

# WORKING DRAFT

## WEST AFRICA: WHAT IS KNOWN OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT ?

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### INTRODUCTION

"The key root cause of conflict is the failure of economic development" (Collier et al. 2003: 53)

"We know that by increasing GDP per capita, we will *somehow* reduce the risk of civil war, but a more targeted policy intervention might be both more effective and easier to implement" (Sambanis 2004: 273).

### INTRODUCTION: DEFINING GOVERNANCE IN A PEACE BUILDING CONTEXT

The objective of this paper is to examine the relationship between development, governance and civil conflict in West Africa. As the quotations above demonstrate, we know that economic development and the more the better is an excellent shield against civil conflict but it is much less clear how and why this is true. Conflict, governance and economic growth are tied up in ways which we are only beginning to unravel (Garfinkel and Skaperdas 2007). By examining regional countries which have succeeded in avoiding civil war for long periods, we can look at the factors which contribute to the maintenance of peace. In some cases these are the mirror image of those which result in civil war, but not always.

Quinn et al. (2003: 5) have criticized analyses of ethnic factors in civil wars which rely on a latent unmeasured variable termed "state strength". It is important to recognise that most definitions of good governance become circular, with societies experiencing civil war by definition being classified as being badly governed. We would argue that Senegal represents an example of a country which is relatively well governed but has still experienced a secessionist civil war (Humphreys and Mohamed 2005). This is an area where outcomes are often confused with outputs. In 2001 the World Bank commissioned a study of why the Ivory Coast had escaped civil war only to be overtaken by the outbreak of war, so that the study was never published (Collier and Sambanis 2005). What the Bank had failed to observe was that the country had gradually moved from being a well-governed autocracy to being a more democratic state where exclusion of minorities was being used to win political battles and where the delivery of basic services by the state was becoming daily less efficient.

## Development and conflict

There are three aspects of good governance which are often confused: (1) democracy /participation in government, (2) the effective and efficient delivery of a range of basic services to the populace and (3) a lack of ethnic, geographic or religious bias in the inclusivity of the provision of government services. Although much of the Western donor rhetoric implies that democracy and the unbiased meeting of basic needs are conjoint twins, yet it is demonstrably possible, as in Ivory Coast 1960-1993, to have an efficient autocracy which delivers across the nation, or a poor democracy which is incapable of providing for the necessities of the population. Indeed, a country may have alluvial diamonds and yet be unable to convert this wealth into development either under an autocracy or a democracy (Lujala et al. 2005). The United Nations Development Programme, which of recent years has had a heavy focus upon improving governance around the world, uncomfortably slips back and forth between general governance indicators and democratic governance indicators as if the two are interchangeable (UNDP 2010; McDonald 2003). We need to remember that prior to 2000 the life expectancy of democracies with per capita incomes of less than \$1,000 a year was less than a decade (Przeworski et al. 1997:295). Presidential democracies as found across West Africa (except in Ghana) are also particularly vulnerable. After a visit to his home country in 2001, political scientist Jimmy Kandeh (2001) concluded: "promotion of welfare and development is the surest way to consolidate peace and build mass support for democratic governance in post-conflict societies like Sierra Leone". Thus he saw increased development as the precondition for democracy rather than the reverse.

Most texts on governance assume that civil security providing basic law and order is a given. Yet, in peace building the basic difficulty is to establish sufficient security, law and order for slum dwellers and villagers alike so that the other aspects of governance can gradually start to be established. In West Africa citizens are only too accustomed to expecting the state to be a predator rather than a protector (Moselle and Polak 2001).

"Good governance depends on transparency, accountability and equality in ways that are responsive to the needs of people. It is composed of the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups can articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences" (Australian Development Gateway 2010). In peace building it is important to focus on objective measures of what the government actually delivers and to whom. A more functional definition of good governance would distinguish those countries which are capable of delivering basic infrastructure and services to all areas of the country irrespective of ethnic or religious divisions. By this measure, a country governed by a corrupt autocrat, but delivering basic education and health services nation-wide would outrank a democracy that could not deliver. In the slums and villages having access to water and electricity may well count for more than having the vote. This is why Jerry Rawlings was a popular military ruler of Ghana through promising "light for all". Democracy costs money which could be spent elsewhere. In 2008 the Liberian Supreme Court ruled that the President could appoint local mayors

## Development and conflict

because the government could not afford to hold municipal elections and fund the schools and schools had priority.

Malawi, which collects data for three quite different sets of governance indicators to satisfy different donors, has inter alia considered a balanced basket of indicators of "equal access to justice". These include "percentage of clients who say that the police will respond to them without requiring a bribe" disaggregated by "gender, ethnicity, religion and level of urbanization" (Scott and Wilde 2006: 8). It is highly probable that any country which can reliably collect such sensitive and detailed data no longer stands in need of such an indicator. It would be very useful to have any data on bribery reaching down to the village level.

### DATA CAVEAT

As a demographer, who has worked in the field and taught social science methodology across West Africa, the author is very well aware that, even in good times, many local statistics are highly questionable. Clearly, in post-war contexts statistics need to be examined with even greater care and accepted with considerable scepticism. All the data which follow need to be considered with this caveat in mind. Thus, for example, we know that, as Fearon and Laitin (2003) have demonstrated, whether econometric studies find a relationship between ethnic fragmentation and civil war depends on the data and definitions used to measure civil war starts.

### DEFINING CIVIL WAR

"A civil war is defined as an armed conflict between an internationally recognized state and (mainly) domestic challengers able to mount an organized military opposition to the state. The war must have caused more than 1,000 deaths in total and in at least a three-year period" (Hegre and Sambanis 2006). The Uppsala/PRIO list of internal armed conflict (Gleditsch et al. 2002) has an annual 25 battle deaths threshold.

In West Africa there are mega conflicts, as experienced in Liberia and Sierra Leone, where the question of who controls the government is seriously in play and in which hundreds of thousands are killed and millions become refugees or internally displaced persons and then there are much smaller conflicts in which the number of deaths meets the civil war requirement but the hold on control of the national government is never in question. Almost all countries in West Africa have experienced these smaller conflicts (see Table 1) so that if the objective is to compare and contrast countries which have experienced civil war and those which have not, it is important to set the barrier well above a thousand deaths and examine the threat to the control of the national government criteria, at least in relation to broad regions. In 1994 Ghana experienced serious inter-ethnic violence in the North between the Nanumba and Kokomba which resulted in 2,000 casualties and tens of thousands of internally displaced persons but these inter-village conflicts were only significant at the local level and did not have any far-reaching consequences nationally. In this case the violence was contained

## Development and conflict

because external intervention and the shipping in of guns was forestalled, indeed some of those fighting used bows and arrows (Adjapawn 2008).

There are also examples of contested classification. Despite considerable violence, in East Africa Kenya is not usually recorded as having experienced a civil war because the Government forces have remained largely unscathed. In West Africa everyone over the age of 30 knows that Nigeria experienced the Biafran Civil War in 1967-70. However, the question of whether Nigeria has experienced civil war since is the subject of lively debate. Most sources do not include Senegal in their listing of civil wars, despite 22 years of conflict, again because the level of government casualties have been very low (Harsch 2005). From the perspective of this paper Nigeria and Senegal are of special interest precisely because they are instances when the national government has been able to maintain a firm grip on power despite very significant levels of armed disaffection in particular regions.

## DEVELOPMENT FAILURE AND CIVIL WAR : GOOD COUPS, BAD COUPS

In examining the out-break of any civil war there are two sets of factors: the general causes which make war likely and the specific causes why war occurred at a particular point of time. As the World Bank has found, Nigeria presents an interesting case of a country which contradicts most models of civil war causation twice: once by having a civil war in the 1960s when it was not to be expected, and a second time by not having had one since (by most definitions) although the conditions for war were amply present (Collier and Sambanis 2005). Like several other West African countries (see Table 1) Nigeria has survived a range of coups without (re)descending into civil war. Even more remarkable have been the cases of countries such as Benin where citizen mobilization succeeded in initiating the transition from military regime to electoral pluralism without the need for accompanying violence (Houngkpo 2007). To date there have been three West African Presidents: Jerry Rawlings of Ghana; Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and 'Chameleon' Kereka of Benin who have moved from being military dictators to winning democratic elections and have then left government of their own volition without trying to hold on to power. Peaceful changes of government have been so rare in West Africa that one definition of good governance is a state where (irrespective of any democratic requirement) a change of head of state can occur without significant violence (CODESRIA-OSIWA 2007).

There is a vital question as to why some coups transition into being civil wars and why others are followed by calm and even improved conditions (Cheng 2010). There is also the definitional issue as to the dividing line between a coup and a civil war. In many definitions a coup accompanied by 1,000 deaths would constitute a short civil war (Sambanis 2004), but the level of disruption can be very different in the case of a coup as compared with a war, and a coup which transfers government from an incapable government to a competent one may even be viewed as a 'good coup' (Lewis 2010). At least 700 people were killed in association with the 2005 Presidential elections in Togo (Banjo 2005) would

## Development and conflict

another 300 deaths have made a civil war? Or, since the former president's son was not ousted, could it only rank as an unsuccessful coup? Overall there have been far more studies of civil wars than of coups, partly because coups can only be understood in their own individual political context whilst data bases such as the correlates of war (COW) make it easy for economists to feed civil war data into their complex quantitative models.

Fearon and Laitin (2003: 76) have argued that in explaining civil war "economic variables such as per capita income matter primarily because they proxy for state administrative, military and police capabilities. Where states are relatively weak and capricious, both fears and opportunities encourage the rise of would-be rulers who supply a rough local justice while arrogating the power to 'tax' for themselves and, often, for a larger cause". The author would agree that there is usually a relationship between the poverty of the state apparatus and conflict, especially where whatever national wealth there is has been co-opted by a particular clique within the country.

## DEFINING DEVELOPMENT

Because development can mean so many different things to different people in different contexts, it is important to define the sense in which the term is used in this paper. Development, as used here, means better living for everyone, especially the poor. Development is thus defined by a country's ability to deliver basic services to the community in education, health and infrastructure - with clean water, passable roads and possibly even electricity. A relatively less developed region of a country is one which has poorer education and health standards and fewer passable roads, post offices, sewage systems, telephones etc. Most, perhaps all, of these facilities could, indeed, be provided by the private sector if the investment were worth while. The reality is that in poor countries very few such goods are accessible to poorer citizens, especially outside the capital cities. Almost by definition, development is only possible in conditions of peace and security, and peace and security can only be provided by the government. Even when Sierra Leone experimented with the use of mercenaries, it was the government who was paying them (Rubin 2000).

The UNDP focuses on the Human Development Index (HDI) as cited in Table 1. This combines information on life expectancy, education and GDP per capita. Although HDI figures are very useful, it needs to be acknowledged that the constituent indicators were chosen as much on the basis of availability of the information for almost all countries in the world as on their value as indicators of development. As Table 1 shows, the HDI Index is not very useful for distinguishing between poor African countries according to their experience of coups and civil war - they are just too closely bunched together at the bottom of the scale. As Collier (2004) has argued, Africans are not especially warlike, but they are especially poor, and poor countries are especially exposed to the risk of civil war.

## Development and conflict

Table 1 Basic Development Data for West African Countries

Countries	Population /density per km2	HDI Rank 2007/ GDP per cap rank minus HDI rank	War/ Coups	Adult literacy 1999-2007 %	Life Expectancy 2007 years
Benin *	8.8/ 78	161/ -7	No/Yes	61	41
Burkina Faso *	15.7/ 57	177/ -17	No/Yes	29	53
Chad	10.9/ 9	175/ -24	Yes/Yes	32	49
Cote d'Ivoire@	20.6/ 64	163/ -17	Yes/Yes	49	57
Ghana*	23.8/ 100	152/ 1	No/ Yes	65	57
Guinea	10.1/ 41	170/ -10	No/Yes	30	57
Liberia@	3.4/ 31	169/ 10	Yes/Yes	56	58
Mali	12.7/ 10	178/ -16	Yes?/Yes	26	48
Mauritania*	3.1/ 3	154/ -12	No/Yes	57	56
Niger	15.3/ 12	182/ -6	Yes ?/Yes	29	51
Nigeria@	149.3/ 162	158/ -17	Yes/ Yes	72	48
Senegal #	13.7/ 70	166/ -19	Yes?/ No	42	55
Sierra Leone@	6.4/ 90	180/ -5	Yes/Yes	53	62
Togo*	6.0/ 106	159/ 11	No/ Yes	53	62

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 2009 Table H, plus population statistics plus author's war/coups classification.

Notes: @ Mega civil war

\* No civil war

# No coup

NB. Yes ? under war indicates that the finding depends on the threshold number of deaths used for classifying a conflict as a war.

West Africa ranks as the least developed region in the world and Niger ranks as the very bottom country, even below Afghanistan. (In the 1970s the World Bank reported that there were only two industrial establishments in Niger: a soft-drink bottler and a tannery). If we look at the comparison between the per capita GDP of these countries and their HDI rank we see that many are in negative territory, performing even worse than their poverty would indicate, with Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, Burkina Faso and Mali all at least 16 ranks lower than their incomes would indicate. (But then Botswana, darling of the World Bank and bilateral donors, falls 65 places behind its income ranking). Ghana

## Development and conflict

stands out as having achieved the level of development which its national production will support.

Basically the problem is that all of these countries have relatively low incomes, educational levels and life expectancy. In many ways the educational short-fall is the most blameworthy: countries cannot help their natural resource endowments and their life expectancy may be dramatically decreased by HIV/AIDS as in Southern Africa, but basic education can be provided at relatively low cost by any government with the will to do so. The poor education results also tend to reflect massive discrimination against women and girls. Nigeria, which tends to get a bad press for its governance, does deliver on the educational front better than any other country in West Africa. In contrast Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger have educational levels on a par with Afghanistan under the Taliban and for the same reason. Very poor education levels are a feature of Muslim societies which object to educating girls.

The second indicator of note is that Senegal is (touch wood) the only country in the region not to have experienced a coup.

Looking at all the factors listed in Box I (which was not specifically designed with Africa in mind), it is immediately striking how all of them are applicable to West Africa. Indeed the question soon becomes: if we know so much about the causes of conflict how is it that so little has been done to address them? The answer to this question clearly lies in bad governance and the failure of the governing elites to address the needs of the bulk of the population.

Looking at post-conflict reconstruction programmes it is evident that the factors in Box 1 are exactly what the donors strive to address. For example, USAID's reconstruction package for Liberia targets almost all of these issues (USAID 2008). In 2008, when Liberians themselves were asked by their Government in nation-wide consultations what their priorities were under the Poverty Reduction Strategy they replied roads and access to schools and health services. Since only 300 miles out of Liberia's 6,000 mile-long road network can be used through the wet season the focus on roads is not surprising. It might also be wondered how far all weather roads contribute to national security and the control of outbreaks of violence. Access to electricity remains a priority beyond any realistic vision: only 10% of the population (in parts of the capital) can pursue their education under electric lights. From 1991 to 2006 even the capital had no public electricity. Liberia's main source of electricity: the Mount Coffee hydro-dam, was washed away by the rains during the war because the spillway gates had been left closed when the technicians fled from the fighting during the dry season. It is a reflection of the lack of development in West Africa and Liberia's place in the world that it will take years before the dam is restored.

- Is the economy (of the country/region) growing, stagnant, or declining? By what per cent?
- Is the country (or region) low income?
- Are there large socio-economic disparities? Do these reinforce other lines of division, such as ethnicity?
- Is the economy heavily dependent on primary commodities? Are these commodities easily 'lootable'?
- Is economic power tied to political power?
- How pervasive is corruption or patronage? Does it flow along ethnic or other lines of division?
- If there is a large informal economy, is it legal or illegal?
- What is the capacity of the formal/informal economy to absorb new entrants?
- What is the unemployment rate, particularly for young men in urban areas?
- Is there a match between the skills of new entrants and the needs of the economy?
- Are these economies heavily dependent on access to global markets? How susceptible are they to economic shocks?

Source: USAID 2004 Conducting a Conflict Assessment p.28-9.

#### UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE LACK OF A VISION FOR YOUTH

"Tens of millions of youth across the continent lack prospects of decent work. This is not only a tragic waste of a precious human resource. It can also have security implications for almost every country in Africa, since desperation often leads young people to fall prey to warlords, criminal gangs or illegal migration syndicates", as UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan explained at the France-Afrique Summit, Bamako, Mali 3 December 2005.

Whilst United Nations' bureaucrats certainly recognise the problem, frequently there appears to be a disjunction between what appears in the research literature and the real problems on the ground. In the case of youth unemployment one is driven to suspect that this is partly because of the lack of half-way credible data about unemployment levels. Countries on the verge of civil war cannot produce jobs much less neat statistics about the lack of employment. Young people see most countries of West Africa as lands of 'non-

## Development and conflict

opportunity'. In Sierra Leone the proportion of young people lacking proper work exceeds 50%. The estimated rate of unemployment among youth in sub-Saharan Africa is thought to be three times higher than among older adults, millions of youths are grossly under-employed or compelled to work under poor conditions in the informal sector (UNOWA 2006: ix and 2).

Yet, finally, in 2009 the West African Co-ordinator of the Youth Employment Network can say: "unemployment, particularly among youth, is on the radar screen. It has always existed, but now, people are at least talking about it and trying to measure it". Beyond economics, there are strong cultural reasons for the neglect of youth unemployment, for West African cultures value age and expect young people to do what they are told – their needs do not have high priority. Polygamy, for example, gives multiple wives to old men whilst denying young men the chance to marry, which was one factor in the Sierra Leone civil war (Richards 1996). "In many developing countries, young people are coming of age in societies that lack stable government, economic growth, or basic material and physical security. In such circumstances, youth often turn away from the authority and ideology of older generations and seek to mobilize their own generation in search of solutions" (USAID 2005: 2).

It has been estimated that halving the rate of youth unemployment in sub-Saharan Africa could add up to 19% to Gross Domestic Product (UN s/2003/688). Youth who are able-bodied but unskilled, jobless and alienated, have been ready to take up arms in exchange for small amounts of money – together with the promise of recognition, loot and 'wives' – and are more likely to be drawn into the influence of warring factions or criminal gangs to gain this 'empowerment'. Youths are looking not just for a source of income but also for recognition and a sense of belonging (UNSG 2005). Because cross-border recruitment of young people for armed conflict is all too common in the arc of territory extending from Guinea-Bissau to Cote d'Ivoire, national statistics and national solutions are not enough (UNOWA 2006: 4). The UN's Youth Employment Network (YEN) stresses entrepreneurship; employability; equal opportunity and employment creation but before these admirable goals come security, law and order. They argue that revenues from natural resources such as oil, diamonds and timber could be used for employment generation but that assumes that governments have the welfare of their peoples in mind not their own hold on power. Well-intentioned governments could start by using food-for-work to re-build urban and rural roads. They could also work to replace child labour with youth labour – children are preferred not because they are cheaper but because they are more obedient. Liberia now has the revenue management system under the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program (GEMAP) which emphasises labour intensive public works. Senegal's successful public works and employment agency (AGETIP) model is now being expanded to ten more West African countries. Young people in West Africa are keen to join the modern world working with computers as in Ghana's Advanced Information Technology Institute, but for that to be a reality there has to be regular access to electricity

## Development and conflict

"People are not going to invest in countries of conflict, and without investment, both domestic and foreign, they are not going to have production. They're not going to have employment and it's a vicious circle" (Ibrahim Gambari, The Interdependent, Fall 2005).

"West African youths are on the average better educated than their parents. Unfortunately, this does not mean they possess more employable skills. Indeed, the reverse may be the case, especially for meeting the demands of stagnant local labour markets. The low level of enrolment in secondary schools is in large part responsible, and improvements in training programmes are essential"(UNOWA 2006: 21).

"Targeting vulnerable groups in order to make them employable is important. People with disabilities are one example, young women traumatized by rape another, and former fighters exposed to drugs a third" (UNOWA 2006: 23). "The first concern of West African governance is not the management of social demands, but the welfare of the rulers, and an approach that sees government as being over and above the struggle for spoils, rather than the principal instrument of the struggle, has drifted into unreality" (Clapham 1998: 495). Development agencies often appear to be operating in just such an unreal world, because they have to work with governments, so they cannot attack their corruption. This is where the language of governance is very useful: whereas to call a government minister or senior bureaucrat corrupt is unacceptable, it is possible to promote improved governance and transparency without causing a breach in relations. Zartman (2005: 284) argues that we need to deal "with conflict early, before poverty becomes discrimination and both governance and protest become privatized. As for need, creed, and greed, the ills that conflict breed: It is best to stop them early, lest the need feed creed and creed feed greed" – if only this were possible.

Sadly rural urban migration does not wait upon development. In Burkina Faso, 93% of migrants to cities are young people under 35 years in search of employment (Makha 2002). "Urbanization concentrates precisely that demographic group most inclined to violence: unattached young males who have left their families behind and have come to the city seeking for economic opportunities ... When young people are uprooted, jobless, intolerant, alienated, and have few opportunities for positive engagement, they represent a ready pool of recruits for groups seeking to mobilize violence" (USAID 2005: 7 and 2). There are still very few opportunities for constructive political engagement that are open to young people in West Africa, unless their relatives are members of the elite. All too often the elites have used young people to intimidate rivals, destabilize the opposition and collect money for 'political campaigns'. Once created, such youth gangs do not necessarily remain under the control of their political masters. Subaltern coups are prevalent in West Africa precisely because young members of the armed forces believe that they have been suppressed by those above them (Kandeh 2004).

## Development and conflict

The academic world has moved on beyond the sterile debate over greed and grievance as causative factors in civil war (Berdal and Malone 2003; Arnson and Zartman 2005). Who is to say whether unemployed youths who join rebel groups which are given to looting are more motivated by the grievances associated with unemployment, or the greed of opportunity, or even the desire for camaraderie and a purpose in life however destructive? Still, ever more sophisticated analyses of greed and opportunity factors have been accompanied by a relative neglect of grievance (but see, for example, Fearon Kasara and Laitin 2006). This is partly a consequence of data problems, especially in relation to the quantification of un- and under-employment. Young people who have no jobs and no access to training do have a justified grievance. "With 60 % of Sierra Leonean youths unemployed according to the government ... some youth employment experts fear young people's growing disaffection combined with chronic poverty and high cost of living pose a threat to stability... There is so much unemployment, marginalisation, so many school dropouts; and all these factors helped fuel the war in the first place" (IRIN 2009). The Secretary General's Report (UN 2009) defined youth employment as the "most acute concern" and called for the creation of employment opportunities to prevent the marginalization of young people. Young people under the age of 15 make up 45% of Sierra Leone's population, however, the government only earmarked 1.4 % of its 2008 budget for youth issues. This may be because they are expecting the donors to step up – but it still contributes to grievance. However, President Koroma has finally established the long promised Youth Commission with the Youth Commissioner leading one integrated programme in support of creating youth employment opportunities in various economic sectors in cooperation with several line ministries, the World Bank, ILO, UNIDO and the European Community (which may be inevitable, but is also very demanding in terms of co-ordination).

## EDUCATION

Whilst there have been some attempts to look at the impact of civil war upon education (Lal and Thyne 2007), there has been less interest in education as a causal factor in civil war. Collier et al. (2003) have argued that secondary education for youths reduces the risk of war, because it raises the opportunity cost of becoming a rebel, but this is only true where there is paid work available for those with secondary education. For Sierra Leone, pre-war 1989 school enrolment in individual chiefdoms is strongly negatively related to war violence but rather than this being interpreted as due to lower recruitment costs for fighters who were paid largely in loot, it could be reflecting local grievances against the state and ruling elite (Bellows and Miguel 2006: 6). In a much cited article, Krueger and Maleckova (2003: 119) enquired: "Education, Poverty and Terrorism: Is there a Causal Connection?" and concluded that "any connection between poverty, education and terrorism is indirect, complicated and probably quite weak".

## Development and conflict

For Sierra Leone there is now a whole literature devoted to the question of the educational backgrounds and the associated motivations of those who fought, especially with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). On the one side is Paul Richards (1996) who emphasises the high educational levels, ideology and rationality of the leader cadres and on the other side are local writers such as Ibrahim Abdullah (1998:21-22) who argues that “the hard-core RUF ‘intellectual(s)’ is drawn from a stratum of Sierra Leonian society that is hooked on drugs, alcohol and street gambling. They have very limited education and are prone to gangster type of activities – sometimes acting as clients of strong ‘men’ in society or leading political figures and government officials”. They are known in Mends as “njiahunghia ngorngesia” that is unruly youth or social misfits (Muane and Abdullah 1998; African Development 1997). Whatever their motives, one notorious action of the RUF was the laying waste of Njala University College. This may indeed have started as an exercise to burn down the administration buildings to destroy the records showing that some leaders had never graduated.

Both sides agree that “Richards is correct in singling out the deepening crisis of youth and their exclusion from the social mainstream as important factors in explaining the easy appeal of the RUF among certain strata of youth ... the political statement of the RUF, (was) drawn up by expelled radical university students” (Bangura 1998: 32). What had happened, as the state’s budget shrank, was that even within an ever diminishing pie the proportion going to education, health and housing fell.

Table 2 Percentages of Sierra Leone Budget Devoted to Social Expenditures

Budget Year	Education	Health	Housing
1974-75	15.6	6.6	4.8
1988-89	8.5	2.9	0.3

Source: Budget Papers

Yet the number of secondary school pupils rose from 16,414 in 1969 to 95,709 in 1990 despite the fact that it was estimated that there were only some 6,000 of these secondary graduates in paid employment in 1985 (Karoma 1997). “By 1990 it had become impossible even for university graduates to secure jobs in the public sector, and this at a time when the private sector was downsizing” (Abdulla 1997: 48). Partly fuelled by the drug culture, the urban unemployed once known as the “rarray boys” had moved on to being “savis man” (street wise) sharing the music of “sistem dread” which voiced the common opposition to the system.

One analysis of regional inequalities and civil conflict in twenty-one Sub-Saharan countries 1986-2004 using Demographic Health Survey (DHS) data has shown that “low educational levels and high levels of intra-regional socioeconomic inequalities are positively associated with conflict ...relative deprivation seems

## Development and conflict

to be particularly conflict provoking in regions with abundant natural resources" (Ostby et al. 2006: Abstract).

In a stimulating review of the statistical sensitivity of empirical results on civil war onset Hegre and Sambanis (2006) take war onset as their dependent variable, internal armed conflict onset, population, GDP per capita and years in peace as their core variables and then examine a whole range of more than eighty concept variables. These variable relate to ethnic fragmentation; ethnic dominance/polarization; level of democracy; inconsistency of political institutions; political instability; political system; centralization; neighbourhood political economy; region; neighbourhood war; growth; economic policy; social welfare; resources; terrain, geography, population distribution; militarization; time and colonial war history. "Decreasing income by one standard deviation increases the risk of civil war by 65%" (Hegre and Sambanis 2006:524). This is a very robust finding. Poverty really does lead to conflict.

## CAN AN ARMY BE TOO SMALL ?

In the context of a peace conference it may seem perverse or worse to suggest that it is possible for developing countries to have armies that are too small. Yet this can be the case for two reasons: (1) because the army is not big enough to dissuade rebels/ coup attempts; (2) because an army can help to give employment, training and purpose in life to youth. In the other direction, spending too much on the military can prevent vital expenditure on social infrastructure. However, it is not a simple case of either/or, of barracks versus workshops, because of the way in which military expenditure which is focused on human resource development rather than imported military hardware ('toys for the boys') can serve an important nation building function if it is used for bonding different ethnic groups in pursuit of a common purpose. Equally, expenditure on practical skills training for the military can also be very useful for the community at large. [Immediately post independence, in francophone Africa, those who had been trained by the French military often became village leaders.]

Table 3: Active Troop Numbers and Military Expenditure as a Percentage of GDP

	Actual Budget 2005 US \$	Troop Numbers	Active troops per 1,000 pop+	1988 %	1993 %	1998 %	2003 %	2007 %
Benin	46.8	4,550	0.5	2.3	N/A	0.7	1	? check

## Development and conflict

						1999		
Burkina Faso	63.8	6,000	0.4 (3.4)	1.9	1.5	(1.1)	1	1.3
Cameroon	223.0	23,100	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.4
Chad #	55.5	30,350	2.7 (3.1)	N/A	3.3	1.2	1.5	(0.9)
Cote d'Ivoire	250.0	17,050	0.8 (1.1)	1.2	1.4	0.8 1997	1.5	1.5
Ghana	64.1	7,000	0.3	0.4	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.8
Guinea	250.0	9,700	1.0 (1.9)	1.2	1.4	0.8 1997	1.5	1.5
Guinea Bissau	12.1	9,250	5.7 (7.0)	0.2 1989	0.3 1994	1.4 conflict	2.9 (4.4 2000)	N/A (3.8 2005)
Liberia	5.5	13,000	3.7	N/A	19 29.7 = 1994	N/A	0.4 2004	0.5
Mali*	120.0	7,350	0.6 (0.9)	2.4	2.4est	1.9	2	2.1
Niger	32.8	5,300	0.3 (0.7)	N/A	1.2 1994	1.1	0.9	N/A
Nigeria	674.0	78,500	0.5 (1.0)	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.1	0.6
Sierra Leone	23.6	13,000	2.3	0.7	3	N/A (1.1 1997)	2.9	1.9 est
Togo	33.2	9,400	1.4	3.1	4	N/A	1.6	N/A

## Development and conflict

\$33.2			(1.4)					
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Sources: Active Duty =Center for Strategic and International Studies 2006

Expenditures = SIPRI Military Expenditure Database

+ Figures in brackets are for military plus reserves plus paramilitary

# Figures for Chad do not include exceptional defence spending funded by oil revenues outside the ordinary budget.

Figures for Mali are for Defence and Security.

Clearly one could write volumes about the accuracy or otherwise of these data (Omitoogun 2003). As the note for Chad makes clear, some governments have extra-budgetary sources of revenue, which they spend on the military and armaments. However, there are a number of points which it is worth making. These figures show military expenditure as a percentage of total GDP, not as a percentage of government budgets. Comparative proportions for developed countries are that the United States expends 4% of its GDP on military expenditure, whilst Australia spends 1.9%. Peaceful Sweden's expenditure has declined from 2.6% in 1988 to 1.4% in 2007 a range which bounds most of the expenditure levels found in this table. Percentages of 3% or above are exceptional. Countries which are engaged in civil wars understandably tend to have serious gaps in their data. If we take Sierra Leone as a case in point, data are not available for 1998 and 1999 because of the coup and subsequent civil war. Also it is not clear whether the data for before and after this period are based on exactly the same definition. What can be said is that, war years apart, Sierra Leone has not spent vast amounts on the military. In no peace year has it spent as much as \$30m which represents less than \$6 per capita (which is certainly significant for poor people but not vast). The reality was that Sierra Leone's autocratic rulers feared that the army might turn against them and preferred to rely upon a small but hopefully loyal presidential guard (Luke 1988). It is sometimes argued that larger states are less likely to be subject to civil war because there are significant economies of scale in providing security. Ghana, population 24 millions (2010), spends less than \$3 per capita on what is widely recognised as a highly efficient military.

The problem is not excessive military expenditure but corruption. Liberia was described as West Africa's "most failed state" by Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Walter Kansteiner (Kamara 2003 footnote 7). This was where a "general" was anyone with links to the President and capable of collecting fighters for the front for fees. In 2002, in the midst of the civil war Liberia had a current budget of US \$70 million, half of which was going to security - but allegedly its assets in Swiss and Burkinabe banks stood at US\$3.8 billion (i.e. more than those of Nigeria or South Africa). Yet 76% of the population were living on less than \$1 a day and unemployment was at 85%. Many civil servants had not been paid for

## Development and conflict

over a year. In 2003 Liberia was suspended from membership of the IMF – there were effectively no government services, but only those provided by relief agencies, NGOs and churches. Infant mortality was 117 per thousand, under 5 mortality 219 (i.e. one in four children died before their fifth birthday), 70% of population were illiterate (Kamara 2003: 12). The war had destroyed much but the base line had been very low, especially outside of the capital.

## THE NORTH SOUTH DIVIDE AND INTERNATIONAL CONTAGION

A common feature of the countries along the West African coast is the South/North divide. This results from the fact that the South tends to be predominantly Christian, better educated and more developed as compared to the North which tends to be predominantly Muslim with some adherents of traditional religions, limited education and very little infrastructure. This pattern crosses the region and is heavily re-enforced by the fact that the national capitals, where so much of development is focused, are on the coast. Mali and Niger are inland, but also suffer from impoverished Northern regions which believe themselves to be neglected and which resulted in the Malian Tuareg Rebellion which began in 1990 and ended in 1996 (although minor fighting still continues in the desert) and in the Tuareg War of 1990-1996 in Niger (again with some groups fighting on). One reason why the conflicts in the northern regions have generally not resulted in full-scale civil wars is because these regions are so poor in resources. Senegal, where it is the agriculturally rich southern Casamance region which tried to break away and Chad (South) and Nigeria (Delta) where it is the rich oil producing regions which want to secede are very different cases where regions want to receive superior treatment reflecting their rich resources rather than equal treatment despite their poverty (Ostby et al. 2006).

Often across West Africa the North-South divide is more important than national boundaries, which are highly porous and allow rebels to move from country to country and join in their neighbours' civil wars. "The recycling of rebels within the region remains a source of continuous fear, leading to concerns in Guinea and Sierra Leone that hundreds of fighters currently engaged in Cote d'Ivoire and those "reintegrated" into Liberia's various militias might return to add to the instability" in Guinea and Sierra Leone (Kamara 2003: 11). Collier (2004) has argued that, especially in Africa, natural resources fuel conflict. However, in this context it is important to understand that lootable natural resources such as diamonds can readily cross international borders – Sierra Leone's diamonds financed civil war in Liberia, even Ivory Coast (Ware and Ogunmola 2010).

## GHANA: THE LUCKY COUNTRY ?

In West Africa Ghana stands out for its high life expectancy and a good education rating demonstrating strong investment in its people. Its North is indeed significantly disadvantaged and has experienced several small, localized 'wars'. Still, Ghana has been able to survive several military coups without descending into civil war. This has been because, despite the coups, the national government

## Development and conflict

has continued to deliver basic services across the country and the national culture has maintained an acceptable level of governance in terms of law and justice. Ghana's bureaucracy is not fully Westernized but it does manage to deliver functioning services (Lokko 2008).

In 1997 the Brookings Institution published a study: *Governance as Conflict Management: Political Violence in West Africa* (Zartman 1997), which argued, through an introduction by Zartman and individual chapters written by indigenous political scientists, that the Ivory Coast was a successful example of the management of divergent interests whilst Ghana was said to be hovering on the brink of civil conflict. It is worth examining this text, not to ridicule past mistakes, but to show that even well-informed and well-intentioned locals (the Ghana chapter was written by Adu Boahen who had been jailed for his opposition to the government in 1978) can be wrong. Boahen, probably correctly, attributed the generally extraordinary non-violence of Ghanaian politics to its emphasis on the mundane issues of governance and economic welfare rather than on ethnicity and religion and to the tolerance and good sense of the Ghanaian people: all factors which it is difficult to measure in numerical terms..

Arnim Langer (2007) argues that good handling of "horizontal inequities" between ethnic groups in Ghana explains why the prevailing socio-economic inequalities between the North and South have not resulted in a violent conflict at the national level. Essentially this is because Ghana's rulers have ruled Ghana as one nation, leading a culturally/ethnically neutral state, even with the continuing tradition of the President rotating the wearing of traditional costumes from different ethnic groups. Presidents have also taken care to ensure that Northerners have been included in successive governments roughly in proportion to their demographic weight. Over a long period there has been a tradition of a Southern President being matched with a Vice President from the North. Nigeria has also rotated Muslim and Christian Presidents.

Recognising the importance of moving towards equalizing access to resources, President Rawlings set up specific projects in the North including the extension of the national electricity grid; improving road access; the establishment of the University of Development Studies in Tamale; and increased expenditure on local education. Subsequent measures to favour the North under World Bank funded initiatives were largely unsuccessful in economic terms, but they worked well in reducing the political salience of the North/South divide because they showed that the North was not being forgotten.

When asked to describe themselves, Ghanaians from a range of ethnic groups refer to their religion, their occupation, their gender and their nationality before mentioning their ethnicity or their languages (Langer 2007:19). Equally eight out of ten of the organizations (religious, professional and educational) to which Ghanaians belong are ethnically mixed in their membership. This is significant in a region where "home-town" organizations often play a significant role in providing services such as education and health (Honey and Okafors 1998).

## Development and conflict

As Brown (1982) argued there has been no development of "Northernness" as a basis for political cohesion and no North versus South patterning of political alignments in Ghana. The same used to be true of Cote d'Ivoire but whereas only 16% of Ghanaians are Muslim rising to 42% in the North, some 60% of Cote d'Ivoire's North and 70% of Nigeria's North are Muslim allowing for a much clearer religious divide. Although Cote d'Ivoire was confronted with severe socio-economic inequalities between North and South from its independence in 1960, serious north-south tensions did not emerge until the northerners also became increasingly politically excluded and disenfranchised from the mid-1990s onwards (Langer 2004).

Ghana experienced coups d'etat in 1966, 1972, 1979 and 1981, and multi-party elections were re-introduced in 1992. The 1969, 1979 and 1982 Constitutions and the 2000 Political Parties Act were all deliberately designed to limit ethnic politics and oblige political parties to have national coverage. The provision for the President to appoint up to half of the Ministers from outside the Parliament is also intended to allow ethnic balancing of appointments.

## GENDER ISSUES AND MATERNAL MORTALITY

It can be difficult to avoid a focus on masculine needs in examining factors contributing to civil war. Although there undoubtedly female fighters in West Africa's civil wars they constitute a minority and many have been coerced in their participation (Caprioli 2003). Indeed, one could make an argument, however unpopular with many donors, that in the short to medium term a focus on young men is justified.

Yet the status of women as reflected in indicators such as female education and maternal mortality provides clear insights as to health of society as a whole. A recent mega-study of maternal mortality trends 1980-2008 (Hogan et al. 2010) provides a good independent source of information on social trends across West Africa. Overall, the picture is of modest but inconsistent declines in the numbers of women paying the ultimate sacrifice and dying of pregnancy related causes. For mainland countries, maternal mortality rates per 100,000 births in 2008 range from lows of 281 in the Gambia and 332 in Burkina Faso to highs of 1,065 in Chad and 1,033 in Sierra Leone. If we take rates below 500 as representing a good position (at least by West African standards, which remain amongst the most dire in the world) then the good performers: Burkina Faso 332, Senegal 401, Ghana 409, Togo 447 and Benin 469 all share one common feature: they have not experienced a nation wide civil war (Senegal has had a localised war in Casamance). At the other extreme, the worst performing countries with rates above 800: Chad 1065, Sierra Leone 1,033, Cote d'Ivoire 944, Guinea 860, Liberia 859, Guinea Bissau 804, have been heavily afflicted with civil war. Going back to 1980, Guinea 1,140, Guinea Bissau 1,155, Mauritania 1,491, Niger 1,083 and Sierra Leone 1,240 all had rates above 1,000 but whilst

Table 3 Maternal mortality rates over time (maternal deaths per 100,000 births).

## Development and conflict

	1980	1990	2000	2008
Benin	829	588	551	469
Burkina Faso	541	488	456	332
Cameroon	810	523	886	705
Chad	978	891	1,205	1,065
Cote d'Ivoire	590	580	1,116	944
The Gambia	898	528	396	281
Ghana	731	549	538	409
Guinea	1,140	965	976	860
Guinea Bissau	1,155	966	809	804
Liberia	645	729	1,055	859
Mali	1,125	831	807	670
Mauritania	1,491	1,295	866	712
Niger	1,083	890	754	601
Nigeria	516	473	694	608
Senegal	670	542	491	401
Sierra Leone	1,240	1,044	1,200	1,033
Togo	600	540	552	447
Total	683	582	742	629

Source: Extracted from Hogan et al, 2019 Table 3.

Mali and Mauritania managed to halve their rate of maternal mortality, Sierra Leone has stayed much where it was and Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia have experienced drastic deteriorations in women's access to safe pregnancy. Ghana and the Gambia both represent good examples of steady declines over time. Banjul the capital of the Gambia has a township with the historically telling name of Half-die, a name that is now happily outdated.

Another aspect of the status of women, which is linked to poverty and conflict is fertility. During conflicts in West Africa women lose their access to health services and the means of contraception (and protection from HIV/AIDS). They

## Development and conflict

may also experience less desire to control their fertility with life all around them so uncertain (see literature review in Agadjanian and Prata 2001). "States with high fertility are twice (2.073) as likely to experience internal conflict than those states with low fertility rates, while controlling for other possible causes of conflict" (Caprioli 2003: 15). Fully 88% of the Uppsala/PRIO data set of conflicts within states are in states with a fertility rate of 3.01 or above.

## THE CAUSES OF PEACE

Many studies have examined the causes of war. Far fewer have looked at the causes of peace (which are not necessarily the mirror image of the causes of war). The Global Peace Index (GPI) only ranks 31 sub-Saharan African countries. Of these Ghana ranks fourth (52<sup>nd</sup> world-wide) and Botswana first (34<sup>th</sup> world-wide). Towards the bottom are Somalia which is last in Africa (142<sup>nd</sup> out of 144 world-wide) and Chad at twenty-eighth (138<sup>th</sup> world-wide) and Nigeria at twenty-fifth (129<sup>th</sup> world-wide) but Cote d'Ivoire is twentieth (117<sup>th</sup> world-wide). Just these figures are enough to suggest the problems in ranking countries for their peacefulness: Cote d'Ivoire which is still teetering on the brink of civil war ranks well above Nigeria apparently because Nigeria has a large army – which has been extensively used for peace-keeping! This paper has essentially argued that the causes of peace in West Africa have much to do with wise rulers. Good economic trends help but only if the increased wealth is somewhat shared and used to provide for the basic needs of the populace.

## CONCLUSION

"Youth who are never integrated into community and social structures, or who never acquire the skills needed for peaceful and constructive adult lives, are at high risk. A deprived, frustrated, or traumatized youth cohort, if left without help, can continue to foment conflict for decades" (USAID 2005: 4). No state in West Africa is either developed or middle income. In order to move up in the world and to provide a better life for their citizens, the first essential is for these countries to stop moving backwards through the impact of civil war and move forwards in terms of education, health and employment. For such an advance to be possible, governments need to do far more for the great majority of their disadvantaged citizens and far less for the small elite of power holders and their relatives, the chosen ones who have access to overseas travel and international bank accounts. Good governance is therefore necessary but, contrary to popular supposition amongst many in the development community, there is little evidence that democracy is the sole route to good governance in the West African cultural context. Ghana has done quite a good job of delivering development almost irrespective of the form of government. Ivory Coast did markedly better in terms of development indicators under an autocratic government than under the current democracy which is tearing the country asunder. Liberia and Sierra Leone, possibly because they are too small to be viable, have yet to demonstrate that they can deliver economic development

## Development and conflict

under any political regime. Donors from outside Africa, who wish to be helpful, have to choose between the least bad alternatives in a region where there often appears to be little that is good on offer at the national level. They also find themselves having to turn a blind eye to the numerous imperfections of those governments and leaders with which they have to deal. West Africa has yet to find a Mandela or, in most cases, even a workaday, mostly honest President with vision. We will never know whether Ivory Coast could have avoided armed conflict if President Houphouët-Boigny had been succeeded by a nephew able to continue his policies and his skills in balancing various ethnic interests - this is at least arguably the case. It is relatively easy to know what needs to be done; much harder to know how to achieve the desirable goals and hardest of all to find the just rulers who will stay the course on the road to sustainable development for the next generation.

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