning cash management system.

Dunn, Elwood and S. Byron, Tarr;( 2008) “*Liberia: A National Polity in Transition*”, Lanham, The Scarecrow Publication.

CHAPTER -4

# CONCLUSION

## CHAPTER-4

**CONCLUSION**

One has to be cautious about drawing far-reaching conclusions based on observations from a single set of elections, especially since these elections were held under conditions marked by the security guarantees of thousands of international peacekeepers\*<sup>1</sup>, the scrutiny of an international contact group that included the major regional and global powers and a society battered by 15 years of civil war that followed a decade of intermittent violent conflicts. Moreover we should be reminded by the fact that Liberia never had a democratic electoral culture; these were only the first free and fair competitive elections in modern times in Liberia. Nevertheless it seen as a snapshot of an important aspect of an unfolding process of post-conflict governance, these elections could provide an initial picture of how that process of governance is taking shape.

**I-THE PASSING OF AUTOCRACY & MILITARISM :**

The first observation is that the macro-institutional arrangements of the Libeian political order are changing. The major political institution of the settler oligarchy, the True Whig Party, has declined even though progenitors of the oligarchy seek a resurgence through reinvented forms. Similarly while the dictatorship of Samuel Doe and Charles Taylor have left deep scars on the Liberian society, the political institutions they established do not dominate emerging electoral processes

1\*. Enhancing Peace and Security. The Government of Liberia (GOL), working in close collaboration with it partners, is:

- Building a capable and democratically accountable military force by completing the demobilization of ex-combatants, recruiting the first 2,000 new Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) troops, and initiating new military training programs.
- Strengthening national security institutions by initiating a reorganization of all security agencies, completing a national security review, beginning to develop a national security plan, and demobilizing a significant portion of the Special Security Service (SSS).
- Beginning to strengthen the Liberian National Police Force (LNPF) by completing severance payments to retire police personnel, recruiting new personnel, and opening "Women and Child Protection Units" in 4 LNPF stations.
- Facilitating the return of 70,000 refugees from neighboring countries between January and June (75% more returnees than in all of 2005), reintegrating 50,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) to their homes (from the original number of 314,000), and providing support to the returnees through health, water, training, and employment programs.

Burrowes, Patric C., (2004) "*Power and Press freedom in Liberia*", Trenton, New Jersey; Africa World Press.



. Both political parties failed to rank among the top contenders and to galvanize the support of their influential members , many of whom deserted to other political parties and organizations. These developments suggest the existence of contestable political space at least at the national level and therefore an open public realm for informed discourse and participatory processes through which democratic institutions can be established .

A related observation is that political parties did not take full advantage of available public space to offer alternative visions and programs ; instead the tendencies that dominated the political debate developed outside of political parties. Parties themselves were weak and frequently inarticulate actors , debilitated in part by the effects of prolonged violent conflicts during which warlords and international actors made the rules and controlled the governing process . During that period political parties were hardly ever consulted , as all efforts were aimed at forging , cooperation for peace among warlords. Not possessing armed extensions, and unable to mobilize mass support in the face of constant firefights, political parties seemed reconciled to being secondary players. The weakness of political parties poses a potential danger to macro-level political process in Liberia. While it is true that a multi party political culture is emerging and that the institutions of autocratic control are on the wane , it is up to political parties to nourish this multi-party political culture. Thus far, judging from the 2005 elections , they have underperformed in this task. Continued failure could reopen opportunities for the return of autocracy , benevolent or otherwise.

## **II-ESTABLISHMENT OF POLITICAL BASE**

The second observation is that most of its issues that dominated the electoral debates , or were their significant subtexts , reflect the deep historical and social cleavages among Liberians; consequently the debates emphasized exclusionary themes. The Heritage Movement, the reinvention of the oligarchy which was a part of the new reformist movement and the populist movement of Weah all projected messages against something or some group ( anti-Americo-Liberian, for example ) rather than projecting a vision of an all-inclusive society . There is a danger that a debate that revives old antagonisms without seeking to bridge divides and develop inclusive governance paradigms could well reinforce zero-sum politics . And this does not bode

well for a country that has just experienced a civil war against the historical backdrop of a century of autocratic rule . Thus the need for an agenda of reconciliation and democratic transformation cannot be overstated.

In its brutality and anarchic colorfulness, its factional fluidity and in the gruesome perversion of religious rituals, the Liberian war was quite unique. The hearing had been dominated by accounts of ritual cannibalism, the drinking of blood of human beings, the gouging of human hearts for consumption in the hope that this would make the consumer's bodies impervious to bullets. There was no point in dismissing these accounts as deluded or merely sensational, since they form the dominant narrative of the war and they were widely believed. Liberians are generally religious; the overwhelming majority of Liberians claim they are Christians, many of them Baptist Christians. But Christianity in the country has always been fused by the vast majority of its adherents with other traditional religious practices; outside of Monrovia few people are literate in the Western sense. Some such practices are both bizarre and clearly harmful.

Since, her election, Johnson Sirleaf had made reform of key governance institutions, including the justice sector and economic recovery the top priority for her administration. The President promised to govern 'differently', decisively breaking from the past. But the capacity constraints are overwhelming. Liberian law states that magistrates and judges must hold law degrees and that they must be Liberian citizens. In practice however because of the dearth of educated and trained Liberians, 90 percent of judicial officials barely finished high school, only 3 percent of attended university. This has severe consequences for individual human rights and capacity of the degraded justice system to cope with the needs of the country. At present only 19 of the 790 people in prisons in Monrovia had been convicted; the rest are on remand, a status which can be indefinite.

One measure of progress in governance in Liberia is the degree of openness with which the government conducts its business as well as the robust anti-corruption posture of the President.

Anti-corruption measures have been included the prosecution of the former Transitional President Gyude Bryant on corruption charges and the sacking of key government officials for the same reason. In March, a Deputy Minister and an assistant minister were sacked for allegedly granting bogus mining licenses and a top official very close to the President was forced to resign early in the year when a picture showing him in a lewd act with two women, surfaced in local news papers.

There is an ongoing process of decentralization, which includes efforts to extend the writ of the state or strengthen its capacity in long neglected areas outside of Monrovia. The UN has created County Support Teams( CSTs) in each of the 15 counties, with the aim of strengthening the capacity of local administration and extending modern justice systems across the Liberia from its concentrated areas of Monrovia. Implementation has been stymied, however, by poor infrastructure and the constricting powers of traditional chiefs: Liberia has about 250 senior chiefs along with over 500 clan chiefs.

Institutional reform, then can only go so far , in other words , not far enough. It means that the problems that caused the war and ensured its gruesome character will not, at least in the short run, be tackled by governance reform so favored by outsiders and some of the enlightened members of the governing elite, like Amos Sawyer, now the head of the Governance Commission.

Many other Liberians see their predicament in a religious light. In his account of Liberian war, James Youboty, a journalist, writes that the war ‘ could be partly blamed on the segregation way in which the ex-slaves from America founded the country and kept the majority of the native population benighted for more than a hundred years. All these disparities in the society set stage for Satan to take advantage in brutally turning brothers against brothers. Even Charles Taylor, Youboty writes, is not unlike most Liberians among the most generous people on the face of the

earth. But the Satan the devil, came from the hell and corrupted the minds of the peace loving Liberian people to start killing one another for no good reason.

Given the overtly religious perspective of most Liberians on their country's problems, it might be that true reconciliation and closure should most appropriately be sought, at least in part, from religion. Stephen Ellis made this point in 1995, long before the end of the war. He wrote: "Healing ( in the circumstances of the religious nature of the Liberian war) lies in the spiritual field at least as much as in the political one and at the local level rather than the national one. The spirit world is the only domain in which constructive action is still detectable and in this a leading role may fall to the churches. Unlike Poro society or other traditional cults, they are universal in orientation, having the potential to incorporate all Liberians. In their own symbolic language, the Holy Spirit is pacific and universal in nature and can enter anybody.

The Christian God can forgive any crime, no matter how terrible. In the case of the international and other former missionary churches, they also have the connections and even the material resources to help in the process. Their greater disability is the unwillingness to come to grips with the anarchic spiritual world of Liberia which may well necessitate assuming more of the symbolic language of Liberian spirituality than is the case at present."

Most liberals recoil at any ascertain of religion in the political and even social life of states but it is important to remember that the church in Liberia, unlike that in Rwanda, played a positive role during the war, it condemned the atrocities and was one of the spearheads of the attempts to forge a negotiated solution. It seems clearly central to Liberian life. Two of the TRC Commissioners are clergymen and it is curious that one of them was not made chair of the Commission. If Liberia's truth and reconciliation process is to have success, the church ought surely to play a more important role.

### **III- ADVANCING EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN**

A third observation is that while the election of Ellen Sirleaf is both a personal success for her as well as a historic departure from a mode of governance that previously elected only men to the presidency, it is not clear whether women voted disproportionately for Sirleaf or whether women candidates for legislative position benefited from Sirleaf's strong candidacy and ultimate victory. A full analysis of gender dimensions of the elections needs to be prepared. Nonetheless, Liberian women and women generally, are basking in Sirleaf's success and it is anticipated that her government will promote women's empowerment policies and programs, thereby firmly establishing women's issues on national agenda for the foreseeable future.

The major social improvement that looks in the Liberian war ravaged society been the spectacular rise of women in the social ladder. Observers have been impressed with the emancipation that Liberian women seem to have achieved. The war appears to have resulted in a disintegration or dilution of institutions that used to define women's role in society and it simultaneously created opportunities for social, political and economic mobility. Losing and gaining depend on the social position of the women in question. Some business women, some peace activists, leaders of women's organizations tapping in to the flow of foreign aid and female politicians appear to have gained. The situation of illiterate and marginalized and of young women who cultivated strategies of independence and appear to contest traditional roles by drawing on the international discourse, deserves further study.

The extent and sustainability of the apparent changes is hard to assess. On the other hand, violence may even intensify as women demand autonomy and men try to compel women to comply with their claims to dominance. As in other countries, in the long run emerging gender and generational conflicts may break many women's resistance and thwart their ambitions. On the other hand, compared to other countries in the region, the specific historical and present day conditions in Liberia may combine to facilitate more profound changes in women's opportunities and enhance the potential of institutionalizing 'female gains'.

The long duration and pervasiveness of Liberia's crisis, which lasted for almost a generation and the displacement of at least half of the population resulted in extensive experiences of new

female roles. If the historical legacy of female Americo-Liberian as well as selective indigenous female leadership provided role models and legitimacy to ambitious women in the past, the more existence of a female at the top of the government and a growing representation of women in leading positions in various government institutions do so in the present. In this light the election of Johnson Sirleaf can be viewed simply as the historical climax of a process rooted in the history of Liberian women and accelerated by foreign interventions in the field of gender politics.

Future developments in the opportunity structures' in Liberia's economy crucially depend on macro-economic developments\*2 and the kind and extent of affirmative support by the government and foreign donor agencies. I do not want to discuss the effects of short sighted blue print policies and measures so commonly applied in the world of development business here. Just as it is hard to assess how durable changes in roles will be, so it is hard to predict what the impact of any external intervention, policies and projects will be in long run. As ethnographic studies on policy making and implementation have shown, enormous variation and selective appropriation by local actors according to context is to be expected. Liberia's women are bound to be affected in diverse ways depending on their respective status, wealth, network position, and access to education.

2\*The Government of Liberia, working in close collaboration with its partners, has:

- Repaired a number of roads including the Phebe via Sanoyea to Totota road (79 kms), the Saclepea-Bahn-Loguatu road (79 kms), and has also inaugurated the Barclayville Bridge in Grand Kru County.
- Rehabilitated the Zwedru and Phebe hospitals, 39 clinics, and four community health facilities.
- Used \$1 million from improved tax collection to fund community projects of approximately \$10,000 each in 100 villages and districts across Liberia.
- Started to rebuild the electricity grid, leading to the restoration of power to most parts of Monrovia since July 26th.
- Revitalized the national strategy to fight HIV/AIDS, provided 5,000 bed nets to households in high malaria endemic communities, and provided tuberculosis drugs for 300 new cases in Montserrado, Grand Bassa, Bong, and Nimba counties. Certain water pipelines in Monrovia have also been rehabilitated, and 100 new water points constructed.

Burrowes, Patric C., (2004) "*Power and Press freedom in Liberia*", Trenton, New Jersey; Africa World Press.

#### **IV- RESURGENCE OF INDIGENOUS INSTITUTIONS & LOCAL GOVERNANCE**

At the sub- national level it could be observed that in the absence of macro- political institutions that shaped national politics and dominated sub- national institutions , the role of sub- national , ethnic, and locally based institutions have been accentuated , especially in county and district level political processes . Local leaders of ethnic and sub-ethnic communities, local Poro and Sande organizations and other local and county level public entrepreneurs have become critical actors in county and district level political decision making. Long standing rules rooted in local traditions are being revived and applied and new rules necessitated by realities are being negotiated. The inconsistent performance in any given county, of political parties in presidential and legislative races suggests that local entrepreneurs and locally crafted strategies held sway in the election of senators and representatives. These local entrepreneurs and emergent patterns are still unfolding and are yet to be fully identified and analyzed.

#### **V- MINORITY & ETHNIC COALITION BUILDING**

A related observation is the growing assertiveness of micro- ethnic or sub- ethnic minorities in county and district level political process and the fashioning of micro- ethnic coalition as one way of gaining access to elective positions . The strategic behavior of the Sapo in Sinoe, the people of Yapeah-Mahn in the Sanniquelli region of Nimba and the Kaloway of Borrobo district was not atypical in these elections . In future elections such sub- ethnic and inter-ethnic negotiations seem likely to replace patterns of domination and control of one ethnic or sub-ethnic group over another.

Finally it should be observed that the removal of the oligarchy and warlords does not make Liberia a political tabula rasa. The ending of the war has not ended the bitterness and soothed the anguish . A multitude of tendencies are emerging and not all are supportive of the creation of a sense of nationhood and the development of democratic institutions . Nonetheless, the absence of oligarchy as a unified and a dominant political force and of warlords , does provide opportunities for Liberians to construct a new governance paradigm and to craft new institutional arrangements through processes of constitutional choice.

The concept of ‘political opportunities ‘ continues to feature in many studies of social movements in the democratic West, identified as external circumstances or conditions that tend

to favour a movement's progress. Now as social movement analysis is applied to authoritarian cases (only minimally to Africa so far), such opportunities are similarly cited in recent studies as critical to resistance movements. But all the study concurs that such opportunities help a movement but how can a peaceful social movement resisting authoritarian rule survive when few, if any, such opportunities are present is matter of analysis! This case study of such a movement in Liberia between 1979 to 2003, a period that includes heavy repression by two regimes, provides alternative explanations to the opportunity thesis; formation of a micro social movement with only loosely connected strands of resistance from civil society; highly committed participants, use of media and international connections to publicize abuses of power and bring international pressure on a regime and historic precedents of resistance, which became more evident in recent decades, especially the 1970s.

No claims are made that the activism caused the fall of the two regimes. A militia leader murdered one of them, Samuel Doe; the other one, Charles Taylor, resigned in the face of an international indictment for war crimes as rebel forces were approaching the capital; but activists kept pressure on the regimes by making human rights and democratic freedoms an issue in the eyes of citizens and international community. Advocates for human rights and democracy were only loosely connected with little coordinated planning except for public demonstration but linked by social and professional ties. Participants included university students, journalists, academics, lawyers, some clergy and others, often drawn in to rights advocacy or activism through their profession and their ideals as well as in some cases as their political ambitions.

This study suggests that future research lies in probing the impact of activists and advocates on the two regimes and vice versa. It points to the need to explore further the limits of resistance compared with repression to determine which levels of repression effectively shut down a resistance movement, possibly driving it under ground or pushing it toward violence. No single study can answer all questions about a nonviolent resistance movement.

Finally the very fact that a resistance movement was mounted despite the risks and lack of opportunities not only extends our concepts of what people in political social movements can do under oppressive conditions; it extends our appreciation for the tenacity of human spirit.



## **VI-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN LIBERIA**

Despite its historical association with the USA, its rich resource base relative to population and generous external assistance by foreign governments & international agencies , Liberia must be placed among the least developed countries in Africa . In 2003 , less than 60 percent of the population was literate , the quality of its educational institutions are poor , the traditional division in between tribal Lebanese & the American- Liberian descendents of the colonial settlers remained in force and traditional governmental procedures & preferences had not been appreciably revised to serve development needs.

The great burgeoning of rubber and iron ore production by foreigners since 1950's has had relatively little developmental impact: the unskilled labour force working for wages has almost tripled but an enlarged receipt of money wages has not induced appreciably more production for the domestic market ; rather it has increased the effective demand for imported consumption goods. The enlarged government revenues ( which increased 8 fold in between 1999 to 2009 ) and enlarged borrowing from abroad – both of which are direct consequences of the rapid growth in primary products for export- for the most part have not been spent in ways which increase the productive capacity of the nation . Most professionally trained Liberians worked for the government . The uneducated mass of tribal Liberians grew subsistence & traditional cash crops and worked as unskilled labourers in the rubber farms. A few had acquired vocational & clerical skills . Only in rubber productions has there been marked growth un an economic activity undertaken by Liberians.

In 2002 there was nothing that could reasonably be called developmental planning . Neither effective plan nor personal existed . Liberians' principal tasks in research and in development al planning are to transform subsistence agriculture ( and especially to increase production of marketed rice and its protein staple, fish), to reform its educational establishment to supply the growing demand for skilled & professional labourers and to undertake feasibility studies for new lines of processing & manufacture. Its most tenacious problems are institutional and require policies to reform traditional social and political organizations; to abolish forced recruitment of labour, to reform traditional land tenure arrangements, to reform the traditional administration of the tribal hinterland in ways , which provide incentives for tribal persons to enlarge their productions for sale, and to allow them access to higher education and political expression.

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