



Bringing the Old Back in: Retraditionalizing the Institution of Chieftaincy in the Modern State Governance of Sierra Leone

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Abstract

Modern state governance in Africa in general, and in Sierra Leone in particular, has become excruciatingly challenging following the end of the Cold War in the 1990s and the devastating civil conflicts that followed it. State structures have crumbled and collapsed and, in some cases, atrophied. The central argument of this paper postulates that if chieftaincy in Sierra Leone is “retraditionalized” and, at the same time, adapted to modern changes, and effectively utilized and appropriately enlisted to complement the effort of the enfeebled state institutions it can engender appropriate social change and assist in the political reordering of society. Although seen as a recreated and appropriated by the colonial and post-colonial state apparatus or as an outmoded institution, chieftaincy has shown remarkable resilience and adaptability in the face of the modernist project. Put another way, chieftaincy has resisted extinction and it continues to demonstrate its visibility in most of Africa’s modern state system as a viable and relevant institution capable of cushioning the fledging contemporary African state. A participatory approach to data collection including but not limited to desk review, focus group discussions, and interviews was employed during this research. The researcher experienced some limitations to this study major of which was the unavailability of some key stakeholders (Paramount Chiefs) for interviews and consultations. Besides, some of the literature was not available, which constrained the researcher in gathering primary data. The results indicate that the institution of chieftaincy in Sierra Leone has refused to be relegated to the dustbin of history.

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It is in this vein that this paper argues that the institution of chieftaincy is still relevant as a trusted institution for governance by the majority of people living in rural Sierra Leone. The paper concludes that traditional leadership can stimulate authentic participatory democracy and provide stability at the local level, which is *sine qua non* to development since more than 70 per cent of Sierra Leone's population live in rural areas directly ruled by chiefs.

Keywords: Chieftaincy; Colonialism; Decentralization; Kingship; Retraditionalization; Ritual Chieftaincy; Ruling Houses; Traditional Institution; Sasswood; Governance.

1. Introduction

The institution of chieftaincy in Sierra Leone predates colonialism. In the pre-colonial era, Kings and Queens and their subordinates rulers (section, town and village chiefs) were tutelary heads of kingdoms and states established all over Sierra Leone. For instance, the Temne of the North had states like Yoni, Maforki, Marampa, Konike, Tane, Masimera, Koya and Kholifa ; while, the Mende people of the East and South of Sierra Leone had six states – Kpaa-Mende, Bumpeh, Kpanguma, Tikonkoh, Gaura and Luawa [1]. The Yalunka and the Limba of the North had the Solima Yalunka and the Biriwa Limba states respectively. Kingship in the pre-colonial period was largely achievement oriented. Put differently, the founders of states and kingdoms were famous warriors, farmers or hunters. Pre-colonial Africa had kings who were later referred to as chiefs by the colonial administrators, and were selected from lineages claiming descent from a founder, or some ancestor who performed a remarkable deed for the community and was rewarded with power [2]. Aside of the fact that pre-colonial kings wielded enormous power and influence in society, their basis of legitimacy rested on tradition; on inherited culture and the people's history; the values, social and moral fabric of society and the indigenous institutions that survived to serve those value systems. Kings, therefore, served as custodians of land and the people. Dovetailing with the above, pre-colonial political institutions had checks and balances to deal with despotism or misuse of power. Two types of chieftaincies (ritual and secular) existed and continue to exist today in Sierra Leone [3]. Ritual chieftaincy, which is highly religious and inflexible, is practiced by the Temne and Bullom in the Northern part of the country. It has a stricter adherence to tradition and not gender-friendly. That is, women are not allowed to be chiefs in the region where ritual chieftaincy exist. Secular chieftaincy, on the other hand, is practiced among the Mende of the East and South of Sierra Leone. It is flexible and not restrictive as ritual chieftaincy. Women are allowed to become chiefs and even become members of the male secret society, the poro. In both chieftaincies, the poro plays a remarkable role in checking the excesses of chiefs. In the pre-colonial period, the poro was powerful enough to delegitimize any king that abused his powers. As a matter of fact, pre-colonial rulers depended largely on the support of secret societies for political guidance and for the maintenance of customary law and order. Chieftaincy under colonialism faced many challenges. It is understatement to suggest that chieftaincy under colonialism was distorted to entrench and consolidate the colonial administration. Mamdani (1996) notes that indirect rule made chiefs accountable to the colonial power, rather than local people, which made them much more despotic and arbitrary. In Sierra Leone, chiefs served as extensions of the colonial administration collecting taxes and conducting public works on behalf of the metropole. By serving as auxiliaries to the colonial administration, chiefs lost their legitimate political and judiciary roles they had enjoyed in the pre-colonial era. The colonial administration supplanted the political and

judicial powers of chiefs by creating courts manned by educated court officials, and even in situations where they exercised political authority; they only did so at the behest of the colonial administration [4]. Abraham further argues that the dominating society, representing a technologically advanced society, infused elements that affected the pattern of change. Indigenous sovereignty was lost, and the rulers were made adjuncts of the colonial administrative mechanism. Chiefs lost not only their independence but also their chiefly legitimacy, authority, powers and influence, which were abrogated by the colonial power. Chiefs were no longer representatives of the people but that of the colonial administration. Indeed, traditional sources of legitimacy of chieftaincy were atrophied. One can say that colonialism effectively undermined, distorted and reinvented chieftaincy, a situation that affected the institution in the post-colonial period. The post-colonial state inherited a distorted form of chieftaincy, which they continued to use as surrogates of administration and local rule. The Modernist theorists and Anthropologists who regarded chieftaincy as outmoded, undemocratic and oppressive predicted doom for chieftaincy in the post-independence era. That is, chieftaincy will wither away the moment democratic institutions emerged on the continent. To the Modernist theorists and Anthropologists, chieftaincy was antithetical to democratic values. Their prediction witnessed a wave of attempts by the post-colonial leaders to further reduce the powers of or abolish chieftaincy immediately after independence. For instance, Sekou Toure abolished chieftaincy in Guinea but it didn't exactly disappear—only another type of chieftaincy emerged. Kwame Nkrumah stripped Ghanaian chiefs of their active or effective political functions, but coopted them into running local communities as opinion leaders. Although it gave chiefs symbolic recognition and no actual power, the institution of chieftaincy was not consigned to the dustbin of history in Ghana. In Botswana, it was the relevance of the institution's symbols and aura in unifying and building the new nation-state which encouraged the new leadership (Sereste Khama, the first Prime Minister was also a Chief) to accord chieftaincy the significance it now holds in public affairs [5]. By the 1970s, these theorists were belied as “retraditionalization” became a critical aspect of rule in most African countries, even if for reasons, but politically, to act as vote catchers.

2. The “Traditional” in Africa

It is an acknowledged fact that most of Africa's population is attached to customary and traditional ways of life and is directly under the tutelage of traditional rulers. This is true not only of the predominant rural population but also of about thirty percent of city migrants and the governing elites who retain their primordial ties and loyalties through the various ethnic and cultural associations that proliferate in the urban civil society landscape [6]. Post-colonial governments have, in different ways, manipulated, reinvented and recreated tradition and traditional practices such as the utilization of witchcraft and juju to access and sustain power. This elucidates that the force of tradition is indeed very dramatic and delicate in the competition for and sustenance of state power in Africa because prominence is accorded to the traditional and cultural roots of the leaders [7]. The audacious and burgeoning literature on the role of traditional leaders in modern African politics abound [8]. The current state of affairs in Africa particularly the socio-economic malaise afflicting the people compels one to argue that the modern state needs to be complemented by other sources of power to achieve its development strides. One such source of power is the traditional institution of chieftaincy that predates colonialism and one that has been exploited by the post-colonial state pretty much the same way the colonial project did. It is also arguable that tradition, which predates colonialism in Africa, has a place in the present post-colonial African

politics and that reengaging it into the modern day governance system will be more compelling in bringing about the much-needed sustainable development. At the sub-national level of the state where most of the continent's populations live, traditional forms of rule and governance (rule through customary laws and traditional rites) are commonplace. Chiefs in villages and towns are still esteemed and remain the most immediate and accessible rulers available to the vast majority of the rural people. The authority of the Poro, Bondo/Sande and Humui and other secret societies that served as cultural arbiters are still widely used in the governance of villages and towns [9]. The author [10: 56] then that, "...serious palavers concerning the chieftaindom as a whole are talked over in the bush (by a poro tribunal), irrespective of whether or not they come up for public attention, or official notice of the government." The re-discovery of the relevance of traditional leadership has awakened Africans to the stark reality that the future of their statehoods, which remain largely fragile and constricted, and the challenges to their sovereignties in the wake of the current global political and economic order, rests on their ability and urgent response to tap into their socio-cultural values and traditional heritage for a more indigenous approach to solving the continent's manifold problems (Zartman 2000). For instance, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda reestablished and reinstated the Kingship of the Kabaka of Buganda against the recommendation made by the political scientist, Mahmood Mamdani, that chieftaincy structures be replaced with elected "resistance" committees [11]. In 1994, President Nelson Mandela of South Africa appointed Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi of the Zulu Kingdom as Minister of Home Affairs as a gesture of unifying a post-Apartheid polarized state, and recognizing the aspirations and visions of the rural Zulu people. The British Department for International Development (DFID), in collaboration with the government of Sierra Leone, rebuilt some homes/residences of Paramount Chiefs (PCs) in 2002 with the logic that the return of PCs to their localities will provide confidence and attract the internally displaced to resettle back to their communities. The Marabouts of Senegal continue to play an extraordinary role not only in the religious transformation of the Senegalese society but also in bringing about local stability and order, much needed for development in their country. These thoughts among African leaders had been anticipated in the Kampala Document of 1991 that addressed the gross instability and insecurity facing Africa, and utilizing home grown prescriptions for curbing them. Dovetailing with the above, a broadcast over the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Network Africa Program on June 9, 2008, revealed that traditional leaders from Bong County in Liberia advocated the reintroduction of "Sasswood"¹ as the most appropriate means of gathering facts from witnesses, and ensuring that complainants and defendants are literally forced to state the facts of their case before the courts. To the traditional leaders, Sasswood is more effective because people who choose to swear on the Bible or Koran have notoriously told lies before the courts and, thereby pervert justice. They argue that people no longer believe in the Bible or Koran and the justice system has, therefore, been appropriated and undermined. The traditional rulers of Bong County advocated for the resurgence of Sasswood as a way of bringing sanity that has once been enjoyed in their society, and appealed to the Liberian government to help modernize the institution of to have it serve as a viable tool in the justice system. The advocacy to enlist chiefs in the functions of the modern state system has always provoked intense intellectual and political debate. Two schools of thought come to mind. To the modernizing perfectionists and some Euro-centric scholars, chiefs are

¹ "Sasswood" is a poisonous tree whose bark was used to establish innocence of guilt in a court case. References to this in most pre-colonial and colonial documents abound. It was established that the tree was poisonous and did not in itself guarantee justice, but because it killed, it was feared and was more effective as a deterrent.

clearly old-fashioned and autocratic, which is an affront to democracy, and as public servants, producing little or nothing of economic value. These scholars argue that since chiefs are securely installed without mechanisms of accountability, let alone mechanisms to encourage good performance, chiefs are seen as entirely beyond the pale. Even worse, chiefs are deemed by purists as open to exploit their subjects, through the charging of fees or demanding services beyond market value [12]. Other African scholars who view modern chiefs as colonial inventions have been scornful of chiefs emerging from colonial rule “as the full blown village despots, shorn of the rule-based restraint” [13]. This view reflects the study of African societies and community leaders immediately following independence, which did not interrogate how these chiefs wielded power during the pre-colonial era, and how much leverage they have over their communities even today. In essence, the emphasis has been on the legitimacy of traditional leaders in the eyes of the researcher, rather than how the chiefs are conceived and held by their people. Responding to such views, Richard Sklaar [14] asserts that “The Kgotla of Botswana, the Alake of Egbaland, the Marabout of Senegal exert power in their societies regardless of one another academic interpretation of their roles.” To retraditionalize, that is, restoring the original dignity, powers and authority of the institution of chieftaincy, must be prioritized to ensure sustainability and legitimacy of local governance in the country. The following are findings from the research:

3. Findings

3.1 Going back to the Basics: Re-traditionalizing Chiefly Authority

The 2002 Paramount Chieftaincy elections marked the beginning of chieftaincy reforms in Sierra Leone history. It was an extraordinary feat considering the pre-war election fracas that characterized the process. Not only did the election generate popular participation of the rural population but it also galvanized their involvement and enthusiasm in consultative meetings to determine the institutional reforms of chieftaincy. The 2010 Chieftaincy Act of Sierra Leone clearly defined the roles and responsibilities of chiefs in dispensing justice, tax collection and general governance at the local. This document was linked to the 2010 Decentralization Policy of Sierra Leone where a clear distinction was made between the roles of Paramount Chiefs (PCs) and Council Chairpersons. Notwithstanding the controversies surrounding individual chiefs in post-independence Sierra Leone, most of the local population sees the institution as the representative framework for community stability and order. The chief was and continue to be seen as the promise of the future because chiefs embody the aspirations and expectations of the people. As the icon of the community, he/she ensures that the future would be orderly, because with the chief the future was nothing more than the continuation of the past and the present. In Sierra Leone specifically, individual chiefs have been criticized for acts that contravene the normative practices of the local order, and efforts have been made to remove them from office.¹ Yet, there is general consensus among liberal and radical scholars that chieftaincy should be mended and not to put an end to [15]. Political parties and successive governments in the post-colonial era used PCs as vote-catching tools. Unmindful of the ripple effects on institutional capability and political legitimacy, the misuse and manipulation of chiefs culminated in the erosion of confidence of the people in their local leaders. Assured of government support, corruption and mismanagement came to define the characteristics of individual chiefs who used their traditional offices and chiefly regalia to penetrate and to exploit the modern state for personal gain.² Supported by the central government, individual chiefs transferred their allegiance from their subjects to the state that culminating in a divide between state and society. The state of chiefdoms from the report of ‘consultative meetings’ held in

2001 on chieftom governance in all three provinces is rather grim.³ The recorded widespread destruction of public utilities, infrastructure and social services by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebellion (1991-2002) reveal the degree to which the institutional capacity of chieftaincy totally depended on central government. PCs fled their communities and most of them lost touch with their subjects for the better part of the eleven-year civil war. This helped to reawaken a sense of urgency among the rural population to reconstitute the infrastructure of chieftaincy in the first place, and to revive social services such as schools, health centers and housing, in the second. For instance, in the Kenema district, “Councilors, including section and town chiefs from the five sections of the Small Bo chieftom (Sowa, Fullah, Golama, Kamboma and Nyawa) called on the government to conduct PC elections in their chieftoms... they observed that one fundamental aspect of a democratic society is for the people to determine their rulers.”⁴ Because chieftaincy is at the heart of traditional institutions of Sierra Leone, re-traditionalizing and reengaging it, and making it more effective as a grassroots political institution is a responsible venture for any government to undertake. The consensus expressed everywhere during the ‘consultative workshops’ was not only in favor of maintaining the institution of chieftaincy but also of electing chiefs from ‘ruling houses’ or ‘ruling families’ in order to “prevent unacceptable people who are politically thrust on them”, a cryptic reference to past All Peoples Congress (APC) party policy [16]. The workshops generated healthy debates not only within chieftoms but also in the wider Sierra Leone community. Nonetheless, there is a profound consensus that while Sierra Leoneans must be culture sensitive in dealing with chieftaincy reforms, the institution in its current form requires a total overhaul as a condition for engaging them in the development trajectory and governance process of the country. That is, chieftaincy must be accorded some of its pre-colonial powers such as the seeking the welfare of the people and dispensation of justice as the bastion for community stability, cohesion and peace. Chiefs should have the authority to appoint their Speakers to give them the opportunity to choose people they think can best work with them for the good of the community. There is a renewed urgency, both at the local and national levels, for total reform of government procedures *apropos* of Paramount Chief elections, viz. a simple majority instead of the current 55% required to win an election, a chieftom councilor list be rationalized to reflect chieftom realities and to reflect the interests of women and youths, and the abolition of the unfair practice of “camping” councilors to influence and obtain their votes unduly [17]. Paramount Chiefs are elected by an “electoral college” comprising councilors in the chieftom. Each chieftom has a number of councilors who, at the demise of an incumbent chief, elects a new one. In some chieftoms, people advocated replacing the life tenure of PCs with periodic elections to guarantee that chiefs continue to hold their positions based on their performance in office.

3.2 Accountability and Legitimacy

The greater the degree to which a chief can achieve the convergence between the public evaluation of his incumbency and the stated criteria of good government, the greater the extent to which he/she may expect to wield legitimate power [18]. Accountability is considered a central virtue of not only chieftaincy but of leadership as a whole, and the degree of control people think they wield over their leadership determines their assessment of his/her rule. But while accountability remains significant, it must not be overplayed because modern day liberal democratic governance systems face accountability conundrums too. The capacity for the traditional ruler to take responsible decisions is deemed equally important as long as they are in the interests of his people. The restoration of the legitimacy of the authority of chiefs back to the people and making chieftaincy

accountable to them is a *sine qua non* to reinstating their integrity and dignity. In the pre-colonial era, chiefs were prevented from perpetrating political abuses because the people, through their Council of Elders and the Poro society even where they had power to impose sanctions against chiefs. These parallel institutions served as oversight mechanisms to ensure that the chief ruled according to the wishes of the people. It was the colonial state that employed chieftaincy to serve as an arm of the colonial project that made it no longer accountable to its people but to the colonial administration. This put chieftaincy in disrepute. Its successor, the post-colonial state, has not done any better. Like its predecessor, the post-colonial state, rather than transform the institution to serve the rural population, maintained and even elaborated the institutional decay as long as it served the interests of the central government. Chieftaincy was not only corrupted and made disdainful, but it was also highly politicized and rendered coercive. Even the criterion for becoming a chief was reduced to being a surrogate to the central state apparatus, which effectively subverted the credibility and respectability of the institution itself [19]. One can extrapolate from the foregoing that if the institution of chieftaincy is to be rescued, one pre-condition is to rebuild the complete legitimacy of the institution. Chieftaincy needs to be reformed not only to respond to the societal and cultural demands but also to articulate the people's needs at all levels of interaction. To achieve this end, chiefs need to refrain from being submissive to the controlling powers of the state's political machinery. Their relationship with the state should be predicated on mutual dependence and cooperation and not on servility and sycophancy, a practice not uncommon with Paramount Chiefs in Sierra Leone. To avert the vulnerability and further erosion of the integrity of the institution, chieftaincy must be put back on its traditional track. This can only happen through the cooperative effort of both the state and the chiefs. Sierra Leone's government commitment to bring governance close to the people was further demonstrated when the Local Government Act was drafted in 2004 with the objective that "local government statutes and legislations...scattered about in various enactments were to be consolidated."⁵ The compilation of the various statutes was aimed at basically reformulating and decentralizing local government in Sierra Leone, and to respond to current socio-political challenges and development trajectories of the Sierra Leone society. Local government had formally ceased to operate in 1972 following the dissolution of the District Council system in which the PCs played a key role as ex-officio members. The District Councils had been instrumental in promoting local development and providing basic services such as managing District Council schools, health care centers and constructing feeder roads. The revival of District Councils in the post-war era to allow local functionaries to plan, implement and evaluate their own development projects and to provide basic essential services to communities was indicative of the government's determination to decentralize the already over-centralized government. In his inaugural address to the newly elected PCs in January 2003, President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah reiterated his government's commitment to the restoration of chiefly powers and authority.

"The desired new policy will now attempt to restore the past, and where necessary modernize the governance structure of chieftaincy to make it more effective, relevant and democratic ... This vital role previously played by Paramount Chiefs, contributed immensely to our stability."⁶ The commitment to re-empower the institution of chieftaincy came against the recognition of the breakdown of traditional order in chiefdoms that culminated in rural discontent, which partly contributed to the civil war. To avert the situation from reoccurring, the government, with the financial and technical support from the Department for International Development (DFID), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the European Union (EU), pledged to 'give

power back to the people' when it seized on the historic moment to conduct a successfully free and fair Paramount Chieftaincy election in which many incumbent ruling houses lost the election and government-supported candidates were rejected by the electorate. Yet, the Electoral College, which basically disenfranchised the people, was not touched. For instance, the political fortunes of the Kuyembeh and the Kutubu ruling houses of Yawei and Upper Bambara chiefdoms in the Kailahun district, respectively, were brought to an abrupt halt when the playing field was leveled, allowing candidates to be judged on the issues affecting their chiefdoms. Making their debut in local politics, PC Cyril Foray Gondor of Upper Bambara (a teacher) and PC Joseph Kormeh Braima of Yawei in the East emerged as winners against the powerful and favored ruling houses. It would have been unheard of for these two very formidable, politically entrenched and influential ruling houses to lose elections under the tutelage of late President Siaka Stevens (1968-1985). In a related case, the support of Honorable S. B. Marah, the SLPP Majority Leader of the House of Parliament, for Alhaji Balansama Marah of the Senghe chiefdom in the Koinadugu district in the North only succeeded in infuriating the electorate to vote for Alie Marah as the Paramount Chief. These impressive events demonstrated a change in the local political landscape of Sierra Leone in which the rural population was provided with a favorable political environment to elect their preferred leaders.

3.3 Succession, Eligibility and Tenure

As a custom-based institution, chieftaincy eligibility should continue to be based on family membership or lineage recognized by tradition. Candidates vying for chieftaincy must prove that they belong to a ruling house acceptable to the people. The new Code of Practice for Chiefdom Administration of 2002 states: "Only aspirants from recognized ruling houses or descendants of the original signatories to the 'Protectorate Treaty' signed with the colonial government administration may stand as candidates in a paramount chieftaincy election."⁷ This has been embraced as a positive step toward legitimizing the institution of chieftaincy. By implication, ruling houses created after independence in 1961 have been declared ineligible to contest chieftaincy elections. However, since paramount chieftaincy is for life, a Principle of Rotation of chieftaincy should be considered as a compromise to minimize dynastic struggles and other intra-chiefdom disputes.⁸ This principle advocates a kind of power-sharing mechanism in which no one ruling house can field candidates twice on a row. That is, at the death, dismissal or suspension of a chief of a particular ruling house, no member of his/her family will be eligible to contest the position. The monopoly of one ruling house over the political field for a long time has translated into the marginalization of other ruling families and led to their non-participation in local politics. Political exclusion of groups and individuals at whatever level of society has a ripple effect on consensus building much needed for development and peaceful co-existence. The marginalized are always suspicious that policies formulated by the incumbent are meant to further extend their exclusion. This gives birth to mistrust and uncertainty that may culminate in intra-chiefdom struggles. One can argue that the principle of rotation will serve as an antidote to reduce suspicion and intra-chiefdom political rivalry between and among ruling houses, a situation that helped fuel the eleven-year old civil war. Literacy should be an essential requirement for office holders in the 21st century. It is an absolute necessity for candidates who vie for public office to be able to read and write so that they can communicate with other people, groups and institutions. In the post-conflict period where chiefs have to interact with development agents, International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) workers and other international personalities, it is imperative that PCs be literate enough to articulate rural

problems. Although literacy was not an eligibility criterion in the 2002 chieftaincy elections, it became an important and crucial element for choosing PCs that year. This was probably because the war had exposed the rural people not only to the ordeals of urban life but also created the awareness that western education can be an advantage in understanding of globalization and how the functioning of the world impacts rural communities no matter how remote or isolated. In addition, most of the older people did not survive the war, which paved the way for younger, educated and more dynamic individuals to contest for chieftaincy positions. Consequently, much younger and better educated PCs were elected. Historically, Stevenson's constitutional proposals of 1948 required all PCs to be literate in order to serve on the Legislative Council. Ironically, when it came up in the Protectorate Assembly for debate, it was the literate PC Julius Gulama of Kaiyamba chiefdom in the Moyamba district that opposed it, while the non-literate chiefs supported the literacy qualification. When the vote for literacy was carried, it threatened to cause a split between the non-literate chiefs on one side, and the literate chiefs and the educated Protectorate elites on the other (Kilson 1966). The debates over the literacy qualification soon died down and have never again been a determining factor for chiefly rule in the politics of Sierra Leone. The opposition of PC Gulama was probably designed to muzzle any potential opposing candidate in his powerful position, which was a retrograde step. Some chiefdom consultation reports recommended the imposition of term limits on chiefs as a way to curb dictatorship and complacency.⁹ The proponents contend that chieftaincy reformers would be defeating the purpose of democratization and good governance if they allow chiefs to occupy office for life. The advocates propose that a periodic chiefdom-wide referendum on whether the chief should continue to rule or not is required. The basis for this proposal is that a periodic referendum gives the people the opportunity to play an oversight role on chiefly activities, and to limit the rule of irresponsible PCs. The argument maintains that it also tests the popularity of PCs and puts them on their toes. The proposal is certainly fraught with some snags. First, it defeats the purpose of being traditional if chieftaincy is to be put on a similar pedestal with the western-style periodic elective process. In pre-modern societies of Sierra Leone, chiefs were selected and not elected.¹⁰ Colonialism introduced the elective process, which undermined the traditional selective process based on achievement. It would be a political gaffe and a dangerously mischievous mistake if chieftaincy is subjected to intermittent elections, which are characterized by competition and personality attacks. Second, an unpredictable scenario may arise where people vote against the continuation of a chief. Traditionally, a chief remains legitimate and enjoys the privileges and opportunities of the office as long as he/she lives. In the event another chief is elected, especially from a rival ruling house, who takes custody of the land, tradition and the people? This can precipitate intra-chiefdom struggles and conflicts with ominous repercussions. It is fair to conclude that however much we try to modernize and democratize the institution of chieftaincy, it will still remain traditional. Modernization of the institution should accommodate some democratic reforms but not everything in an elective office. For instance, there is need for direct elections of PC instead of electoral college; and instead of periodic referendum, national monitoring committees be established to find out people's views of chiefs who will then be advised accordingly and pressure put by the government to get back on track.

3.4 Sources of Income

Regular source or sources of income is a compelling pre-requisite for restoring the dignity and respect of chiefs. It is an understatement to suggest that the Sierra Leone civil conflict left the country in dire financial straits. The

country emerged from the war with a depleted and narrow economic resource base. Agricultural productions had come to a halt; the Sierra Leone Iron Ore Company (SIEROMCO) and the Sierra Rutile Company were ransacked in 1995 when the RUF/Sobel army struck the mines; and the diamonds fields had been effectively occupied by the rebels since 1994. It was still unclear in 2002 who controlled the diamond industry, the major source of foreign exchange earnings in Sierra Leone. The destruction of the country economic base left in its wake an incapacitated national and local institutions and an impoverished rural marginal. Because the national economy was in a shambles, even ministers and government officials referred to the country's plummeting economy as 'donor driven'. This indicated that the government was largely dependent on donor assistance and foreign loans/grants to service the national debt and to fulfill rudimentary financial obligations like payment of salaries to workers. The 2003 UNDP Human Development Report statistically ranked Sierra Leone as the least developed nation in the world.¹¹ The economic malaise placed state institutions, including chieftaincy, in an unpredictable position. If chiefs are to reclaim their lost glory, dignity and respect, and at the same time, respond to demands made on them by their constituents, then adequate remuneration for them must be a priority. As we have seen, inadequate remuneration by both the colonial and post-independence regimes led chiefs to engage in financial malpractices that brought the institution into disrepute. Colonialism undercut the earning capacities of chiefs, reduced their incomes and exposed chieftaincy to all forms of economic malfeasance. Because the people look to their chiefs for support in times of bad harvest, natural calamities, and lean periods, they need adequate resources to enable them respond to these demands. A chief who cannot fulfill these obligations becomes a liability. This point is critical given the misery of the rural population after the destructive war, and the centripetal and centrifugal forces that normally define chieftaincy. Post-war chiefs must not be made to fail but to succeed in bringing into play their administrative experiences, their knowledge of the rural communities and their mobilizational capabilities that are much-needed to court the participation of the rural population in good governance, democratization and development processes. Their success is strategic in the on-going consolidation and 'indigenization' of peace wherein the people become central actors to sustain and own the peace and development of their societies. This clearly means an increase in both internal and external sources of revenue to meet these many expectations. Against this backdrop, the capacity of both the state and the institution of chieftaincy must be increased to cater for resources to cushion the institution. In this light, three possible sources of income are identified:

- i) Grants and Salaries from the central government;
- ii) Generating internal revenue; and
- iii) Sale of chiefly services to the nation.

3.4.1 Grants and Salaries

The introduction of stipends to chiefs by the colonial administration did not end with the achievement of independence. It has continued since as a policy that the central government pays salaries to chiefs and provides grants for chiefdom development projects. The salary scale of PCs in Sierra Leone in 2002 was one hundred thousand Leones a month, which is about \$50.¹² This is not only inadequate but it also reduces the institution of

chieftaincy to a pauper state. If chieftaincy is to be respected and made viable for good governance and development, a complete review of salary conditions is needed to reflect current socio-economic challenges. Besides, prompt payment of salaries may prevent chiefs from sliding back into their old behavior of imposing excessive fines and using forced labor to supplement the non-payment of salaries as experienced in the colonial and post-independence periods. In addition, government should be responsible for traveling expenses and sitting fees of chiefs when they attend conferences of the request of the government or on official duties, such as attending conferences called by the Council of Chiefs and local councils. It has been particularly difficult for the government to meet these obligations in light of economic difficulties afflicting the state. As mentioned earlier, the immediate post-war government depended on handouts to run the state machinery. However, continued excuses on the part of government to pay salaries to chiefs and to provide resources for development may bode ill for the proper functioning of PCs and local government. Government officers have acquired notoriety for displaying ostentatious lifestyles even when ordinary citizens grovel in penury. Government cannot, therefore, afford to claim bankruptcy while its executive and legislative officers live in unbridled affluence. It becomes difficult for chiefs to understand the position of the government. To supplement the meager salaries of chiefs and to help chiefdoms overcome their financial difficulties, the government adopted a policy to give back to chiefdoms with diamond deposits about 0.7% on the sale of diamonds that went through official channels by July 2001. The Minister of Mines, Mr. Swaray Deen, while presenting a check of 190 Million Leones to PCs and Regent Chiefs in diamondiferous chiefdoms in the Southern and Eastern provinces, said that the checks signified government's readiness to restore the dignity of the chiefs and to empower them to have control and supervision over their chiefdoms.¹³ As direct beneficiaries of the diamond sales, chiefs and the people may be more vigilant in unearthing diamond trafficking, a situation that continues to cripple Sierra Leone's battered economy. The government provides grants to chiefdoms with diamond deposits especially in the South and East of the country. The monies are meant for community development with the hope of lessening the burden on central government. Out of the chiefdom committee, a chiefdom development committee was created that involved youths, women and the elderly with the purpose to undertake community development activities. While enormous progress was being made in some chiefdoms to rehabilitate community infrastructures such as schools, court barriers, and the like, some other chiefdoms were still to account for the monies disbursed to them. For example, In the Lugbu chiefdom, Bo district Southern Province and in Loko Masama in Port Loko district in the North, the construction of the Native Court Barrie remained incomplete, while In Tinkoko chiefdom in the South, Chief Kangbai Mackavorey completed the construction of a health center in Sembehun 17. Unfortunately, in Sahn Malen in the Pujehun district and Baoma in the Bo district, the chiefdom was yet to give an account of how the money had been spent. There was nothing to show that they had spent the money. While government wanted to make rural development the independent responsibility of chiefdoms, some chiefs had not forgotten their old practices of misappropriation of public funds. But on the whole, tremendous progress was being made and the rural population was made to be more involved in their own development. What has still remained unclear and seemingly unpredictable is what alternative provisions exist for chiefdoms that are less endowed with mineral deposits. Not all chiefdoms in the country produce diamonds; as such, mechanisms need to be in place to attend to their development needs. It is critical for the government to weigh in on this issue in order to avoid crises that may arise from uneven development at the chiefdom level.

3.4.2 Leveraging Chiefly Expertise and Knowledge

Another way to finance traditional rulers is through the sale of their services to the public. With the increasing number of educated elites as PCs, the question is not how well a chief fares as an individual but how effective a chief exploits opportunities from other sources to cater for the needs of his people. Leveraging chiefly expertise and knowledge to the public is one way a chief can promote his/her talents, visions, agenda and ingenuity on national issues on the one hand, and earn money to maintain the institution, on the other. For example, PCs can give public lectures and participate in panel discussions organized by educational institutions, NGOs and other agencies to speak on topics relevant to grassroots development, local government reforms, and chieftaincy institution in general and other related topics for specified fees. PCs can also get paid as consultants and advisers to government, NGOs and quasi-governmental institutions.

3.4.3 Generating Internal Revenue

Some form of financial autonomy is essential in breaking the stranglehold of the government's grip on chiefs because as the cliché goes, 'he who pays the piper plays the tune'. One way the colonial administration undermined the independence and legitimacy of chiefs was through the payment of stipends [20]. In the opinion of Chief Hinga Norman (a minister of government but spoke to me as Chief), chiefs can only succeed in preserving some autonomy if resource mobilization at the grassroots level is put in place to maintain chiefdom administration. He rationalized measures for generating income from the chiefdoms:

One thing is clear at the local level, as long as the chief is perceived as legitimate and seeks the welfare of his people, the people will be always willing to go by what he says. The chief does not need to wholly depend on government to finance his/her chiefdom...¹⁴

4. Chiefs and National Politics

"You cannot have two bulls in a kraal" is the well-known Southern African expression to describe the relationship between traditional rulers and elected officials. As mentioned in this work, there is the tendency on the part of the state to super-impose its will over chieftaincy largely because of the political arrangements bequeathed by colonialism. The relationship between the chief and the modern government is based on two characteristics: competition and mutual dependence [21]. Both the chief and the state prey on each other's power – there is evidence of state bureaucrats adorning themselves with chiefly symbols and regalia not only to get the support of chiefs but to extend their power to attract citizens to identify with the state [22]. Chiefs, on the other hand, use their influence to penetrate the state to achieve economic objectives, which they can use to buy more power and favor from the state and their subjects. In such a situation, the chief and the state are both locked in competition. Two diametrically opposed schools of thought exist to define the role of traditional rulers in national politics, especially in a two-party system of government, such as operates in Sierra Leone. The non-partisan school contends that traditional rulers, as custodians of the land, culture and the consciousness of the people, should not be placed in a position where they will have to vote in favor of one group against another as their ceremonial, dignified and time-honored role as the father and the final arbiter in controversial matters is

incompatible with partisanship and that they should be content with upholding of their prestige in the presence of their subjects [23]. Protagonists of this school argue that chiefs are positioned by tradition to fairly exercise their influence and dignity to promote peaceful co-existence and stabilize the community, to help to preserve the traditions and cultural heritage of their people and to play a symbolic role in unifying all subjects. Considerable emphasis is placed on the sacrosanct nature of chiefs and enjoining them to uphold and guard their inspirational image as fathers of the land. This school advocates that chiefs should play advisory and ceremonial roles, rather than executive and legislative roles in national affairs as the only propitious way of maintaining and preserving the integrity of the institution from partisan attacks. Conversely, advocates of the second school argue that the chieftaincy institution is in itself a political institution and even the ceremonial and advisory role advocated by the earlier school is a political role. They submit that to hold views and express them is a fundamental human right...and that as long as politics is conceived of as the authoritative allocation of societal values, it is practically impossible to insulate traditional rulers from partisan politics [24]. Proponents maintain that traditional leaders are 'political animals' and therefore, cannot avoid being political or detach themselves from political activities. Furthermore, this school argues that subterranean involvement of chiefs in partisan politics is more threatening to national stability than open participation. They also believe that partisan politics is inevitable because it is an integral part of man's daily activities as a political and social animal. The major limitation of this school is that it downplays the damage partisan politics may cause on traditional institutions and its overall effects on national stability. In Sierra Leone, chieftaincy as an institution fared well when it was not directly integrated into the mainstream of modern politics, with its emphasis on electoral competition [25]. They further argue that the institution became a subject of political machinations and rivalries when it was incorporated into national politics in 1971, when the Republican constitution created room for chiefs in the representative legislature *albeit* chiefs were involved in national politics according to the Independent Constitution in 1961. The 1978 One-Party constitution, which aimed to integrate the state and to weld the polarized ethnic cleavages in the Sierra Leone polity, did not identify the role of chiefs in the new dispensation. What ensued was ambiguity of the role of chiefs in national politics, a debilitating situation that has marred the image of the institution for a long time. In the post-war era, a determination of the role of chiefs is a requirement toward establishing a state devoid of pre-war chiefly coercion, intimidation and submissiveness. A constitutional amendment is required to expunge the notorious law empowering parliamentarians to make laws that affect the qualification, removal, suspension, powers and functions of chiefs.¹⁵ A constitutional provision to redefine and to free chiefs from the clutches of state manipulation is fundamental and primacy should be given to the autonomous role of the Council of Chiefs. Contextually, the Council of Chiefs needs to be empowered to take responsibility of all matters relating to local and chieftaincy issues.

4.1 Rights and Privileges

Constitutionally, PCs are not immune from some capricious actions by state bureaucrats. The 1991 constitution of Sierra Leone categorically states that: A Paramount Chief can be removed from office by the President for any gross misconduct in the performance of the functions of his office if after a public inquiry conducted under the chairmanship of a judge of the High Court or a Justice of Appeal or a Justice of the Supreme Court, the Commission of Inquiry makes an adverse finding against the Paramount Chief, the President is of the opinion that it is in the public interest that the Paramount Chief should be removed.¹⁶ However, the phrase 'gross

misconduct' remains murky and is not apparently defined in the constitution, and is therefore subject to different interpretations by state officials. 'Gross misconduct' depends largely on the interpreter. For instance, while a District Officer may understand a particular conduct of a chief as a misdemeanor, a Cabinet Minister may interpret the same conduct as a criminal offence and therefore punishable by removal from office depending on both the context and their relationship. 'Gross misconduct', therefore, lies in the eyes of the beholder. Invariably, this ambivalent clause clouds the real intention of the constitution, the constitutional drafters and interpreters and subject chieftaincy to ridicule. The ambiguity conspicuously subjects the institution to governmental interference and abuse because the PC rules at the pleasure of the executive and legislative branches of government. Many of the political crises that precipitated chieftain riots and upheavals were caused by the vagueness of the constitutional provision on chiefs on the one hand, and the stopgap measures undertaken by the government to keep PCs under the influence of elected officials, on the other. It can be argued from the foregoing that state officials have used the legal backing of the constitution to trample on the rights and privileges of chiefs. As a result, PCs reign at the mercy of parliamentarians and the Presidency. One can argue that once a PC has been popularly elected, he should be accorded the same privileges of immunity from arrest, harassment and other forms of denigration enjoyed by Members of Parliament. An amendment to the constitution is needed to insulate PCs from political scrutiny, removal, suspension and other forms of punishment by both the executive and legislative branches of government. These measures should fall within the jurisdiction of the newly established Council of Chiefs, which would be empowered to perform national duties including all matters pertaining to chieftaincy.

4.2 The Council of Chiefs

The political undercurrents for a more inclusive and participatory role of PCs in national discourse gained momentum when youths, women, the elderly and the rural population lent their voices to the restoration of chiefly powers and authority in the country-wide consultative meetings in 2002.¹⁷ The appetite was particularly whetted by the declining influence and malfunctioning of state institutions in rural communities hard hit by the brutal eleven-year-old carnage (1991-2002) reinforced by the political capacity and mobilizational skills chiefs displayed in the establishment of the Civil Defense Force (CDF) against the RUF. With more than half of the soldiers abdicating their responsibilities to join ranks with the rebels, a situation engineered by state collapse, PCs readily stepped into the breach and galvanized the local population behind the logic of "defense of the community against marauders", which clearly signaled the rebirth of their original pre-colonial role. There has been a revolution of rising expectation among government officials and the people that chiefs can be relevant to post-war peacemaking and sustained stability if provided with a clearly defined autonomous role devoid of political arm-twisting. This recognition has found open expression in the reformulation of the Council of Chiefs in 2003 in which the government proposed to refocus the attention of chiefs to their original responsibilities as guardians of tradition and rural communities. The proposal states *inter alia* that the new focus of the Council of Chiefs is to reorient the institution to think, consult, speak and act as a collegial body to defend tradition, to advise government and to undertake development projects in rural communities. Their political role, however, is limited to ceremonial and advisory functions.

4.2.1 Council of Chiefs: The Politics of Accommodation

The first real experiment to incorporate chiefs into the central administration of Sierra Leone came in 1905 when the Protectorate Native Law Ordinance proposed a three-tier Assembly of Chiefs that comprised Local, District and General Assemblies. It was proposed that chiefs were responsible for advising the Legislative Council on all matters affecting the Protectorate in the General Assembly. Despite successful experiments in Wonde and Yonni chiefdoms in the Pujehun and Tonkolili districts respectively, the District Commissioners were opposed to the measure, and it was abandoned, somehow to materialize four decades later in the Protectorate Assembly [26]. Attempts to resuscitate Protectorate representation in the Legislative Assembly in 1924 led to the appointment of three Paramount Chiefs, one from each province, to be official members of the Legislative Council since “under the tribal system no others would have adequate title to speak with authority”.¹⁸ However, the position of chiefs did not radically change until the Protectorate Assembly was formed in 1946 where chiefs spoke on matters affecting the welfare of their people. In 1947, the Stevenson constitution provided for an unofficial African majority in the Legislative Council as well as created “an opportunity for the people of the Protectorate to take an increasingly effective share in the management of the affairs of the country.”¹⁹ The incorporation of PCs in the Legislative Council reinforced the political dominance of the Protectorate educated elites over their Creole counterparts in the Colony. When Dr. Milton Margai, the first Protectorate medical doctor, was asked to nominate five members to the Executive Council after the 1951 constitutional promulgation, Paramount Chief Bai Farma Tass was one of the nominees.²⁰ As mentioned earlier, when the Protectorate Assembly was dissolved following independence in 1961, the role of PCs in national politics was never clearly defined. The 1961 constitution provided for a representation of twelve PCs, one from each district, in the national House of Representatives. Both the 1971 and 1978 constitutions served to strengthen government’s stranglehold on PCs who served as parliamentarians without any independent voice. Because of the ambiguity of their role in the constitutions, PCs were subjected to the state’s manipulative tendencies. The government of President Tejan Kabbah took a step further, even if theoretically, to accommodate PCs within the framework of national politics and to move away from the pre-war political arrangements that subdued chieftaincy. The government views chiefdoms as the basic unit of the administration of Sierra Leone, and as such, considers chiefs as power centers to politically mobilize and effectively coordinate the participation of the rural population in the affairs of the state. During the inauguration ceremonies of the newly elected PCs in Kenema, Bo and Makeni, President Kabbah announced the government’s intention to “set up a Council of Chiefs which shall serve as an advisory body on Paramount Chieftaincy matters...and shall not have any legislative or executive roles.”²¹ As noted above, the idea (Council of Chiefs) has just been resuscitated because “this has long been mooted and was actually provided for in the Peter Tucker (1991) constitution, but the APC government removed the section after opposition from the Attorney General Abdulai Conteh” [27]. The APC once more proved its anti-chief stance, and its unwillingness to validate an institution that it helped to cripple. One of the main reasons proffered for establishing the Council of Chiefs is for the chiefs to consult among themselves and then to provide advice to government pertaining to the chieftaincy institution and the state of affairs in the country. To the government, chieftaincy could be made to play its rightful role not only in chiefdom matters but also in the overall national affairs by creating a forum where chiefs can articulate their problems and needs and collectively seek solutions to the problems. As a group, they can ensure good governance at the chiefdom level; promote public sensitization on reconciliation; review the criteria for succession, suspension and removal of chiefs; foster good relationships among PCs irrespective of

ethnic background; seek the interests of their local constituents at the national level; review customary law and practices and to develop a national standard; and to review the procedures for the election of Paramount Chiefs. The government argues that the establishment of the Council of Chiefs will expedite the retraditionalization of the institution because chiefs, in concert with their colleagues, carry the greatest responsibility of upholding the values, norms and respectability of their institution. The Council can serve to restore the moral and political authority of chiefs. Against this backdrop, the Council is charged with the responsibility to take decisions on chieftaincy succession, to settle chieftaincy disputes and to define their roles. The importance of these functions cannot be overemphasized because chieftaincy disputes, for example, were some of the structural causes that inflamed the eleven-year old civil war. In order to reverse the above situation and to ensure that it does not reoccur, chieftaincy should be made to play a more central national role to integrate the polarized groups and individuals, and to provide a forum where disputes can be settled amicably. However, it is a concern that the government is not inclined to surrender legislative and executive responsibilities to chiefs because that would give more power to traditional rulers. We can therefore agree with Martin Kilson who hypothesized the behavior pattern of chiefs prior to the achievement of independence in Sierra Leone: “The traditional ruler may be expected to support the arrangement which will enable them (1) to maximize modern sources of power and (2) simultaneously maintain as much as possible traditional authority” [28]. To the extent that they are able to associate themselves with the modern bureaucratic state and the international market system, chiefs are more likely to conserve their privileged status [29]. Political commentators contend that if the Council of Chiefs is given powers outside of their ceremonial roles, the institution may become too powerful and will set them against elected officials. Locked in competition, chiefs will be exposed to open attacks by state officials. The state and chiefs oversee the same population with a minor difference. While the state presides over citizens, chiefs preside over subjects. Conflicts between traditional rulers and elected officials become inevitable as each tries to outdo the other in governance of the population. Hence, the state, more than likely, will do all in its power to limit chiefly influence over the population.

5. Conclusion

From the above discussions, it is evidently clear that chieftaincy has not completely lost its place in the governance structure of rural Africa. As a matter of fact, it has repositioned itself as an alternative or a complementary agency to the modern state system especially where the latter’s capacity to cope with internal struggles and fend off external policy interventions have clearly remained an eyesore. As indicated in this article, the Paramount Chiefs of Sierra Leone became the last bastion of hope to the population when state collapse gripped the war ridden country in the 1990s. It was the chiefs that organized the Civil Defense Force to rattle the RUF rebels/marauders from their hide-outs and to repel their ferocious attacks on innocent civilians. Such an exemplary feat only lends credence to the advocacy for the re-engagement of chieftaincy into the modern state system as a complementary institution capable of cushioning the effort of the fledging contemporary state.

It must be noted that tradition continues to exist in the modern world and in most African societies, people consider traditional practices as relevant to their political and socio-economic existence. Traditional practices that have fallen into disuse, such as the practice of ‘Sasswood’ in Liberia, can be reactivated and readjusted to fit

into contemporary context. In most conflict ridden African countries such as Somalia where intractable civil wars have rendered the state to collapse, there has been a renewed call for employing traditional methods in mitigating conflicts that are among especially the pastoralists. Zartman instructively argues, "Tradition as a dynamic entity can be updated, adjusted and opened to new accretions in order to stay alive through changing times" [30]. In other words, tradition does not refer to something that is antiquated, impervious to change and unaltered. Rather, it is flexible and dynamic in terms of its core values and ideological standpoint, and in its interaction and relationship with other actors. Chiefs today are not only highly educated and use cell phones in contemporary African societies, they also have access to, negotiate and interact with foreign dignitaries/diplomats/politicians and members of the International Non-Government Organizations in designing development projects for their communities. This lends credence to their re-engagement in cushioning contemporary state reordering in Africa.

6. Recommendations

The Government of Sierra Leone should endeavor to restore the dignity, respect and authority of Paramount Chiefs by providing them with the legal and political authority/framework through Constitutional amendments and policy reviews. More importantly, traditional authorities should have access to economic resources that could empower them in the performance of their duties; There is need to establish the Council of Chiefs charged with the responsibility to serve as a check to chiefly abuse of power, to present a collective voice to central government in addressing issues affecting the institution of chieftaincy, and to safeguard the authority and powers of the institution of chieftaincy. A revision of the Local Government Act of 2004, the Decentralization Policy of 2010 and the Chieftaincy Act of 2010 that clearly and unambiguously define the roles, privileges and responsibilities of PCs, Local Council administrators and District Officers should be undertaken to ensure stability and peace at the local level; The government of Sierra Leone should restore the dignity and integrity of traditional institutions by allowing paramount chiefs to function as an independent institution under the supervision of the Council of Chiefs; Paramount Chiefs (especially the educated ones) should endeavor to sell their talents by giving speeches, public lectures for a fee as a means of earning extra to cushion and complement grants and salaries received from central government; The institution of chieftaincy should be made apolitical. That is, Paramount Chiefs should not be openly involved in national politics, which is normally characterized by violence, intimidation, abuse of power and polarization. This is critical to maintaining peace and stability much required by the greater majority of the people ruled by Chiefs.

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Notes

¹ PC John Kuyembeh of Yawei chiefdom in the Kailahun district, an ex-army officer, came under mounting opposition from the chiefdom people in the 1980s for his highhandedness and malpractices. Efforts to remove him from office were stalled by the APC, a party notorious for aiding and abetting rogue chiefs.

² For example, PC Alimamy Dura II of Binkolo in the Bombali district, who was a founding member of the "Ekutay" Limba ethnic clique, won many state contracts to provide uniforms for the National Police during the rule of President J. S. Momoh (1985-1991).

³ See "Chiefdom Governance Reform Program: Summary Reports on Consultative Workshops, Freetown, December 2001.

⁴ “Chiefs Call for Election in Chiefdom,” See *The Standard Times*, September 28, 2001.

⁵ “Report of the Consultants on Drafting a Local Government Act for the Government of Sierra Leone,” by Patrick Roome, Clarence A. Adusei and Dr. Bu-Buakei Jabbie, Freetown, Sierra Leone, 2002.

⁶ In January 2003, President Kabbah took a nationwide tour crowning newly elected PCs after the civil conflict. For more details, see “Ceremony for the Recognition of Newly Elected PCs and the Establishment of the Council of Chiefs,” January 2003, p. 9.

⁷ See “A Code of Practice for Chiefdom Administration,” prepared by the Ministry of Local Government, Freetown, Sierra Leone, 2001.

⁸ This point is particularly relevant for chiefdoms such as Wonde in the Bo district where the Dabos have controlled chieftaincy for a considerable period of time at the expense of the Manyeh and the Kangoi ruling houses. The chiefdom dispute in the 1980s can be clearly linked to that dynastic struggle for power.

⁹ See, for example, “Chiefdom Report from Golahun Tunkia chiefdom” in the Kenema district, Ministry of Local Government, Freetown 2002.

¹⁰ For a detailed account, see Arthur Abraham, *Mende Government and Politics under Colonial Rule*, p. 209.

¹¹ See the UNDP Human Development Report, 2003. Sierra Leone fell to the bottom of the UNDP HDI ladder.

¹² See “Project Document on Local Government Reform and Decentralization” produced by the Ministry of Local Government, Republic of Sierra Leone, 2003.

¹³ See “Mines Minister gives Chiefs 190 Million Leones,” in *Concord Times*, July 19, 2001.

¹⁴ Interview with Chief Hinga Norman, the former Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs on March 2, 2003. Chief Hinga Norman, former Defense Minister in the Tejan Kabbah administration, was a leading figure in the establishment of the Civil Defense Force that routed the RUF rebels in Sierra Leone.

¹⁵ See Section 72 subsection (5) of the 1991 Sierra Leone constitution, which clearly subjects chieftaincy to the controlling powers of parliament.

¹⁶ See Section 72 Subsection (4) of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone.

¹⁷ See “Project Document on Local Government Reform and Decentralization,” p. 12.

¹⁸ See Address by His Excellency the Governor on the occasion of “The Opening of the Legislative Council of

Sierra Leone,” in Freetown on November 25, 1924.

¹⁹ See Sierra Leone Legislative Council, Sessional Paper no. 48 of 1948.

²⁰ PC Bai Farma Tass of Magbema chiefdom in the Kambia district became a nationalist figure who played a leading role in welding the North-South divide that threatened Protectorate dominance in post-independence Sierra Leone.

²¹ See President Kabbah’s Inauguration Ceremony of the Newly Elected Paramount Chiefs, p. 12. This period witnessed the crowning of the newly elected PCs in Sierra Leone after the civil war official ended in 2002.