Child Reconciliation in Post-Conflict Sierra Leone

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Over the past 60 years, intrastate conflicts have vastly outnumbered interstate conflicts (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2010). The past two decades alone have witnessed a high number of intrastate conflicts (UCDP, 2010), and evidence suggests that in addition to their prominence, these conflicts are becoming the longest lasting historically (Collier et al., 2003, p.93). Despite their name, intrastate conflicts are rarely contained within borders, as there is a spill-over effect in neighbouring countries, undermining political stability and socio-economic development, leading to a range of ills, including a high numbers of refugees and challenges to public health (Collier et al., 2003, p.2). Whether ending in peace agreements, ceasefires, or victory, intrastate conflicts leave both victims and perpetrators living together in the same state. A unique challenge in the aftermath of such conflicts is overcoming antagonism between former belligerents and finding ways for them to live and work peacefully within the same border. It is no surprise, then, that the field of conflict management has in recent years focused on ways former antagonists can accommodate one another within the same geographical space where there are no clear victors to dictate terms of peace.

Transitional justice initiated after intrastate conflict can be both complicated and messy. These processes mark an attempt to restore the moral fabric of society after violent conflict (Stovel, 2010), which may have been severely torn by prolonged fighting and atrocities. Since infrastructures and systems are often destroyed during conflict, transitional justice processes are frequently created from scratch in the aftermath of chaos, and architects of these processes face numerous challenges. Often, countries that have been entrenched in conflict are home to several different culture groups with competing traditions and beliefs. In order to usher in peace, transitional justice must respect traditions and attempt to ensure that all components of society, even competing ones, are included in the process. Most intrastate conflicts include psychological damage resulting from the dehumanization of the “other”, and transitional processes are tasked with the seemingly impossible assignment of reversing distrust, disrespect, and hate between former enemies. Transitional processes are often faced with an enormous number of offenses and perpetrators; therefore compromises frequently have to be made (Stover & Valiñas, 2010, p.12). In their attempts to create peace, amnesty provisions are often negotiated as part of peace agreements, ultimately limiting transitional justice options once peace has arrived (Stover & Valiñas, 2010, p.13). Time can be a challenge, and many transitional justice processes take several years before they are implemented. Likewise, transitional justice processes often drag on for years or even decades, leading to frustration and dwindling respect for the process. Finally, resources often pose the biggest challenge to transitional justice initiatives. Implementing transitional justice can be extremely expensive, and fundraising often becomes a primary task. Despite its many challenges, transitional justice may help maintain peace and ensure that former enemies can live peacefully after conflict.

There are a number of remedies in the domain of transitional justice that can be exercised as peacebuilding strategies in the aftermath of violent conflict, including retributive justice, restorative justice, and reconciliation (Clark, 2008, p.332). Retributive justice holds those criminally responsible for wartime actions, and due to the sheer number of offenses and perpetrators during conflict, prosecutors usually focus on those who are guilty of the worst human rights violations. These are often implemented by international tribunals because local courts are often left incapable or incompetent after prolonged conflict or repressive regimes. Victims do not play a role in retributive processes, which often leaves them feeling neglected or ignored by the process, and does little to address their psychological needs. Examples of retributive justice in post-conflict transitions include the 1945 Nuremburg trials, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and the

International Criminal Court (ICC). Their cost is often their largest impediment: by the end of 2009, the ICTY had spent over 1.79 billion dollars, at a cost of 19 million dollars per accused, while the ICTR had spent 1.4 billion dollars, at a rate of 26 million dollars per accused (Jalloh, 2011, p.430). Justice after violent conflict often comes at an astronomical cost.

Restorative justice has gained interest in recent years as a conflict management tool. Founded on Aboriginal conflict techniques (Clark, 2008, p.339), restorative justice recognizes that offences create harm to people and relationships, and brings victims, perpetrators, and the community together in dialogue to try to collectively repair harm. Rather than considering the offense in isolation, as retributive justice does, restorative justice considers the context in which the offense took place, while acknowledging that offenders can simultaneously be victims (Stover & Valiñas, 2010, p.13). Restorative justice often occurs at the community level, and there are many examples of grassroots endeavours in post-conflict societies, such as the *gacaca* courts in post-genocide Rwanda and the "Theatre for Ethnic Dialogue" in Serbia (Clark, 2008, p.343). Restorative justice is increasingly gaining thrust as a tool for children: for youth criminal justice matters, family justice, including family group conferencing, and as a schoolyard conflict tool. Restorative justice, unlike retributive justice, gives equal weight to victims, offenders, and community members who have been affected by harm, and invites all stakeholders to participate. Likewise, restorative justice presents a competing paradigm to retributive justice as it is based on the accused taking responsibility for his or her actions, admitting guilt, and showing genuine remorse (Lynch, 2010, p.170).

Finally, reconciliation has become a familiar feature of the peace-building landscape, and has been widely adopted as a means of healing the wounds of war and past injustices. National reconciliation initiatives (NRIs) are initiated by governments and generally take place throughout a subject country (Hayner, 2001, p.88). A form of NRI that has gained currency is the truth and reconciliation commission (TRC). TRCs are usually state-created ventures that can embrace local healing methods while attempting to bring about reconciliation and mutual understanding. These public forums attempt to rectify harm that has occurred during prolonged conflict or through systematic policies. TRCs have five main characteristics: they investigate abuse, they focus on the past, they have an official mandate, they are temporary, and they are frequently created during a period of political transition (Hayner, 2001, p.14). Although they can be used as an alternative to justice in the traditional sense, they often integrate aspects of community justice through an understanding of where responsibility for offenses lie, and frequently include reparation programs for victims. Although it is not always possible to bring perpetrators and victims together, reconciliation initiatives often do when possible, therefore employing some aspects of restorative justice. Reconciliation is centered on the community coming together in dialogue to discuss and overcome violent conflict. It has been suggested that ultimately, reconciliation after prolonged violence can only be realized when retributive justice and restorative justice are blended to create a unique transformational process (Drumbl, 2000, p.296). The first TRCs occurred in Latin America in the 1980s, including in Argentina, which implemented a National Commission to investigate and understand the mass disappearance of people at the hands of government. The first exercises in truth and reconciliation have largely been criticized as lacking transitional thrust, since repressive governments remained in power (Hayner, 2001, p.201). Likewise, early TRCs, including Argentina and Chile, provided reparations to victims in the form of pensions, scholarships, and free social services, which was seen as a way to buy victim support in the wake of general amnesty for military personnel mainly responsible for violence. TRCs have become increasingly prominent as a peacebuilding tool in countries facing intrastate conflicts, particularly since the highly publicized exercise carried out by South Africa almost two decades ago, which was at the time considered to be the most ambitious effort in truth and reconciliation (Roper & Barria, 2009, p.376).

Reconciliation in Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone, in West Africa, employed reconciliation as part of its peacebuilding strategy. At one time a well-functioning British colony, Sierra Leone struggled in the latter half of the 20th century with bad governance and corrupt politicians who degraded government, plundered the nation's resources, and stifled democracy in the country. The country's 11-year conflict was borne out of frustration about the restrictive and corrupt government, the lack of human rights, abject poverty, and greed, bolstered by a large reserve of diamonds. Sierra Leonean rebels calling themselves the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone (RUF) infiltrated the country in March 1991. The conflict had several distinct phases; although the conflict was fought between rebels and government forces in the

beginning stages, civilians soon became the primary targets of violence from all factions. Women and girls were singled out for rape, with many forced into sexual slavery for armed groups; over 60 percent of girls involved in fighting were forcibly married and acted as 'bush wives' during the conflict (McKay & Mazurana, 2004, p.92). Children and young people were abducted and forcibly recruited as fighters by both rebel groups and the government forces; in order to ensure their submission, many were forced to kill their parents or family members, so that they would be shunned by their community if they did escape. Many children and adults were drugged into complacency, and branded with the RUF mark in order to prevent their escape or to stigmatize them if they did. Pregnant women were targeted for atrocities and torture. When villages were looted for supplies and goods, entire families were locked inside their burning houses to die. Infrastructure was completely destroyed. When the RUF began to indiscriminately amputate civilian limbs, widespread terror spread through the country. This scheme began as an attempt to prevent civilians from voting, as a thumbprint was needed to vote, but later evolved into a strategy spreading fear and panic. On January 6, 1999, rebels invaded the capital city Freetown, surrounding themselves by abducted civilians who were forced to act as "human shields" (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.62). The level and intensity of the violence and enormous number of civilian victims made it clear that significant peacebuilding strategies would be necessary post-conflict.

A turning point in the conflict was the signing of the Lomé Peace Accord on July 7, 1999 (Schabas, 2003, p.1035). Preceded by two failed peace agreements, the Lomé Accord was agreed to by the RUF and the Government of Sierra Leone (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.62). The Lomé Accord included an Amnesty Provision, which granted immunity for crimes committed during the conflict in exchange for peace, an essential criterion for garnering rebel support (Schabas, 2003, p.1035). In recognition of the amnesty clause and with consideration to the devastating violence civilians were forced to endure for eight years at the point of signing, the Lomé Accord specifically outlined the need for a TRC as the alternative to justice, and a way to advance national reconciliation (Schabas, 2003, p.1036). The primary mandate of the TRC was to "create an impartial historical record of events in question as the basis for the task of preventing their recurrence" (TRC Act, 2000, p. 10), promote a mutual understanding of the conflict, and to encourage national reconciliation in the fragile country. The Lomé Accord also included a ceasefire agreement, which allowed for United Nations peacekeepers to assist with disarmament and demobilization programs. Although not immediately successful, the Lomé Accord laid the foundation for peace in Sierra Leone.

Despite the ceasefire agreed to in the Lomé Accord, fighting continued on. Due to violations of terms set out in the peace agreement, amnesty was revisited, and was eventually rescinded when the Government of Sierra Leone requested that the international community aid with the creation of a criminal tribunal to charge those most responsible for the war. Some have argued that this constituted a breach of the Lomé Accord by the government and the United Nations, and that it could undermine future peace talks (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.110). Nevertheless, Sierra Leone and the United Nations created an international criminal tribunal, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, to render judgement on particularly egregious cases which occurred in the latter half of the war. Although the Special Court and the TRC worked simultaneously, the Special Court tribunal was independent of the TRC, and came into existence on January 16, 2002 (Jalloh, 2011, p.401). Two days later, on January 18, 2002, the war was finally recognized as having ended, when 3,000 weapons were ceremonially burned at Lungi and all leaders of the conflict came out in support of peace (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.200). In all, the conflict saw six different governments in power through two military coups, a palace coup, and an election; and between 75,000 and 200,000 deaths (Denney, 2009, p.154). Thousands more people were injured, maimed, and displaced (Zach-Williams, 2006, p.119).

Children in Sierra Leone

What made Sierra Leone's post-conflict experience unique was the inclusion of children in the national reconciliation process. Children played a complicated role in the war in Sierra Leone, both as victims and perpetrators of violence. It has been suggested that ten thousand children were forced to join the armed forces (Sesay, 2003, as cited in Zack-Williams, 2006, p.123). While children were used by all of the fighting parties in Sierra Leone, they were especially recruited by the RUF and AFRC (Sierra Leone TRC, UNICEF, & UNAMSIL, 2004). Half of all RUF fighters were children between 8 and 14 years of age (Zack-Williams, 2006, p.123), while children between the ages of 10 and 14 were especially singled out for abduction by armed groups (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004a, p.14). Children made up half the population in Sierra Leone (Denov, 2010, p.792), and therefore could not be ignored by the reconciliation

process. In order to reconcile those affected by war, Sierra Leone became the first country to include children in the national reconciliation processes, creating a process for children in addition to the mainstream TRC. The child's process included interviews with children to create a historical record that took into account their unique experience. It also created several child-friendly learning tools, including the *Child-Friendly Version of the TRC, the TRC Report: A Senior Secondary School Version*, a video, and a picture book about the war (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004a, p.7). Although the TRC was one reconciliation initiative, there were distinct differences between the regular process for adults and the child's process. The child's process recognized that even if they had perpetrated crimes during the conflict, all children in Sierra Leone were primarily victims, and therefore were only categorized within the child's process as victims and witnesses (ICTJ & UNICEF, 2010, p.11). Therefore, the child's process did not take the form of restorative justice-based reconciliation activities, but rather adapted the process to assume all children, regardless of role, were victims of the conflict. Although the mainstream TRC employed both public hearings and private interviews, the child's process utilized only private interviews and closed hearings in order to ensure full anonymity for participants, both for security reasons and to prevent stigmatization. For the purpose of this research, therefore, the two processes of the TRC are considered to be separate and distinct.

Chapter 1: The Research

Purpose of the Research

Currently, there exists a large research gap relating to children and post-war reconciliation. Much of the present focus on children has been on traumatic events they have witnessed or experienced. There has been little research on the impacts of reconciliation efforts. Research has been done on past TRCs and their implications, both short- and long-term, for participants (Byrne, 2004; Verdoolaege, 2005). However, because past TRCs have historically excluded children, there have been no opportunities to examine children's roles in national reconciliation initiatives. Since the end of the conflict in Sierra Leone, numerous studies have examined former child combatants and ongoing reintegration efforts (Zach-Williams, 2006; Medeiros, 2006; Betancourt, Agnew-Blais, Gilman, Williams, & Ellis, 2010; Betancourt, Brennan, Rubin-Smith, Fitzmaurice, & Gilman, 2010; Denov, 2010). The focus of these studies has been on mental health, rehabilitation and reintegration after the trauma of war, rather than examining effects of reconciliation initiatives. Furthermore, much of the current research focuses on child soldiers; there has been little consideration for children who did not participate as a member of armed forces, or those who participated to a lesser degree in the conflict than those who bore arms. This research project, therefore, is an attempt to fill some of the gap in the current research, and to initiate discussion about children and young adults living in post-conflict countries, their correlation to peace processes, and their involvement in reconciliation initiatives. As separate child rights are finally recognized and entrenched in international law, and with the gradual inclusion of children in reconciliation processes, there is a need for continual, systematic examination of children's roles in peacebuilding. As children are increasingly welcomed into reconciliation processes, their roles should be analyzed to maximize their contribution and the effectiveness they gain as participants. Although children can unquestionably benefit by being included in reconciliation programs, they also can contribute their experiences, history, and thoughts on conflict, but research must continually evaluate to ensure their safety. If children can be safely included in peacebuilding processes and reconciled along with the remainder of the population, their participation could potentially help to break conflict cycles in the future.

Sierra Leone was chosen as the country of study for two reasons. First, it was the first country to systematically include children in its national reconciliation activities. Since Sierra Leone's TRC was completed, there have been other countries that have included children in reconciliation activities, such as Timor-Leste, Liberia and Guatemala. Sierra Leone was the first country to include children in all aspects of the reconciliation strategy, and the first to create a child-friendly version. Children played a large role in Sierra Leone's national reconciliation initiative, going far beyond simply providing statements, as they were involved in shaping the TRC process itself and providing recommendations for their version of a peaceful Sierra Leone. Seven years have gone by since the completion of Sierra Leone's TRC in 2004; in comparison, Liberia's TRC only completed in 2009. Sierra Leone has been in transition for several years and participants and nonparticipants alike have had the time to be able to make sense of its national reconciliation processes.

The second reason for choosing Sierra Leone as the country of study is the uniqueness of both its conflict and the peacebuilding methods employed in the country. The conflict was distinct in length, intensity, and with the mass inclusion of children as child soldiers. Likewise, the peacebuilding and reconciliation processes were unique and marked innovative attempts for the field of transitional justice. This includes the simultaneous creation of a TRC and a Special Court and the inclusion of children in the reconciliation process, as well as the number of versions of the TRC report that were created. Sierra Leone did not use a cookie-cutter approach to reconciliation, but rather implemented distinctive components that represented the country, its unique makeup and cultures in its quest to maintain and embrace peace and unity. As a case study, both the conflict in the country and its post-conflict reconciliation strategies provide enormous opportunities for research and understanding. Sierra Leone presents unique opportunities to expand scholarship in transitional justice, the role of the child in post-conflict healing, relationships between truth commissions and criminal tribunals in the aftermath of civil war, understanding about peacebuilding, and the quest for reconciliation.

Research Questions

In order to assess the impact of including children in its post-conflict reconciliation activities, I proposed the following main research question: Was the Sierra Leone TRC Child's process effective in stimulating reconciliation among child participants? A comparison of child participants of the TRC with those who were unable to participate would give some understanding of the success of child reconciliation, as well as whether national reconciliation was successful in permeating the country. If participants and non-participants of the TRC child's process display signs of reconciliation in the form of changed emotions and attitudes regarding the conflict, the success of the TRC can be evaluated. Because only a small number of children actually participated in the child's process of the TRC, the goal was to permeate the remainder of the country, and an examination of the two groups can provide some insight into whether this is the case.

A first sub-question is: Did the child's role during the conflict, that is, membership in an armed forces group, affect the outcome of reconciliation within TRC participants? Undoubtedly, membership in an armed forces group during the conflict has created increased barriers to reconciliation, and therefore an analysis of TRC participants' roles during the conflict is important. Although there were approximately 10,000 child members of armed forces groups, only 300 children participated in the TRC, not all of whom were members of an armed forces group. Therefore, only a small portion of each group was able to partake in the child's process, and a comparison of the two groups will give insight into whether membership in an armed forces group during the conflict affected or posed barriers to reconciliation. An examination of intrapersonal reconciliation would reveal whether the child's process, which treated the two different groups the same, was successful in achieving reconciliation in children who had vastly different experiences during the conflict.

A second sub-question is: Did reconciliation among adult and child participants differ due to the different TRC processes that were employed? This question is important because it analyses the differences between the two TRC processes, and whether they were successful in achieving similar outcomes. The goal of the TRC was to reconcile both adults and children, and therefore, an analysis of the two groups would be telling as to whether that goal was realized. Post-conflict, children and adults would have had a different understanding of the conflict; likewise, experiences would have differed between the two groups, and examining adult and child participants of the TRC may reflect on the processes that were employed in the search for reconciliation.

Methodology

The study was undertaken using an action research methodology, whereby those being studied participated in the design and implementation of the research (Bargal, 2008, p.18). Action Research is "a joint venture between external researchers with members over… a matter which is of genuine concern to them" (Eden & Huxham, 1996, p.75). Given the nature of the study, it was necessary for the people of Sierra Leone to have been actively involved in the project. In keeping with an action research design, the research was sponsored by a local Sierra Leonean organization, the Association for Children in Crisis (ACC). The ACC is a community-based NGO that works with orphans, former child soldiers, street children, youth, and women. They operate in Freetown and Magburaka, in the

Northern Province.

The research recognized that the TRCs in Sierra Leone were *processes of reconciliation*, designed to overcome the trauma of war through mutual understanding of the conflict. There also exists the concept of *individual reconciliation*, an understanding and coming-to-terms with experiences and personal trauma endured in the conflict at the intrapersonal level, and which ultimately affects behaviour at the interpersonal level. Intrapersonal reconciliation was used in this research as an indication of the reconciliation processes, measured by emotions and attitudes that were indicated through descriptions of the conflict, peace process, concept of reconciliation, perception of the reconciliation process in the country, and vision for Sierra Leone's future.

In light of the fact that the Sierra Leonean conflict began twenty years ago and ended over nine years ago, the majority of those who were children during the conflict are now young adults. The study therefore examined people who were children during the Sierra Leone conflict but are now young adults, born between 1978 and 1993. Those who were born in 1978 were 13 years old when the conflict began, 24 when the conflict ended, and 33 in 2011. Those born at the latter end of the spectrum, in 1993, were born two years after the conflict began, were 9 years of age when the conflict ended in 2002, and 18 years of age in 2011. Therefore, this group is now the youth of Sierra Leone, and, with the median age of 19 years of age in the country (CIA World Factbook, 2011), the majority of the population. Participants were volunteers from the community who agreed to participate in the research project, and the majority of respondents heard about the project through word of mouth.

In order to examine differences in responses between those who participated in the Child's Version TRC and those who participated in the mainstream version, I expanded the questionnaire to allow some respondents outside the specified age range. Therefore, a small percentage of participants were born prior to 1978. These participants were volunteers from the community, members of local organizations and NGOs, and those who were involved with the creation and implementation of the TRC.

Consequently, there were three main groups examined. The first group (Group 1) was comprised of people who were children during the conflict and participated in the TRC and related activities after the war. The second group (Group 2) was those who were children during the war who did not participate in any TRC activities. Participants who were not members of an armed group were sub-grouped into Group 1A or 2A, depending on their participation in the TRC, while subjects who identified as being members of an armed group, usually the RUF, were placed into sub-groups 1B or 2B. A small group of adults, born before 1978, was surveyed. These adults, along with those from the age-range of 1978 to 1993 who participated in the adult version of the TRC, made up the third group (Group 3). Group 3A participated in the mainstream TRC, while Group 3B did not. Although members of Group 3 identified their role in the conflict and whether they participated as a member of an armed force, this did not warrant subgroups as Groups 1 and 2. This was done for Groups 1 and 2 because participation in the conflict was measured to examine if it affected reconciliation during participation in the Child's process of the TRC.

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative research components. There was significant primary desk research, in order to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the Sierra Leone conflict, the peace processes, and the TRC processes. Further, data collection in the form of a short survey was delivered as a self-administered questionnaire and was completed by approximately 50 percent of those surveyed. Due to illiteracy in the country and a language barrier, the other half of the questionnaires were administered in the form of one-on-one interviews with ACC staff, conducted in Krio, the *lingua franca* of Sierra Leone. In these instances, the consent form was explained to the participant in Krio, in order to achieve free and informed consent. The multiple sources of data collection increased the research validity by utilizing the process of triangulation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, p.99). (See Appendix A for consent form and questionnaire.)

In order to protect the anonymity of participants, all participants were assigned coded numbers, which were logged on the consent forms. After completion of the survey, the consent forms were then manually separated from the survey results, in order to ensure confidentiality. All survey results were then logged into a Microsoft Excel file, and original survey results filed. Participants had the option to give a name, mailing address and/or email address on the consent form in order to be sent the results of the study, and these results were also logged into a Microsoft Excel file.

Originally, the research plan included conducting several focus groups, one for each subject group; however, once in the field, there were a variety of barriers that were encountered. First, language was an issue, as many of those who did not complete their education spoke limited English, and used Krio for communication. Although an English Pidgin, Krio still proved to create an unexpected language barrier to the research, and translation services provided by the ACC were used regularly. I also decided it would not be culturally appropriate to stage focus groups, and considering the sensitive subject matter being probed was concerned with maintaining participant anonymity. Therefore, focus groups were not utilized for the study.

Limitations

There were several limiting factors affecting implementation of the research program. First, the research could not be exhaustive. Since only a small percentage of the population actually took part in the mainstream and child`s version of the TRC in Sierra Leone, these small numbers were reflected in the small number of respondents of this study who participated in the TRC. A majority of participants in this study did not participate in the TRC, and therefore Group 2 made up the bulk of the survey respondents. This discrepancy led to small sample sizes when TRC participants were examined directly.

Second, the research was based out of Freetown, in the Western Area, and Magburaka, in the Northern Province, just north of Makeni. While a majority of the respondents were currently residing in the Western Area at the time of the survey, over a third of respondents were originally from the Northern, Southern, or Eastern Provinces of Sierra Leone. Due to logistics, the survey was not distributed outside of Freetown and Magburaka, and is therefore limited in its general application to the whole of the country. Language was also a factor, limiting respondents to those who could understand and respond in either English or Krio.

Time, logistics, and resources proved to be factors that also limited the research. Due to limited resources, the field research allotment of the study was limited to two months, affecting the capacity and reach of the study. Limited resources, as well as restrictions on movement during the rainy season prevented travel to the Southern and Eastern provinces to distribute the questionnaire.

Finally, the survey only examined the first two markers of intrapersonal reconciliation, attitude and emotions, without a systematic examination of the third, behaviour. An examination of behaviour would have required significantly more time and resources for the research. Further, an examination of behaviour beyond a self-administered questionnaire would have necessitated a change to the methodology to include a systematic observational study. This was simply not feasible due to the time, logistical, and resource limitations.

Chapter 2: Sierra Leone

A Brief History

Sierra Leone is a country of over 5.3 million people nestled against the Atlantic Ocean in West Africa, sharing a border with Guinea to the north and Liberia to the south (CIA World Factbook, 2011). As the oldest British colony in the region, Sierra Leone served as the capital for all British colonies in West Africa (Bangura, 2009, p.583), and served as a social experiment in both colonization and repatriation. Evidence has shown that as far back as 2500BC, the land was inhabited by the many indigenous tribes of Sierra Leone, which today include the Temne, Mende, Krio, Limba, Sherbro, Fula, Kuranko, Susu, Yalunka, Mandingos, Loko, Kono, Vai, Kisi, Krim, and Gola tribes (Manson & Knight, 2009, pp.29-35). In 1462, the land was first recorded by Portuguese explorers and given the name *Serra Lyoa*, or Lion Mountains (Manson & Knight, 2009, p.4). From the mid 16th century, export of human capital dominated as the primary mode of trade, due to the demand for labour for the plantations in North America. The slave trade flourished in the country, turning into an economy that all races participated in.

After slavery was declared illegal in England in 1772, a group of philanthropists in Britain went about creating an establishment in Sierra Leone for the repatriation of freed slaves. This was originally called Granville Town, but would later become known as Freetown (Bangura, 2009, p.584). The first group of repatriated slaves to arrive,

known as the Black Poor, came from Britain and landed in Sierra Leone on February 22, 1787, with 411 freed slaves and 60 white women. The second group, the Nova Scotians, were former American slaves who had fought in the civil war there alongside the British, arriving in Sierra Leone in 1792 with approximately 1200 people (Bangura, 2009, p.584). The third group was the Maroons, from Jamaica, who arrived in 1796 from Nova Scotia after being first repatriated there. The final repatriation of slaves was the Liberated Africans, who, after the abolition of the slave trade in Britain in 1807, were freed from ships along the Atlantic Ocean. Living among the other three groups in Freetown, this final group was viewed by the Black Poor, the Nova Scotians, and the Maroons as "unrefined", due to the fact that many of them spoke languages other than English (Bangura, 2009, p.585). This group was eventually relocated outside of Freetown and given access to Western education, ideas, and culture through the many British missionaries in the area.

Eventually, as original discord between the Black Poor, Nova Scotians, Maroons, and Liberated Africans subsided, intermarriages between the groups resulted in a hybrid culture, the Krio people (Bangura, 2009, p.585). In the 19th and early 20th centuries, this group became the Freetown elite, occupying important posts in government and civil society in partnership with the British. The Krios, having embraced Western education and culture, considered themselves superior to the other groups in the country, creating rifts between the Krio and non-Krio, including the numerous tribes in the country (Bangura, 2009, p.585).

Freetown was quietly colonized in 1808 by the British and infrastructure was developed to a western standard (Bangura, 2009, p.587). The Colony of Sierra Leone, which only encompassed modern day Freetown, had the best educational facilities in West Africa, including Fourah Bay College. This lead to Sierra Leone acquiring the title "the Athens of West Africa", as people would travel from abroad to enjoy western education in Africa. In 1866, the Colony of Sierra Leone became the British headquarters for all the British West African colonies: Nigeria, Ghana, and The Gambia (Bangura, 2009, p.586).

It was not until 1896 that Britain expanded its reach to the entire country of Sierra Leone beyond the original borders of Freetown, due to political pressure from traders who wanted protection from trade and tribal conflicts outside the Colony (Bangura, 2009, p.586). Beyond the borders of Freetown was declared a Protectorate, in order to prevent French seizure, and there were significant differences between the two areas. For one, those residing in the Colony were British citizens, while residents of the Protectorate were British Protected Persons, reinforcing long-standing disparity between Freetown and the rest of the country (Bangura, 2009, p.587). In 1924, a new constitution was created that combined both the Colony and Protectorate into one central administration with two political entities, based in Freetown (Bangura, 2009, p.587). Contrary to its intent, this move inflamed the rivalry between the urban and rural regions. The Protectorate was extremely underrepresented in government, despite being the largest region (Bangura, 2009, p.587). The decision to combine the entire country after neglecting the areas outside Freetown for so long meant that there was a serious discrepancy in development, infrastructure, opportunity and amenities between the two regions, which led to conflict and regional bias (Sheriff & Bobson-Kamara, 2005, p.18).

The British declared that the colonies of West Africa should eventually be bestowed to its people, although representation in government continued to grow as an issue (Manson & Knight, 2009, p.7). Krio dominance began to wane by the end of the 19th century, with Europeans taking over the majority of government positions, creating dissidence among the people. In order to battle inequality within government, several political parties formed, including the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) and the All People's Congress (APC). In order to prepare the country for independence, a new constitution was passed in 1947, merging the Colony and the Protectorate into one political entity (Sheriff & Bobson-Kamara, 2005, p.19). After several constitutions and general elections, Sierra Leone was granted political independence from Britain on April 27th, 1961, although the Queen of England remained the country's Head of State until 1971 (Bangura, 2009, p.590). At this time, Sierra Leone passed a Republic Constitution into law, replacing the Queen of England with a Sierra Leonean Head of State, and Sierra Leone became fully independent (Bangura, 2009, p.590).

In the 1960s and 70s, political changes rapidly began to take place. Past rifts and conflicts resurfaced, and ethnic and tribal divisions began to present themselves at the government level. The first government post-independence was the SLPP, and was characterized as a Mende government due to strong support from the southern and eastern

parts of the country, mostly inhabited by the Mende tribe. This label eventually began to materialise, giving rise to nepotism and tribalism in government (Sheriff & Bobson-Kamara, 2005, p.19).

Eventually, government began to become more limiting, and democracy was curbed in the country due to the ruling elite. Under the APC government of President Siaka Stevens, a One Party Republican Constitution was passed in 1978, banning all opposition parties in the country and creating an increasingly authoritarian and corrupt state (Bangura, 2009, p.590). Young university students who considered themselves revolutionaries began to assemble, and in the 1980s were given strong support from the Libyan government (Sheriff & Bobson-Kamara, 2005, p.37). Their revolutionary program included self-defence training courses in Libya and networking with like-minded insurgents from other countries in Africa (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.9).

One party rule remained in force until 1991, when a Multi Party Constitution called the Peter Tucker Constitution was passed, which allowed for opposition parties to coexist and opened the door to a democratic process in Sierra Leone. However, before it could be put into use, a conflict broke out, and the new constitution was suspended in 1992 after the first military coup, bringing a return to the one party system once again (Bangura, 2009, p.591). In 1996, Sierra Leone saw a return to the multi-party system for the first time since the 1970s, allowing elections and a democratic process to be re-established in the country. By 1991, when the conflict erupted, the APC party had monopolized Sierra Leone government for over 20 years. The ruling elite had implemented systematic ways to limit opposition participation in the process, while simultaneously exploiting the country`s resources, corrupting government, while quashing human rights and expression (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004, p.9). Bad governance was tolerated and ignored by the international community (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004, p.89). Ultimately, frustration developed about the political situation in the country and was used as a catalyst for war.

The Conflict

The conflict in Sierra Leone was an extremely violent and destructive one that began in 1991 and lasted until January 18, 2002 (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004, pp.9-10). It was characterized by guerrilla violence, forced conscription of child soldiers—sometimes as young as five years old—and the horrendous torture, maiming and/or execution of unarmed civilians. The political, social, and economic climate in Sierra Leone presented rebels with the perfect opportunity to launch an assault on the country. The conflict was a battle for both power and resources, and was made possible by the degradation of government and establishment of corruption at the highest levels with no regard for human rights. Though ethnic and identity differences were not related to the outbreak of the conflict directly, they played a role both in the political degradation and were used by some factions as rationale for atrocities during the conflict. Frustration at the long-standing political condition in the country, abject poverty, widespread youth unemployment, and corruption helped to motivate outrage that allowed rebels to maintain they were freedom fighters. However, there was also a large incidence of greed both within the country and outside of it, reinforced by the large diamond reserve in the country. Although not the sole root of the conflict, this diamond reserve was responsible for funding, extending, and expanding the conflict. Fighting to gain control of the diamond mines was fierce throughout the conflict, and the resource was exploited by both local and international players. Profiteers, businessmen and corporations from Belgium, Holland, Italy, Israel, Lebanon and other foreign countries also participated by financing the conflict and collecting its spoils (Jalloh, 2011, p.424). Furthermore, it has been established that international groups such as Al Qaeda benefitted directly from the conflict in Sierra Leone, using the illicit diamond trade to stockpile its wealth (Collier et al., 2003, p.48). With many of its rivalries inflamed during the colonial regime, its 20-year history of degrading government and quashing democracy, the lack of basic human rights, and its large diamond reserve, Sierra Leone presented the perfect catalyst for conflict parties. It really is no surprise that Sierra Leone's conflict was able to take hold at that point in its political history, and combined with the lack of intervention, that the conflict was able to last as long as it did.

Stakeholders.

The conflict originally began on March 23, 1991 after the RUF, led by Foday Sankoh and strengthened by Liberian manpower, crossed the Sierra Leone border from Liberia and attacked the town of Bomaru, in Kailahun District. Sankoh, one of the 1980s revolutionaries supported by Libya, gave then-APC President Momoh 90 days to

relinquish power, gaining some initial popularity as a freedom-fighter dissatisfied with the long-standing APC rule (Manson & Knight, 2009, p.14). As fighting escalated, however, it became clear that the conflict was not a fight for political change, demonstrated by the frequent change in political parties and ideologies with the continuation and escalation of violence. Despite the fact that the RUF original goal was to depose the APC, fighting continued and intensified after the first military coup in 1992, when the NPRC came to power. Notwithstanding the fact that the NPRC and the RUF shared the same vision of Sierra Leone free of APC rule, they fought against one another ruthlessly.

The depletion and marginalization of the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) in the 1970s by then-President Siaka Stevens of the APC Party, an attempt to prevent a military coup, left the country completely unprotected against rebel forces (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004, p.50). Outnumbered two-to-one by the rebels in 1991, the SLA certainly stood no chance once the RUF numbers swelled to 10,000 fighters by late 1992 (Manson & Knight, 2009, p.15). Soldiers were underpaid and undervalued, lacked training, and were far from combat-ready—they were lacking even working vehicles (Sheriff & Bobson-Kamara, 2005, p.36). Infighting within the SLA made it difficult to focus on its mandate of citizen and state protection, and it eventually split to form several different factions.

The National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) were two of the first SLA splinter-groups, and each successfully mounted its own military coup on the national government. The NPRC, comprised of mostly junior SLA officers, took over power from 1992 to 1996, when it was replaced by the SLPP in a general election, whereas the AFRC seized power from the SLPP in 1997 (Sheriff & Bobson-Kamara, 2005, p.48). Although the NPRC are generally recognized as having made decisions with the national interest in mind, the AFRC were in power purely for personal gain, and the time of their rule was the worst period of lawlessness during the conflict (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.60). The AFRC was deposed in 1998 when President Kabbah and his SLPP government were reinstated, enforced by the arrival of ECOMOG (Amnesty International, 1998). Further, there was also a splinter-group called the West Side Boys, who played a primary role in the Freetown invasion in 1999, and were responsible for many of the worst human rights abuses (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.72). Obviously, the general population quickly lost faith in the SLA, due to members who exploited their positions; this was facilitated by RUF members who donned full SLA gear while launching attacks on towns and villages (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.9).

Alliances shifted throughout the conflict. There were times that the RUF fought the AFRC, and times that they fought alongside one another, even forming the People's Army together when the AFRC was in government (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.10). Sierra Leone Army soldiers often defected, leading to the phrase "sobels", soldiers by day and rebels by night (Denney, 2009 p.154). Lacking confidence in the Sierra Leone Army, several communities began to take up arms themselves to protect their villages. These groups eventually united to form the Civil Defence Forces (CDF), made up of local militias including the Kamajors, comprised of Mende secret hunting societies of the south; the Gbenthes, Kapras, and Tamaboros of the north; and the eastern Donsos. Highly superstitious and with strong conviction in magic, many fighters underwent rituals to protect them against gunfire and which they believed allowed them to become invisible to their enemies. Some of the original RUF rebels joined the Kamajors when they were established (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.36). The CDF were trained and equipped by Executive Outcomes, a South African mercenary outfit contracted by the NPRC government in 1995 to do the job of its army (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004, p.67). In total, there were three mercenary groups contracted during the conflict, along with Sandline and Ghurkhas Security Group (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.14). Subsidiary companies of Executive Outcomes were given access to the diamond mines in partial repayment for services, and the government had to mortgage the nation's assets when the contract was cancelled early, a RUF demand at the failed Abidjan peace talks (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.89). Despite the CDF mandate to protect the villages of Sierra Leone, many of the members were responsible for human rights violations, violence against civilians, and looting. The TRC report ultimately laid 6% of responsibility for atrocities during the conflict with the CDF, specifically the Kamajors, who were responsible for disproportionately targeting civilians on the basis of ethnicity and solely responsible for forced cannibalism (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.11).

Although the conflict is referred to as an intrastate one because the conflict was largely fought within Sierra Leone's borders between mostly Sierra Leonean players, there were significant outside influences. President Blaise

Compaoré of Burkina Faso provided weapons, training, and logistics to the rebels during the conflict (Jalloh, 2011, p.422). The Libyan government, under President Muammar al-Qadhafi, supported rebels through guerrilla training and networking insurgents to those of like-minded neighbouring countries beginning in the 1980s, with the goal of creating a "fiefdom" in West Africa (Jalloh, 2011, p.422). Likewise, Libya supplied arms and support to the rebels during the conflict (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004, p.422). It was through these programs in the 1980s that Foday Sankoh was introduced to Charles Taylor, who would become one of his biggest allies during the conflict.

After the Liberian conflict broke out, Sierra Leone allowed West African peacekeepers to launch attacks on Liberia from the Sierra Leone airport in 1990, prompting Charles Taylor, who would be Liberian president from 1997 to 2003, to threaten that Sierra Leone would "taste the bitterness of war" (Manson & Knight, 2009, p.15). It has been established that this was part of a plan concocted by Sankoh and Taylor to initiate war in both Liberia and Sierra Leone (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.17). Training centres in Liberia, such as Camp Namma, were created for Sierra Leonean rebels, where they were trained to bear arms and kill. Furthermore, the original 385 RUF fighters were bolstered by 2,000 fighters from Taylor's army, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) when they originally attacked Bomaru in March 1991, along with mercenaries from neighbouring countries such as Burkina Faso (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.85). Taylor officially recalled his Liberian fighters in 1992, but continued to participate in the conflict in Sierra Leone, with many of the arms, ammunitions, and supplies for the conflict entering illegally through Liberia.

Taylor was a direct beneficiary of the Sierra Leone civil war, and played an instrumental role in the conflict. One of the ways he benefitted was through appropriation of diamonds. Sierra Leone has always been more diamond-rich than its south eastern neighbour; Liberia, on the other hand, averaged only about 150,000 carats per year. However, in 1996 alone, 12.3 million carats of diamonds were exported from Liberia, while Sierra Leone's numbers declined significantly (Manson & Knight, 2009, p.247). As a result of his role in initiating the conflict and maintaining it, Taylor was indicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone in 2003, controversially, at the beginning of the Liberian peace talks in Ghana (Hayner, 2007, p.6). Apprehended in 2005 trying to flee Nigeria where he had been living in exile, he was charged with eleven counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious contraventions of international law such as rape and the use of child soldiers (Jalloh, 2011, pp.410-411). In 2006, in a controversial move, Taylor was moved to The Hague to continue his trial there, for fear of instability in Liberia and Sierra Leone if he were to remain in Freetown (Jalloh, 2011, p.411). Taylor's trial is the final proceeding remaining in the Special Court of Sierra Leone, and a verdict is expected in 2012 (Jalloh, 2011, p.411). Clearly, this conflict involved more than just Sierra Leone players, as the chaos and consequent potential for profit attracted both local and international players.

Conflict phases.

Due to its length, its intensity, and its transformation throughout, it has been recognized that there were three distinct parts of the conflict in Sierra Leone. The first, Phase One, has been called Conventional Target Warfare, and was in place from the outbreak of the conflict on March 23, 1991 to November 13, 1993 (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.9). In this phase, the conflict was contained to the eastern part of Sierra Leone, on the border of Liberia, and was fought between the RUF, with support from Liberian forces, and the SLA.

Phase Two was Guerrilla Warfare, where the conflict moved increasingly out of sight, parties became less reliable, and the conflict moved from the East to every district of Sierra Leone. It occurred between November 13, 1993, and March 2, 1997. The CDF became involved during this phase and were built up by international mercenary groups such as Executive Outcomes. This phase included the failed Abidjan peace talk in 1996. This peace accord was hastily put together, and international pressure on the government of Sierra Leone to end the conflict quickly led to a poor negotiation, where most RUF concessions were accepted in haste, including that the contract with Executive Outcomes be cancelled (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.10). In effect, this concession bankrupted the state and allowed the RUF to reclaim territory it had previously lost (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.89). This phase of the conflict saw increased violence from all factions towards civilians.

Finally, Phase Three was called Power Struggles and Peace Efforts. This phase occurred from March 2, 1997 to the

end of the conflict on January 18th, 2002 (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.10). This phase began with the second military coup and saw the RUF align with the AFRC to form the People's Army. October 1997 saw another effort at peace negotiations, held in Conakry, Guinea and supported by the British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone. ECOMOG intervened in February 1998, and on January 6, 1999, the capital city, Freetown, was attacked by AFRC fighters and the West Side Boys (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.53). This phase also included the Lomé Peace Accord and subsequent interventions by the United Nations and British forces. Although the Lomé Peace Agreement was not immediately successful—over 500 UN peacekeepers were taken hostage in May 2000 in violation of the Lomé Accord—it eventually established peace in the country. Peacebuilding strategies, including both the TRC and Special Court, were created in this phase. Finally, the conflict was officially declared over with a ceremonial burning of 3000 arms at Lungi on January 18, 2002 (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.200).

International intervention.

Despite lessons learned from previous international inaction in countries including Rwanda in 1994, intervention by the international community in Sierra Leone was limited. Had the international community intervened early on in the conflict, it is possible that the conflict would not have lasted as long as it did, and damage to society, infrastructure, and the economy could have been contained. However, the only international interventions came at the latter part of the conflict, in Phase Three. The main international deployment during the conflict was the 1998 deployment of ECOMOG, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group, to observe the failed Abidjan Agreement. Nevertheless, ECOMOG would exceed their scope and eventually act as replacement for the SLA, taking an active combat role and taking orders from the Sierra Leone government directly (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.87). International politics limited the involvement of other international actors in Sierra Leone. The largest contributor to ECOMOG, Nigerian Head of State General Sani Abacha, was a military dictator who was extremely unpopular on the world stage. Ultimately, his presence as ECOMOG's driving force prevented other interventions in Sierra Leone (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.87). Although ECOMOG was responsible for many successes during the conflict, including the reinstatement of President Kabbah's SLPP government in 1998, reversing the second military coup, unfortunately some of the atrocities committed during the conflict were attributed to ECOMOG soldiers themselves (Amnesty International, 1998).

The United Nations first sent an observation mission to the country in 1994. The United Nations Special Envoy to Sierra Leone did nothing to alleviate the conflict (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.14). The United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) was established in July 1998, although the 720 observers were ineffective and unable to stop the second military coup. As such, UNOMSIL has been "remembered more for its lack of impact" (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.14). Its third attempt came after the Lomé Peace Agreement was signed, when the United Nations created the United Nations Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). UNAMSIL deployed peacekeepers that arrived in December 1999 to enforce the ceasefire and subsequent disarmament and demobilization. They were deployed under a Chapter Six mandate, without authorization to use force, even in self-defence (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.90); this soon proved problematic. In 2000, when over 500 UN peacekeepers were held hostage by RUF forces, a majority of the population lost what confidence they had in the United Nations and their ability to stabilize the country. However, after the hostage incident, the UN changed its mandate in Sierra Leone to a Chapter Seven directive, allowing for the use of force in self-defence (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.90). Eventually, the peacekeeping force became effective in helping to stabilize the country.

British troops finally arrived in its former colony in the year 2000. Nearly a decade after the conflict started, the British mandate was to evacuate all British citizens from the country and to help secure Freetown and the airport. Sierra Leoneans were dismayed at the lack of help they received from international players, especially their former colonist: "Sierra Leoneans are justified in their view that they were abandoned by the United Kingdom in their hour of need" (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.84). Although the British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone supported the Guinea peace talks in 1997, it has been argued that the British could have done more by threatening the use of force in order to compel AFRC concessions (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.88). Instead, the British government encouraged the participation of Sandline International, an international mercenary group, to provide arms and support to forces loyal to the ousted Kabbah government. After it finally did intervene, however, the British were effective in demobilizing the West Side Boys and deterring the RUF, and two years after their arrival, peace was

declared in the country (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.89).

Chapter 3: Literature Review

I have divided the existing literature into three general themes. In the first section, I discuss the topic of reconciliation. In the second section, I examine the literature on childhood trauma. In the third section, I address the theme of children and war. Once the three themes are examined, I summarize the three topics and their relationship to one another.

Reconciliation

In a report for the World Bank, Paul Collier et al. (2003) explained that development and intrastate conflicts often form a vicious cycle: countries that are developed have the best chance of avoiding conflict, while those that are undeveloped are at the highest risk of conflict. Further, intrastate conflict impedes and actually reverses development, and countries that have had one conflict are at high risk of getting caught in a conflict trap (Collier et al., 2003, p.2). Low income countries that have been unable to develop are at the highest risk of conflict, with the chance of intrastate conflict 15 times higher than developed countries, such as those in the OECD, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (Collier et al., 2003, p.5). Interventions must occur during the conflict, to limit the length of the conflict and its detrimental effects, but also post-conflict in the form of aid, development programs, and peacebuilding. Reconciliation is one such peacebuilding device. Reconciliation initiatives are attempts to break the conflict and development cycles, and efforts to promote lasting peace.

Despite recent growth of reconciliation as a conflict prevention measure, reconciliation has only recently begun to be systematically examined as a field of study (Brounéus, 2008, p.292), due in part to a changing paradigm of peacebuilding in the post-Cold War era (Philpott, 2009, p.389). Reconciliation can take the form of a bottom-up approach, which attempts to stimulate a change in the population (Staub, 2006, p.868). It can also take the form of top-down approaches, which involve the media and leaders, and can ultimately affect a country's institutions (Staub, 2006, p.868). Top-down approaches to reconciliation include the TRCs and initiatives such as memorials, official apologies, and community responses (Brounéus, 2008, p.291). In light of the ambiguity surrounding the topic of reconciliation, many definitions of reconciliation have been suggested (van der Merwe, 1999; Bloomfield, 2006; Staub, 2006). For the purpose of this research, the following definition of reconciliation has been adopted: "*reconciliation is a societal process that involves mutual acknowledgment of past suffering and the changing of destructive attitudes and behaviours into constructive relationships toward sustainable peace"* (Brounéus, 2008, p. 294). This definition recognizes that reconciliation is a pragmatic process aimed at enabling coexistence through three central components of reconciliation: changes in emotion, attitudes, and behaviours (Brounéus, 2008, p.294). These components correspond to characteristics within Galtung's (1969) conflict triangle of a) attitudes, b) behaviours, and c) the incompatibility causing the conflict.

As a field of study, reconciliation has only begun to gain momentum in the past two decades, first starting with the study of post-genocide Rwanda. Staub (2006) outlined that there are three important factors that must be understood prior to undertaking reconciliation activities after genocide or mass violence: the evolution of violence, the effects on survivors, and the effects of perpetrators and passive bystanders (pp.871-872). In order to include all members of society in reconciliation activities, including perpetrators of violence, there must first be the ability to acknowledge wrongdoing, which is of vital importance to reintegrating a society (Nadler, Malloy, & Fisher, 2008). TRCs provide a platform to acknowledge wrongdoing, while compiling a history of the conflict. To date, the most comprehensive methodological attempt to understand reconciliation strategies has been created by Karen Brounéus (2008), who created a structured method of analyzing reconciliation initiatives. Brounéus examined NRIs with a focus on behaviours of those in power. In order to examine and codify reconciliation initiatives, Brounéus examined two indicators to measure behaviour, which she outlined as symbolic and judicial acts, and two indicators to measure attitude, outlined as normative statements and strategic policy statements.

TRCs recognize that large-scale conflict affects all members of society, bringing members together to share their experiences in order to create a "shared collective memory" (Staub, 2006, p.882) of the conflict. Over half of all

TRCs that have be executed to date have occurred in sub-Saharan Africa (Hayner, 2001), which saw fifteen TRCs between 1974 and 2003 (Roper & Barria, 2009, p.374). The most famous TRC occurred in South Africa between 1995 and 1997, where three committees were created: the Human Rights Violations Committee, the Amnesty Committee, and the Committee on Reparation and Rehabilitation (Verdoolaege, 2005, p.61). Controversially, participants in the South African TRC could apply for amnesty from judicial proceedings, or risk prosecution for crimes committed during apartheid (Foster, 2006, p.528). Those hoping for amnesty had to apply, provide complete details of their actions, and justify how the action was politically motivated, but did not have to display regret or apologize to their victims (Eisikovit, 2006, p.490). Amnesties approved during the South Africa TRC granted both criminal and civil liability (Eisikovit, 2006, p.490).

It has been recognized that there is a risk of re-traumatisation through truth-telling, which is integral to the process of TRCs (Backer, 2007; Brounéus, 2008; Byrne, 2004; Stover, 2004). However, trauma researchers have suggested that avoidance of traumatizing experiences does not achieve reconciliation at the intrapersonal level, and that engagement is necessary (Herman, 1992; Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995). This is also proven by long-term studies of reconciliation, which have shown reconciliation is directly correlated to peace (Long & Brecke, 2003). Long and Brecke examined the long-term impact of reconciliation events on intrastate conflicts and lasting peace in those countries between 1957 and 2003. The researchers found that in 64% of cases that included a reconciliation event, the country did not return to violent conflict. However, 91% of the countries studied with no reconciliation events ultimately returned to violent conflict. These results led the authors to conclude that reconciliation events were correlated to peace due to the return to social order.

Childhood Trauma

It has long been acknowledged that people who have experienced trauma must be given support in order to understand wrongdoings that they have experienced or they themselves risk falling into a negative pattern of behaviour. Trauma can be either personal, such as experiencing direct physical harm, or public, such as terrorism (Herman, 1997); either can affect the psyche negatively, and must be rectified in order to overcome potential consequences. Those who have been traumatized require ways to understand what it was they experienced, true especially for children who have experienced or witnessed trauma. Children must be able to understand and comprehend their experiences, and it is understood that childhood trauma has negative consequences that reach far beyond influential childhood years.

It has been recognized that children from families with domestic violence often suffer severe emotional consequences such as depression, regression, anxiety or withdrawal, and these children are at a higher risk of becoming either abusive or abused as adults (Haddix, 1996, p.792). This is true of those who were physically abused as children (Griffin & Amodeo, 2010), but also for children who witnessed abuse in the home (Haddix, 1996, p.760). Trauma experienced as children, then, can create cyclical patterns for future generations.

Trauma experienced as a child can ultimately have adverse outcomes on adulthood, affecting both future mental and even physical health. Childhood sexual abuse can cause psychological problems such as depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, physical problems with sexual functioning in adulthood, and social issues such as anxiety and behavioural problems (Briere & Elliott, 2003; Lemieux & Byers, 2008; Levitan, Rector, Sheldon & Goering, 2003; Rojas & Kinder, 2009). It has been established that serious mental consequences are directly correlated to either witnessing or experiencing abuse as children, including borderline personality disorder (Herman, Perry, & van der Kolk, 1989). Further, post-traumatic stress disorder is a potential serious consequence of trauma. Physical changes caused by extreme stress during formative childhood years have been demonstrated to affect physical health, as it can directly alter neurobiology, with the result of affecting long-term neurotransmitter activity (Heim & Nemeroff, 2001). Likewise, it has been noted that women who have experienced long-term, prolonged abuse as children have smaller hippocampal volume than women who did not have similar experiences, which can negatively affect mood and mental health (Vythilingam et al., 2002).

Studies have consistently proven that overcoming childhood trauma is determined by the level of support that the person receives (Daro, Edleson, & Pinderhughes, 2004; Egeland, Jacobvitz, & Sroufe, 1988; Henggeler, Melton,

Brondino, Scherer & Hanley, 1997). Due to its lasting effects, psychosocial support is often necessary to overcome childhood trauma, and is defined as that which "aims to protect or promote psychosocial well-being and/or prevent or treat mental disorder" (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2007, p.1). Many considerations must be made when lodging any support intervention to manage childhood trauma, such as context of the trauma, family situation, and age, in order to launch safe and successful support. In the form of emotional support, therapy or another form of healing, assistance is necessary for victims of childhood trauma to understand their experiences and move forward from them.

Children and War

Atrocities against children have only recently been singled out in post-conflict rebuilding, regardless of the fact that children are immensely impacted by war. Between 1986 and 1996, it is estimated that more than two million children were killed in armed conflicts, and more than six million were disabled or injured as a result of war (United Nations General Assembly, 1996). Previously, there was no special consideration given to crimes against children as they were deemed analogous to crimes against general populations (UNICEF & ICTJ, 2010, p.ix). The paradigm began to shift with the introduction of significant international treaties concerning child rights and welfare, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN General Assembly, 1988); the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child On the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (UN General Assembly, 2000); and the Rome Statute, which created the ICC and criminalized graves crimes (UN General Assembly, 2002). A groundbreaking report by Graçal Machel for the United Nations brought international attention to the devastating consequences that war has on children (UN General Assembly, 1996). Recommendations included ending child soldier recruitment, psychosocial support for child survivors of war, and preventing conflicts through socio-economic support (UN General Assembly, 1996).

Many studies researching children and war have focused on former child soldiers (Bayer, Klasen, & Adam, 2007; Betancourt, Agnew-Blais, Gilman, Williams, & Ellis, 2010; Betancourt, Brennan, Rubin-Smith, Fitzmaurice, Gilman, 2010; Denov, 2010; Derluyn, Broekaert, Schuten, & De Temmerman, 2004; Medeiros, 2007; World Health Organization, 2009; Zack-Williams, 2006). Children who did not participate in armed conflict have for the most part been excluded from studies examining children and war. Only recently have research begun to focus on children displaced or affected by war. In a study of Columbian children, of which one group had been exposed to extreme violence and one group was not, it was found that exposure to violence negatively affected children's moral development (Ardila-Rey, Killen, & Brenick, 2008). Nevertheless, both groups, despite the level of violence witnessed or experienced, were open and understanding of the concept of reconciliation when presented with various scenarios.

Likewise, it has only been in recent years that the topic of children participating in truth commissions has been examined systematically. In a joint effort, UNICEF and the International Center for Transitional Justice (2010) published research on TRCs that have integrated or included children in TRCs. To date, this is the most exhaustive investigation of child participation in truth commissions during post-conflict reconciliation initiatives. However, the study was limited to technical findings and recommendations for future TRCs involving children, and it was not an evaluative study of any individual TRC (UNICEF & ICTJ, 2010). The research examined truth commissions and child involvement in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Peru, South Africa, Guatemala, Chile, and Timor-Leste. Many attempts have been made in the past to include children in national reconciliation activities. During the South African TRC, it was first suggested that children should be able to participate in the activities. However, due to a lack of precedence, it was unclear as to how children could participate safely. As a result, children were excluded from participating directly (UNICEF & ICTJ, 2010, p.10), ultimately limiting their ability to reconcile and include their experiences as part of the national historical record. Many TRCs limited child involvement to exhibitions of drawings or creative outlets.

Sierra Leone was the first country to specifically mention children in its TRC mandate, and included children in statement-taking as well as closed and thematic hearings (UNICEF & ICTJ, 2010, p.x). Furthermore, children were included in the development of the TRC from the outset and were integral to the construction and implementation of the child-friendly process (Sierra Leone TRC, UNICEF, & UNAMSIL, 2004). The idea for the Child-Friendly Version

of the TRC was first proposed at a technical meeting in 2001, where children and children's groups came together to discuss the upcoming TRC and make recommendations. Three children's networks participated in the Child's process of the TRC: the Children's Forum Network, the Voice of Children Radio, and the Children's National Assembly. The impact of the inclusion of children in Sierra Leone's TRC process have yet to be evaluated, although the topic has begun to attract researchers. Cook and Heykoop (2010), in examining Sierra Leone's inclusion of children in the TRC, outlined that culture may have impacted the goal of reconciliation, as reconciliation in the country is often measured objectively through reparations. The Sierra Leone TRC was also unique as its mandate required that the government accept its recommendations, and a monitoring committee was created to ensure the government followed through (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.118); however, this did not come to fruition. Recommendations were designated into three sections: "Imperative", which the government were required to implement immediately; "Work Towards", and "Seriously Consider".

In addition to having the first TRC that included children in the reconciliation process, the Special Court for Sierra Leone was the first international court to prosecute crimes committed specifically against children (UNICEF & ICTJ, 2010, p.xi). Although TRCs are usually chosen as a cheap alternative to justice after widespread violence in and a state-made process to promote healing and unity after conflict, the TRC in Sierra Leone worked simultaneously alongside the Special Court. Unlike previous international retributive attempts, the Special Court was mandated to use both domestic and international law to try those accused of child abduction, forced recruitment and sexual violence against children (UNICEF & ICTJ, 2010, p.5). Originally the Special Court had mandated jurisdiction over children over the ages of 15 who were accused of crimes; however, this was later rescinded as it was recognized that the children of Sierra Leone were victims and could not bear the largest responsibility for the war (Park, 2010). The mandate was therefore changed to acknowledge that children could only be considered victims and witnesses, and not perpetrators (UNICEF & ICTJ, 2010, p.11).

In addition to dispensing justice, the Special Court was created with the expectation that it could contribute to long-term peace and national reconciliation (Jalloh, 2011, p.397). As the first *ad hoc* international tribunal located *in situ*, the Special Court made it accessible for Sierra Leoneans, without the need for witnesses and interested parties to travel abroad (Jalloh, 2011, p.454). The simultaneous experiment implementing both a truth commission and a criminal tribunal was unique, and not without difficulties. The Special Court had jurisdiction over only part of the conflict, from the failed Abidjan Agreement in 1996 (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.17).This meant that only crimes from major city centres were prosecuted, rather than earlier offences committed up-country, which refuelled former urban-rural rivalries (Jalloh, 2011, p.454). There were also power struggles between the two bodies, for instance when the Special Court refused to allow the TRC to conduct hearings with detainees of the Special Court (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.18). The Court's refusal to allow defendants to participate in the TRC was seen by the public as arrogant, and lessened its legitimacy in the public eye (Jalloh, 2011, p.456). Although the two bodies were independent of one another, many Sierra Leoneans saw the TRC as an instrument of the Special Court, and there were fears that testifying to the TRC would result in charges at the Special Court level (Cooke & Heykoop, 2010, p.165). All justice stemming from the conflict would be dealt with by the Special Court for Sierra Leone and no other international bodies; as the International Criminal Court (ICC) was only created in July 2002, it has no retroactive jurisdiction over the Sierra Leone conflict (Jalloh, 2011, p.458).

Summary

The literature demonstrates that despite being a relatively new field of study, reconciliation is an extremely important one which can ultimately impact the outcome of post-conflict transitions. National unity and reconciliation are integral after intrastate conflict in achieving a peaceful transition and the leaders of post-conflict should ensure that any chosen reconciliation process be reflective of the culture, its people, and the history of the conflict. It is important to study past reconciliation approaches in order to understand their effects and long-term outcomes and to help shape future reconciliation initiatives. Childhood trauma creates numerous adverse outcomes, and can result in serious, long-term consequences if not addressed. Therefore, children who have suffered trauma require outlets and significant support to justify and make sense of what they had experienced or witnessed. The definition of childhood trauma, then, should be expanded to include incidents that children have experienced during war. As an invariably traumatic experience, children who have survived conflict should be included in all attempts to reconcile the nation

and to promote individual intrapersonal understanding of what they had experienced. It is clear that children who have witnessed or experienced war are able to understand the concept of reconciliation, have their own experiences and history to contribute to the process, and therefore should be active participants in reconciliation processes. Further, children's potential roles in reconciliation activities should be examined and studied to ensure their safety and effectiveness, and to guide future reconciliation initiatives. Children will make up the next generation of voters, politicians, and decision makers. Their participation in reconciliation activities could result in the difference between peace and continued conflict in the future.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

Subjects

Between May 18 and June 25, 2011, questionnaires were distributed in Freetown and Magburaka, Sierra Leone. Approximately half was self-administered, while the other half was completed as interviews in the Krio language. Participants were volunteers from the community who had heard about the project through word of mouth and members of NGOs. Both participants of the TRC and those who had not participated in the TRC were surveyed. In total, the project surveyed 202 subjects. The main group studied were respondents between the ages of 18 and 33 years of age, born between 1978 and 1993. This range was chosen because they were children at some point during the conflict in Sierra Leone. Those who were born in 1978 were 13 years old when the conflict began, and 24 when the conflict ended. On the other hand, those born in 1993 were born two years into the conflict, and were 9 years of age when the conflict ended in 2002. Participants were 18 years and older at the time of the survey.

Group breakdown.

The research separated participants into three main groups. Group 1 were respondents who participated in the Child's process of the TRC, made up of 6% of respondents (N=13); this small number reflects the small percentage of TRC participants compared with the Sierra Leonean population. Group 2 respondents did not participate in the TRC, and made up a large majority of the survey sample overall with 81% (N=162). In order to examine whether the different TRC processes affected the goal of reconciliation, several participants outside the specified age range were also surveyed. These were grouped into Group 3, along with those born within the specified age range but who participated in the regular TRC. This group made up 7% (N=15). Finally, 6% of the sample (N=12) did not provide enough information within the survey to be grouped into either Group 1, 2, or 3, meaning they did not provide information on their participation in the TRC (see Appendix B for table and chart).

Age.

The majority of respondents, 69%, (N=139) were born between 1987 and 1993. Those born between 1978 and 1986 represented 22% (N=45) of the sample, while those born prior to 1978 represented 7% (N=14) of the sample. Four respondents, representing 2% of the survey, did not give their year of birth and therefore could not be grouped (see Appendix B for age breakdown).

Gender.

There was a significant gender discrepancy within the study. Females represented only 22% (N=44) of the study. The majority, 77% (N=155) of participants were male. This gender discrepancy may exist for several reasons. It may be that males were more open and willing to discuss their experiences during the war. Many of the male respondents were unemployed youth, giving them the time and opportunity to come and fill out the questionnaire during office hours—it may be that many of their female counterparts were attempting to make money during the day and therefore less able to take the time to fill out a survey. Many of the survey respondents were informed of the study by word of mouth, and it could be that females were either less interested in participating, or less informed about the project. Whatever the explanation, it is important to recognize that the majority of respondents were males, and therefore not a complete and accurate representation of the population makeup (see Appendix B).

Former members of an armed forces group.

Former members of an armed forces group, some of whom self-identified as child soldiers, made up 22% (N=45) of the study, while 69% (N=140) did not participate in the conflict. A further 8% (N=17) of the overall respondents did not give information on their role in the conflict. Those who had no participation in the conflict as a member of an armed force group were designated either Group 1A or 2A, depending on their participation in the TRC Child's Version. Group 1A made up 2% (N=4) of the survey overall, while Group 2A constituted 58% (N=118). Alternatively, those who did participate in the conflict as a member of an armed force group were designated either Group 1B or 2B, also reliant on their participation in the TRC. Group 1B, those who participated in the conflict and the TRC, made up 4% (N=8) of the survey, while Group 2B, those who participated in the conflict but not in the TRC, constituted 18% (N=36). There were several participants who could not be placed into a subgroup within their group, as they did not provide information on their role in the conflict; there was one respondent from Group 1, constituting 0.4% of the survey respondents, and 4% (N=8) from Group 2. Those who participated in the conflict as a member of an armed force group were only specified for Group 1 and 2 respondents, and not for Group 3. It is important to note that some participants joined by their own volition, either convinced by political outrage, the potential to gain power or capital, or as a means of survival after the death of family members. However, many members were forced to participate in the conflict by punishment of death. They were also given drugs to lower their inhibitions, and trained to be complacent through torturous methods (see Appendix B).

Geography.

Geographically, all regions of Sierra Leone were represented in the survey. The country has four distinct parts, comprised of the Western Area and three provinces—the Northern, Southern, and Eastern Provinces. Although the Western Area is the smallest geographical area in Sierra Leone, it has the largest population; Freetown, the capital city, falls within its borders, and most of the respondents of the survey resided there at the time of the survey. Freetown received an influx of Sierra Leonean citizens during and after the war, which explains why many of the participants were originally from elsewhere in the country but are now living in Freetown. This is both due to improved opportunities for employment in the capital and because whole communities were destroyed during the conflict. 49% of respondents (N=98) identified as having lived in this region during the conflict.

There were 19% (N=39) of all respondents who were living in the Northern Province when the conflict erupted. This area includes Kambia, Port Loko, Bumbuna, and Makeni.

The Eastern Province borders Liberia and includes Kono, Kenema, Panguma, and Kailahun. It was in Kailahun district where the conflict began in 1991. 14% (N=29) of respondents self-identified as having lived in this province during the war.

The Southern Province represented where 6% (N=12) of respondents were originally from. It includes communities such as Moyamba, Momaligi, Bo, and Zimmi.

Within survey respondents, 1.5% (N=3) identified that they lived outside Sierra Leone during the conflict, in either Guinea or Liberia. This could be because they fled the country and lived in refugee camps during the war—Guinea had a large Sierra Leonean refugee camp—or they came to Sierra Leone during or after its conflict. Neighbouring Liberia also experienced a devastating conflict, which ended in 2005. It is estimated that over 27,000 people living in Sierra Leone are Liberian refugees (CIA World Factbook, 2011).

Participants were defined as unknown/not distinguished when they gave a vague answer such as "I lived in the village", "I lived at my parent's house", or answers such as "Sierra Leone". 5% (N=11) of respondents fell into this category. Further, those who did not answer the question made up 5% (N=10) of the sample (see Appendix B for geographical analysis).

Trauma.

Unlike the Ardila-Rey, Killen, & Brenick (2008) study of Colombian children, where only half the subjects had witnessed violent events, without a doubt every respondent to this survey witnessed horrifying events, while some were responsible for them. It is worth noting that the majority if not all of the respondents were traumatized as a result of the conflict and events they had witnessed during the war; the nation as a whole suffered trauma from the prolonged conflict, and due to its length and expansion, virtually everybody in the country suffered (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.50). This is also evident in the results of the study. Over 54% of respondents (N=110) identified that they had one or both of their parents killed, with many of the killings witnessed by the children themselves. Eight percent of respondents (N=17) had a family member who had a limb amputated. Nine respondents, 5% of the sample, disclosed that they had been sexually assaulted during the conflict, with several of the female respondents identifying that they had been forced to become "bush wives" in the RUF. Over 52% (N=105) identified that their education was halted, although the number is likely much higher—many respondents missed out on their entire education; the length of the conflict, and the danger it presented, resulted in the closing or destruction of many schools and a halt to education country-wide (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004a, p.98). Although these impacts are just a small portion of Sierra Leonean society, they no doubt present a reflection of the horrendous and traumatizing consequences of the conflict on the country as a whole. It was because of these devastating consequences that the government chose national reconciliation initiatives in order to move forward together towards a united and peaceful future.

Research Question One

In order to answer the first research question of whether the Child's process of the TRC was successful in promoting reconciliation in child participants, I did a comparative analysis of survey respondents who participated in the TRC, and those who did not. For this question, the independent variable examined was participation in Sierra Leone's TRC and related activities, and the dependant variable was reconciliation. In order to assess reconciliation at the intrapersonal level, I examined two of the three components of reconciliation, that is, changes in emotions and attitude. These were measured by analyzing both direct answers given by participants, and their use of positive and negative language when responding. The third component of reconciliation, behaviour, was not assessed within the survey.

Due to the small size of Group 1 (N=13), and the large number of Group 2 (N=162), I selected a sample of 13 surveys from Group 2 to compare with Group 1. In order to select a sample with which to compare Group 1, I analyzed the makeup of Group 1 respondents and made all attempts to choose surveys from Group 2 that were of similar gender, age, and geographical makeup, save from participation in the TRC. For example, if a Group 1 respondent was a male born in 1993, from Port Loko, who participated in the conflict as a member of an armed force, I attempted to find a Group 2 respondent who was also a male born in 1993, from Port Loko, who also participated in the conflict as a member of an armed force. Although I was successful at matching Group 1 and Group 2 samples in most cases, there were some with slight variations in the birth year and area in which they lived.

Therefore, of the 26 survey respondents sampled, half were from Group 1 and half were from Group 2, and for the most part, the makeup closely resembled the whole of the survey respondents. Most were males, with only 8% (N=2) being female. As well, 69% (N=18) of the sample was born between the years of 1987 and 1993. They were from all over the country originally, with 35% (N=9) from the Eastern Province, 27% (N=7) from the Western Province, 19% (N=5) from the Northern Province, 12% (N=3) from the Southern Province, and 8% (N=2) from out of the country.

One variation between the sample and the wider survey was the number of respondents who had participated in the conflict as members of an armed force. Sixty-seven percent of sample respondents (N=16) identified in the survey that they had participated in the conflict, compared with 22% of the wider survey. This high number reflects the larger proportion of Child's process TRC participants who had previously been members of an armed force. Of the remainder sample, 31% (N=8) did not participate in the conflict as a member of an armed force, and 8% (N=2) did not disclose their participation.

Results.

I.

"To my own level of understanding, the war did not make any sense to me, because it was the misused of management and government fun [corruption] that led the uprising of the civil war in Sierra Leone [sic]."

–Group 1 respondent

The first analysis of the research was to examine the language use when describing the conflict, the impact on respondents personally, how the war affected their family and community, their historical perspective of the conflict, and several questions relating to reconciliation in the country. Language use and description of the conflict can signify emotions and attitudes toward the conflict. All participants of the sample, without prejudice to their participation in the TRC, described the war using negative terminology, using words and phrases such as "devastating", "destructive", "dangerous and sorrowful", "it was a senseless war", and "the war wasn't friendly". It was expected that some, with perhaps a higher percentage of those who had participated as a member of an armed forces group, particularly the rebel groups, would describe some aspects of the conflict with positive terminology, for instance that the rebels were freedom fighters. However, this was not the case. The use of negative terminology to describe the conflict suggests that there seems to be a mutual understanding, regardless of participation in the TRC processes, that the conflict was extremely negative for the country and its people.

Furthermore, all participants used positive language when describing a vision for the future of Sierra Leone, describing the type of country they'd like to live in. Only 8% (N=2) of respondents of the sample size chose to give no response to the question. This suggests that most respondents have hope for their future and their country.

There was a discrepancy, however, in the ability to accurately describe reconciliation between participants of the child's version of the TRC and nonparticipants. Only 54% (N=14) of the sample accurately described reconciliation, with 64% (N=9) of those belonging to Group 1, while the remaining 36% (N=5) were from Group 2. 42% (N=11) of the sample did not answer the question, with Group 2 encompassing 73% (N=8), and Group 1 comprising 27% (N=3). Finally, one participant from Group 1 answered that they did not know how to describe reconciliation, comprising 4% of the sample. Due to the differences between Group 1 and Group 2, this result suggests that participation in the TRC may have affected personal understanding of the concept of reconciliation (see Appendix C).

II.

"For peace to prevail in Sierra Leone now, we need good road, water facilities, good job for the youth, light infrastructure and also home for we the war affected children in the street [sic]."

-Group 1 respondent

The second examination involved an analysis of respondents' explanations for what brought peace to Sierra Leone. The question followed a series of questions about the conflict, and was worded as follows: "What, in your view, most contributed to peace in Sierra Leone?" It was in this examination that a trend emerged. An unexpected result was the use of the present tense, suggesting that there are some respondents who did not believe peace had been accomplished at the time of the administration of the survey.

Although the majority of the sample, 73% (N=19), answered in the past tense, a higher percentage of Group 2 respondents answered in the present tense than Group 1. In total, 23% (N=6) of the sample answered this question in the present tense, with 17% from Group 1 (N=1) and 83% from Group 2 (N=5), with an answer such as "For all Sierra Leonean to have peace in our country we should have peace, unity, justice and love each and other [*sic*]". Eighty-three percent (N=5) of respondents who answered this question in the present tense were born between 1990 and 1993, suggesting that this sentiment may be more prevalent among the younger generation than the older group. 4% of the sample did not give an answer to the question. Although some of the responses may be the result of a language barrier due to a lack of education—simply putting present tense in the place of past tense—many of the responses are clear that they are talking about present-day peace.

Due to the small size of the sample being examined, I expanded the analysis of this question to the general survey to see if the trend was recreated, or if the sample was an anomaly. The trend was recreated, with 16% (N=33) of all survey respondents answering this question in the present tense. A further 13% (N=26) of all respondents gave no answer to the question, or answered either "No" or "I don't know" to the question. Of those who answered in the present tense, Group 1 represented 3% (N=1), Group 3B represented 9% (N=3)—there were no representatives from Group 3A, who participated in the mainstream TRC—9% could not be classified into any group (N=3), while an overwhelming majority, 79%, were from Group 2 (N=26). This represents 17% of total Group 2 respondents. As in the smaller sample, the majority of respondents were in the majority age group, with most born between 1987 and 1993 (see Appendix C for charted analysis).

III.

"The TRC is successful at promoting reconciliation because after destroying killing we have peace again [sic]."
-Group 2 respondent

In order to examine reconciliation of child TRC participants compared to those who had not participated in TRC activities, I analyzed replies to the question "In your view, was the TRC successful in promoting reconciliation in Sierra Leone? Could it have done anything differently?" Rather than analyzing the wording they used, this question asks the respondent outright whether they thought the TRC was successful. In order to assess the answers, I created four categories in which respondents had answered: yes, yes with restrictions, no, and no answer. 62% of all respondents answered this question with a "yes" response, 39% of which were from Group 1 (N=10) and 23% (N=6) from Group 2 respondents. Twelve percent (N=3) of the sample answered yes with restrictions, stating that the TRC mandate should have included provisions for war-affected children such as housing for the homeless or education, with 67% (N=2) from Group 1 and 33% (N=1) from Group 2. Only 4% (N=1) of the sample believed that the TRC was unsuccessful in promoting reconciliation, from Group 1. Finally, although there were no respondents from Group 1, 23% (N=6) of the sample, all from Group 2, did not answer the question. This constituted 46% of Group 2 sample respondents (see Appendix C for table).

Like the previous trend, this tendency suggests that there are differences between those who participated in the TRC activities and those that did not. Those that participated in the Child's TRC process had mostly positive perceptions of the outcomes created by the process, while the majority of those who did not participate were either unsure about the success of the TRC or did not answer the question.

Discussion.

The results of the sample suggest that there are clear differences between child participants of the TRC and those who did not participate in the TRC in terms of intrapersonal reconciliation. All survey respondents used negative terminology to describe the war, which suggests that there does exist some mutual understanding in the country about the conflict in Sierra Leone. The largest differential between the two groups existed when examining the concept of reconciliation, as a majority of those who participated in the reconciliation process could accurately describe reconciliation, while those who did not participate in the reconciliation process were less able to describe reconciliation. An understanding of reconciliation is vital to the success of the TRC on a national scale; however, the results suggest that a portion of the population, those who did not directly participate in a reconciliation activity, has been left behind in the search for national reconciliation.

Likewise, a large portion of the respondents felt that peace has not yet come to their country, and is still a goal to be accomplished. As a country that has been celebrating peace for over nine years, Sierra Leone's reconciliation processes would have been expected to have eventually permeated all segments of society. This trend suggests that while the child's version of the TRC was successful in creating a mutual understanding of the conflict and its history through truth-telling and dialogue, this effect was limited to those who participated in it. It could be possible that some of those who did not participate in the TRC process continue to be either disgruntled or uninformed about the peace process or frustrated with their present living situations, or a combination of the two. Whatever the reason, the trend implies that the TRC had a positive effect on an understanding of the war and subsequent peace

processes, but this was limited to participants in the process.

Although the child's version of the TRC has been a success for the majority of participants, it did not go far enough to reach those who did not participate in the process. Since only 300 children participated in the child's process, these results suggest that the vast majority of young adults, those who did not participate in the TRC, have yet to be reconciled from the conflict. Since mutual understanding is a first step towards reconciliation, a lack of understanding about the peace process is invariably impeding intrapersonal reconciliation for non-participants. Without exhaustive reconciliation at the intrapersonal levels, reconciliation on a national scale cannot be possible.

Sub-Question One

In order to assess the first sub-question, whether reconciliation differed between participants of the TRC who had been members of an armed forces group during the conflict and those who were not, I again picked a sample of all participants. However, for this question, rather than being their participation in the TRC, the independent variable was participation in the conflict as a member of an armed forces group. All respondents being examined in the sample had participated in the TRC. Group 1A respondents, who had not been members of an armed force group, were compared against Group 1B, those who had. Again, all efforts were made to match geographical region, approximate age, and gender, although there were some variations. The same format was followed as the previous research question, whereby there was an analysis of language use and direct responses to the survey questions.

The sample size was considerably smaller than the previous sample, with only 8 respondents in total, due to the small number of Group 1A participants. The majority of respondents were male, with 88% (N=7), and only one female. All geographical regions of the country were represented, with 38% (N=3) from the North, 25% (N=2) from the Western Area, 25% (N=2) from the East, and 13% (N=1) from the Southern Province. Eighty-eight percent of respondents (N=7) belonged to the majority age range of 1987 to 1993.

Results.

I.

"I was capture in 1993…and I become a rebel when I was six (6) years old. I also took a drug and kill peoples. It causes a lot of bad damages in my life [sic]."

-Group 1B respondent

Again, the first analysis for this sample was to examine the language use to describe the conflict, its impacts, and reconciliation. Since the second sample came from the original sample from Research Question One, it has already been acknowledged that all respondents used negative terminology to describe the war. Unlike the results from the first question, however, the majority of participants in this sample were able to accurately describe reconciliation, with 88% (N=7) of the sample answering the question correctly. 57% (N=4) was from Group 1A, comprising that entire group in the sample, and 43% (N=3) was from Group 1B. Only one participant did not answer the question, from Group 1B. Furthermore, the majority of all participants also described a vision of Sierra Leone, with only one participant, from Group 1A, not responding (see Appendix D for table). This suggests that participation in the TRC is correlated to being able to accurately describe reconciliation, rather than former membership in an armed force group.

II.

"Peace came because the rebels were call out from the bush and a peace accord was signed [sic]."

-Group 1B respondent

In order to assess the trend found previously with in answering the question about peace in the present tense, I

examined this sample group to see if participation as a member of an armed forces group affected outcome. However, I found that it did not. 75% of all respondents answered this question in the past tense, with an equal number of respondents from both Group 1A (N=3) and Group 1B (N=3). While none of Group 1A answered in the present tense, only 25% of Group 1B (N=1) answered in the present tense, and 25% (N=1) of Group 1A did not answer the question. This led to the conclusion that this trend was not affected by membership in an armed force group, but solely related to participation or nonparticipation in a TRC process (see Appendix D).

III.

"Yes it was successful to promoting the truth for the poor affected child. It was bad again because the TRC did not provide any shelter for we the war affected child. And knowledge we are in the street begging and we did not have any home or job facilities [sic]."

-Group 1B respondent

The final examination was to analyse the respondent's judgment on the success of the TRC. In total, 75% of all participants said that that the child's process of the TRC had been successful in promoting reconciliation in the country. Of that, 75% (N=4, constituting 100% of the group) were from Group 1A and 25% (N=2) from Group 1B. 13% (N=1) of the sample, from Group 1B, stated that it was successful but should have had a stronger mandate to include shelter; 13% (N=1) believed the TRC was not successful in promoting reconciliation, also from Group 1B. Although it must be recognized that the sample size is extremely small, this differential suggests that satisfaction rates for the TRC were affected by former status as members of an armed force group, even though all were participant to the TRC process (see Appendix D for chart).

Discussion.

Differences between former members of an armed force group and civilian children are undoubtedly vast. Child members of armed forces groups in Sierra Leone were forced to consume drugs and alcohol in order to lower their inhibitions, which would have affected physical and mental development. Further, being forced to perform or witness violent acts has been proven to affect children's moral development (Ardila-Rey, Killen, & Brenick, 2008). For the most part, however, there were minimal discrepancies in terms of intrapersonal reconciliation between the two groups of child participants of the TRC. Although it was expected that former membership in an armed forces group would affect an understanding of reconciliation or the ability to describe it, this proved not to be the case with study respondents, as the majority of the respondents were able to define reconciliation accurately. Therefore, being a member of an armed forces group during the conflict did not affect the ability of child participants of the TRC from the ability to reconcile, despite potential affected moral development. Likewise, the majority of all participants, regardless of former membership in the conflict, could explain the history of the conflict and the subsequent peace process in the country. Considering that a primary mandate of the conflict was to create a mutual understanding of the conflict, an understanding among its participants can be seen as vital to the success of the TRC in Sierra Leone. That participants of the child's process share a mutual understanding of the conflict regardless of participation in the conflict suggests that for participants, the child's process of the TRC was a success and satisfied its mandate in that regard.

The only difference that emerged between the two groups was through an examination of the perceived success of the TRC from the perspective of participants. Membership during the conflict in an armed forces group affected the perceived success of the TRC, as those who did not participate in the conflict were more likely to describe the TRC as successful in promoting reconciliation. Some former members in the conflict described the TRC with some negative viewpoints. Further, more former members of the conflict held the belief that the mandate of the TRC was too limited and should have gone further to help children with their physical requirements in the wake of the war. It could be that participants were expecting more from the child's process of the TRC than they were ultimately given, they were too young at the time to understand the purpose of the project when they gave consent to participate, or that the outcome of the process was not explained satisfactorily to participants. Considering the difference in moral development and possible mental consequences, as well as potential loss of guardians, inclusion of former members

of armed forces groups must be conducted in an extremely careful and prudent manner. Although the difference between the groups is small, it nonetheless suggests that when undertaking reconciliation activities in a post-conflict society, special consideration should be given to former members of armed forces groups to ensure that they understand the process, goals, and end results of the project and can participate meaningfully in the process.

Sub-Question Two

In order to assess the second sub-question, which asked whether reconciliation differed between participants of the two different TRC processes, I again picked a sample of all participants. The independent variable for this question was participation in the TRC, either the child's version or the regular version; therefore, all respondents being examined in the sample had participated in one of the TRC processes. Group 1 respondents, those who had participated in the child's process of the TRC, were compared with Group 3A, those who had participated in the regular version of the TRC. As above, all efforts were made to match geographical region, participation in the conflict, and gender, although there were some variations. The same format was followed as the previous research questions, whereby there was an analysis of language use and direct responses to the survey questions.

There were a total of six respondents in this sample. 67% (N=4) of the sample were males, while females made up the remaining 33% (N=2). Only the Western Area and the Northern Province were represented in the sample, with 50% (N=3) respectively. 50% (N=3) of the sample participated in the conflict as a member of an armed force group, 33% (N=2) did not, and 17% (N=1) did not answer the question.

Results.

I.

"*The conflict in Sierra Leone is characterized by mass killing and gross violations of human rights. A lot of innocent civilians lost their lives and several infrastructures destroyed which in fact increase* [sic] *the poverty situation in the country*."

-Group 3A Participant

As with the other samples, the first step was to examine the language use of participants, to see whether they described the conflict using positive or negative terminology. As expected from previous results, all respondents used negative terminology to describe the conflict and its subsequent impacts. Likewise, 100% of all participants accurately described reconciliation. This continued the above trends which found that participants of the TRC were able to accurately describe reconciliation at a higher rate than those who did not participate in the TRC. Therefore, both the adult and child's version of the TRC had comparable outcomes in terms of ability to describe the conflict and the impacts of the war (see Appendix E for chart).

II.

"*The prevalence of peace in Sierra Leone was first caused by the neutrality of the peacemakers and the setting up of justice mechanisms such as the TRC, [and the] special courts as well as peace and civic education carried throughout the country*."

-Group 3A Participant

The next question examined the use of tense in describing the peace process in Sierra Leone. 67% of the sample (N=4) responded in the past tense. Of the remainder, one respondent answered in the present tense, and one respondent did not answer the question, both from Group 1. Results from the first research question suggested that participation in the TRC process was responsible for an understanding of the peace process. However, this result suggests that the process may have slightly affected understanding as well; while 100% of Group 3A described the peace process in the past tense, there was only one respondent (33%) from Group 1 (see Appendix E for chart).

III.

"*The TRC was successful because people accepted to make statement and recommendation were agreed upon for it to be implemented, and today people are counting on the TRC for a progressive Sierra Leone* [sic]."

-Group 3A Participant

The final examination was an analysis of the success of the TRC. It was found that there were no differences between the two processes of the TRC in terms of perceived success rates. 100% of the sample said that the TRC was successful, and should not have done anything differently to achieve peace and reconciliation in the country. This suggests that despite the different processes used in the mainstream TRC and the Child's process, the outcome was the same, with all participants saying that the process was successful to promoting reconciliation in Sierra Leone (see Appendix E for chart).

Discussion.

There were very little differences between adult and child participants of the TRC processes. Both groups, in line with previous results, described the conflict in negative terms with a solid understanding of the conflict. Further, every respondent in the sample, regardless of age and the process they participated in, described the TRC as successful in promoting reconciliation in the country. The sole exception between the two groups was in terms of describing peace. Although the adult participants had a solid grasp on the peace process, there were some of the child participants who did not understand or answered in the present tense, as if peace had not yet been achieved.

This result may be because of the different processes utilized for the adult TRC process and the child's TRC process. However, it must be noted that Group 1, in addition to age, undoubtedly has an educational gap when compared with Group 3A. Many of Group 1 respondents were unable to finish their schooling due to their age when the conflict occurred. All Group 3A members, on the other hand, would have been of an adult age when the conflict began, and therefore had at least the opportunity to complete their education prior to the outbreak of the conflict. Although there were some minimal differences between the two groups, the results of the survey suggest that the TRC was successful in promoting intrapersonal reconciliation among participants of both the adult and child's processes of the TRC in Sierra Leone.

A Note on Behaviours

It is important to recognize that the survey only examined the first two markers of reconciliation, emotions and attitudes through an analysis of language use, descriptions, and perceptions of peace processes, without examining individual behaviour, the third characteristic of reconciliation, due to limitations of the project. There are clear indications that behaviours have changed, the first being that the conflict ended successfully and has not reignited in nine years of peace. Former enemies seem to be living alongside each other peacefully in the country. Likewise, initiatives such as disarmament were successful in the country and are now entrenched in law, as it is illegal for civilians to be in possession of arms in Sierra Leone.

However, there are some indications that behaviours have not completely changed. Observations during the field time spent in Sierra Leone suggest that some people continue to settle interpersonal conflicts with violence. I observed numerous daylight street fights, which escalated from disagreements between two people and often turned into mob justice. Thieves are treated to mob justice as well, and even children are publically flogged if caught stealing. Although it is important to note that each society has members who settle interpersonal conflict with violence, further research is needed to assess whether the post-conflict reconciliation activities affected how Sierra Leoneans handle conflict in practice, and whether intrapersonal reconciliation resulted in a change of conflict patterns. Likewise, research could examine whether individual conflict behaviours have modified in the past nine years for participants of the TRC processes.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

The systematic inclusion of children in the Sierra Leone TRC process was unprecedented in the history of truth and reconciliation initiatives, and participation of children and subsequent programs for children ensured that a major portion of the population was not ignored in the reconciliation process. Given the country's history of child involvement in the war as both victims and perpetrators, it was especially important to include children in the post-conflict peacebuilding processes in order to ensure lasting peace in Sierra Leone. This exercise in post-conflict healing provided a template to other post-conflict countries on how to safely include children in reconciliation initiatives, while provoking a global discussion around children's meaningful participation in reconciliation activities.

An examination of the Sierra Leone TRC, particularly its inclusion of children, suggests that seven years after its completion, there were varying ranges of success. Although the child's process of the TRC was successful for direct participants, it was largely unsuccessful in promoting individual intrapersonal reconciliation for children who did not participate in the reconciliation process directly. While there seems to be a mutual understanding of the conflict at the personal level among all members of society, regardless of participation in a reconciliation activity, there are areas which suggest that those who did not take part in the child's process of the TRC do not share the same level of intrapersonal reconciliation as participants of the TRC. Those who did not participate in the TRC processes have misunderstandings or misgivings about the peace process in the country; some are unable to accurately describe reconciliation; and some have yet to be convinced of the TRC's success in promoting reconciliation. The TRC's directive was to permeate society beyond the participants of the TRC, through initiatives that included education and public discourse. While the TRC created educational tools for subsequent school curriculums, these efforts would have had little impact on those who were unable to return to school at the end of the conflict. The majority of intrapersonal reconciliation occurred only for child TRC participants themselves, which means that long-term reconciliation must continue in the country, expanding its reach to non-TRC participants of all ages–including adults, youth, and children.

The study also indicates differences among child participants of the TRC based on their role in the conflict. Former child members of armed forces groups during the conflict who had participated in the child's process of the TRC had misgivings about the success of the TRC in promoting reconciliation in the country. Victims who had participated in the child's process of the TRC disagreed, and felt that the TRC was successful in promoting reconciliation. This suggests that former members of armed forces groups may need more intensive reconciliation programs than victims. Especially after a prolonged conflict such as Sierra Leone's, children who participated as a member of an armed forces group may have more difficulties reintegrating post-conflict, and suffer from stigmatization and rejection by their community or families. Their beliefs and thought processes may have become more established than for adult fighters, especially if negative attitudes and egotistical philosophies were embedded at extremely young ages when mental, psychological, and social beings were still being formulated. Therefore, former child members of armed forces groups may face more barriers than victims in changing emotions, attitudes, and behaviours, and therefore reconciliation processes should recognize their unique circumstances, and former members of armed forces groups should be given special consideration when the time to reconcile arrives.

Finally, although for the most part the results from participants of the mainstream TRC and the child's process were similar, the differences in the processes may have slightly affected intrapersonal reconciliation, through participants' understanding of peace processes. However, these differences between adult and child TRC participants proved to be minimal. It may be that the lessons learned through participation in the child's process of the TRC needed to be followed up through continued programs and reconciliation initiatives. The practice of creating separate processes for adult and children was for the most part successful for those who played a role in them.

In sum, the TRC processes, both adult and child, were successful to those who participated in them, but the child's process in particular was not successful in achieving the goal of national reconciliation because the process was unable to saturate society. Although they treated adults and children differently, the TRC treated diverse groups of children the same, resulting in differing outcomes for the two groups in terms of perceived success of the TRC seven years after completion. Likewise, the reconciliation program should have been more exhaustive and attempted to include a higher number of children in order to expand its reach. Luckily, reconciliation as a process can continue in the country as both a conflict prevention measure and a continued healing strategy. There are still Sierra Leoneans who have yet to achieve intrapersonal reconciliation following the devastating war, and this must be rectified in order

for national reconciliation to begin to take place. Reconciliation strategies and initiatives for peace must be continually revisited in the country in order to ensure that no Sierra Leoneans, young or old, are left behind in the search for common ground.

Recommendations

Although the mandate of the TRC is complete, reconciliation is a long-term process, and the results of this study suggest that reconciliation in Sierra Leone must persist. Reconciliation must continue in the country in order to continue where the TRC left off, and ensure that all members of the society are able to move forward to the future in a meaningful, united way. The grasp of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone is still felt in the country with the tools it created for children and youth, and the goal of reconciliation in the country is unceasing, as many local and international NGOs are promote reconciliation in order to continue what the TRC began. However, there is still much work to be done in the country in order to ensure reconciliation can be realized in the country.

Further reconciliation activities must be widespread and operate at the national, community, and grassroots levels in order to increase its impact on the population generally, while making special considerations for youth, especially those most affected by the conflict. The median age of the Sierra Leone population is 19 years of age (CIA World Factbook, 2011). As the largest age-group, then, the government, with the support of the many NGOs and INGOs in the country, should do everything possible to ensure that youth are given an opportunity to excel for the benefit of Sierra Leone. It must be recognized that this group will become the next generation of leaders and policy-makers and therefore, an investment in their future is parallel to an investment in the growth of the country.

At the national level, the government should continue to implement the recommendations of the TRCs, especially those that were considered “imperative” which have yet to be implemented, in discord with the original TRC mandate. Imperative recommendations that were not implemented include abolishing the death penalty (Jalloh, 2011) and ensuring that women made up 30% of political party candidates while youth were to make up at least 10% (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004). Young people should be given every opportunity to participate in the democratic process in Sierra Leone. The recent creation of the National Youth Commission in June 2011, one of the recommendations of the TRC that was implemented, is an excellent step towards ensuring that youth have an instrument to ensure their voices are heard at the highest levels. However, many of the youth I spoke with in the country were unaware of the new process, and what it meant for their ability to participate in the democratic process. Therefore, the National Youth Commission should advertise its newfound status, to ensure that all youth in the country, the intended beneficiaries of the National Youth Commission, are given the opportunity to utilize this important instrument.

In addition, the government should implement symbolic recommendations in the spirit of reconciliation, such as recognizing January 18 as National Peace Day, in celebration of the end of the conflict. The TRC categorized this recommendation as requiring “serious consideration” (Sierra Leone TRC, 2004b, p.222) by government but was not implemented. Symbolic policy statements such as this are integral to promoting reconciliation at the national level. Likewise, organizations that continue to promote reconciliation at the community level should be given funding and support.

The majority of survey respondents were critical of the fact that the conflict interfered with their education. Most have been unable to go back to their studies due to financial restraints, although the majority outlined a desire to do so. Therefore, continued investment in adult education programs is critical. Not only would it help to minimize the illiteracy rate in the country, currently at 64.9% overall but much higher for women (CIA World Factbook, 2011), it would help to control the frustration of the many young people who were robbed of an education by the conflict. Scholarships should be created for those who were able to finish their secondary education, in order to allow them to continue their studies at the college and university level and ensure that there is a properly educated group to lead the country in the future. The practice of levelling fees against students sitting exams limits their ability to continue their education and the practice should be eradicated in both theory and practice. Likewise, corruption in the primary, secondary, and tertiary educational systems must be closely scrutinized to ensure that students are not forced to pay for grades, reference letters, or unnecessary items. Primary education should be free in order to increase participation; despite this being a recommendation of the TRC, it has yet to be implemented, and costs can be

prohibitive for families. Children who are unable to go to school will lack exposure to the tools of the TRC, limiting the reach of reconciliation. The education sector, as the driving force of a continued, prolonged national reconciliation program in the country, should ensure that all members of society are included.

The conflict should be used as an opportunity for educational development. Similar to the tools that it created for children, a condensed version of the TRC created specifically for adults would widen readership of the TRC and ensure that the TRC is disseminated to the widest possible arena. Likewise, by implementing a program specifically for the adult education sector, understanding of the TRC, reconciliation, and peacebuilding would swell in the country. Children and adults alike should be given the opportunity to learn from the mistakes of past generations in order to continue mutual understanding in Sierra Leone, and boosting adult education programs would ensure that youth, many of whom missed their education due to the conflict, would have the opportunity to become educated while achieving intrapersonal reconciliation.

A majority of the respondents suggested that youth unemployment played a large role in the outbreak of the conflict. Today this continues to be a problem, with a large unemployment rate, although exact numbers are not available (CIA World Factbook, 2011). As one of the survey respondents outlined, potential for conflict continues to remain high due to the high rate of youth unemployment in Sierra Leone today. Therefore, Sierra Leone should implement creative initiatives that generate employment for the youth, along with increased skills training. There are plenty of opportunities in Sierra Leone for boosting trades, including construction, road building, and electrical and mechanic work, and the youth of Sierra Leone should be given all opportunities to fill these niches. Further, international organizations should make every effort to train and hire local Sierra Leoneans for positions. Job creation would help boost human development, which in turn would contribute to conflict prevention, and may lead youth to educational programs, leading to a potential reconciliation.

All efforts should be made to ensure that the country does not evolve into war again. Conflict prevention measures in the country should continue to ensure the preservation of peace with a focus on governance, democracy, human rights, capacity-building, and development. Aid and partnerships should continue to be created in the country. Likewise, conflict prevention measures should be continually used in neighbouring countries, to prevent wars that would have indisputably negative effects in Sierra Leone. Development should continue in order to provide hope to those living in abject poverty, and to prevent future incidents of violent uprising.

Finally, further research is needed in the area of reconciliation, and especially child reconciliation. As children are increasingly welcomed as participants to peace processes around the globe, further opportunities for research in the field of reconciliation are presented. It is important to conduct long-term follow-up studies on the outcomes of including children in peace processes, in order to build the post-conflict knowledge-base to be implemented in countries transitioning towards peace. Although it was not a perfect process and was designing its methods throughout, Sierra Leone provides an excellent example of how reconciliation processes can include children of all ages in more than just statement-taking or creative outlets. Of a population, children undoubtedly understand the least when a country is erupted into conflict, and the time and effort should be taken to ensure that their needs are met, and they are able to form some understanding of what happened to them, and why. As more countries include children and youth in peace building and reconciliation activities, the knowledge base becomes richer and post-conflict countries can adapt the understanding to create unique and distinctive reconciliation activities. Out of the tragedy of war has presented an opportunity to learn: about human behaviour, about political unrest, about intervention, and about reconciliation. Lessons learned from Sierra Leone can guide future conflict missions, interventions, and reconciliation initiatives.

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List of Abbreviations and Terms

Abbreviations

ACC	Association for Children in Crisis
AI	Amnesty International
APC	All People's Congress (Sierra Leone political party)
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
CDF	Civil Defence Forces
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States; Made up of 16 West African states: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo
ICTJ	International Center for Transitional Justice
NPRC	National Provisional Ruling Council
NRI	National Reconciliation Initiatives
RUF	Revolutionary United Force of Sierra Leone
SLA	Sierra Leone Army
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party (Sierra Leone political party)
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission

ULIMO	United Liberated Movement of Liberia
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNOMSIL	United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Terms

Child : A person under the age of 18 years.

Intrastate conflict : A conflict which takes place between two or more factions within the borders of a nation.

Member of an armed force : Children who participated in the war in some capacity, through membership in an armed group involved in the fighting. Tasks ranged from cooking, cleaning and laundering clothes, carrying loads, sexual slaves, to those who had carried arms in combat as child soldiers. (The term "child soldiers" is not used to define this group as a whole, since many participants did not bear arms.)

National reconciliation initiatives : Reconciliation activities which are initiated by the government and take place simultaneously throughout a country.

Reconciliation : Defined as "a societal process that involves mutual acknowledgment of past suffering and the changing of destructive attitudes and behaviours into constructive relationships toward sustainable peace" (Brounéus, 2008, p.294). National reconciliation is preceded by individual reconciliation at the intrapersonal level, which is also based on changed emotions, attitudes, and behaviours.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission : A national reconciliation initiative which, driven by volunteer truth-telling of those who were affected, creates a historical record of an event in order to acknowledge the past and move forward from it. This usually occurs throughout the country simultaneously, and usually takes several years to compile.

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