



**NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF TRIBALISTIC COMPETITIVE
AUTHORITARIANISM: THE CASE OF SIERRA LEONE**

M.A. THESIS

Adama CONTEH

**Nicosia
February, 2023**

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MASTER THESIS
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**Supervisor
Assoc. Prof. Bilge AZGIN**


**Nicosia
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Approval

We certify that we have read the thesis submitted by Adama Conteh titled **“Investigating the Impact of Tribalistic Competitive Authoritarianism: The Case of Sierra Leone”** and that in our combined opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of International Relations.

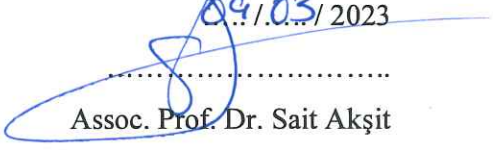
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Declaration of Ethical Principles

I declare that all information, documents, analysis, and results in this thesis have been collected and presented according to the academic rules and ethical guidelines of the Institute of Graduate Studies, Near East University. I also declare that as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced information and data that are not original to this study.

Adama Conteh

24/03/2023

Acknowledgment

Indeed, the Almighty Allah has been grateful to me, my sincere thanks to Him for giving me the courage, strength, and above all the life to overcome this painstaking venture.

My profound gratitude goes to my beloved husband who stood by my side from the start to the end of this course and without his financial support, this course would not have come to a realization.

To my parents, Late Mr. Mohamed S. Conteh, Mrs. Makallay Conteh, and Grandmother Ya. Adama Bangura whose parental and moral support has helped me throughout.

Thanks to my supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Bilge Azgin, and course advisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sait Akşit for your resilience, understanding, and accurate response to my emails, never mind the distance. And to this important personality Mr. Peter Kargbo whose advice and support helped me to reach this peak.

Appreciation goes to my children, especially Kadjatu Shaw who stood firmly for my young baby Medisha Sesay during the fight to achieve this course.

Finally, to my friends Fatmata Barrie, Mariama Barrie, Sandra Uweh, and Lawrence Benson. I value the courage you gave me throughout this course.

Adama Conteh

Abstract

Investigating the Impact of Tribalistic Competitive Authoritarianism: The Case of Sierra Leone

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MA, Department of International Relations

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Bilge Azgün

February, 2023, 77 Pages

Many authors have tried to deliberate on the concept of competitive authoritarianism. Yet, there is still room for interpretation because the term is based on the personality of people who are noticeable by their respect for jurisdiction, who are viewed as all-powerful, and who give a lifeline in a terrifying and unpredictable world. In all competitive authoritarian administrations, periodical elections are held. These elections are crucial because the opposition has a theoretical chance of winning and intimidations occur at all costs to both the side of the opposition and journalists and the voters. The subject of this research thesis is the novel notion of tribalist competitive authoritarianism. The political scene in the country, as well as its apparent authoritarianism, may be traced back to the political tribal zoning that occurs inside the country's voting system. Sierra Leone's pre-colonial and post-independence elections have proven to be contentious. This is because they have always been accompanied by violence, bitterness, murder, regionalism, and tribalism. In terms of candidate selection and campaigns mostly from the two main political parties APC and SLPP, these features were not exempted in the 2018 elections. Political tribalism can be seen as a sociopolitical positioning that influences intergroup relations and also intergroup prejudice. Tribalism in politics is a sort of identity politics and in the same way, authoritarianism is characterized by a favorable evaluation or idealization of the in-group. According to previous research, tribalism and competitive authoritarianism in Sierra Leone have been determined way back the previous regimes of Albert Margai favoring his Mende brothers and Siaka Steven's prolonged holding on to power and political oppressions. However,

the author has demonstrated via both empirical and theoretical investigation of the electoral environment in the country that proves, there is a link between tribalism and competitive authoritarian politics in the country and if necessary, measures are not put in place, these will lead to a reverse of a long-lasting 11 years' civil war that started from 1996 to 2002.

Keywords: Competitive authoritarianism, tribalism, elections, regionalism, multi-party system.

Özet

Kabileci Rekabetçi Otoriterliğin Etkisinin Araştırılması: Sierra Leone Örneği

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Danışman: Doç. Dr. Bilge Azgin

Şubat, 2023, 77 Sayfa

Birçok yazar rekabetçi otoriterlik kavramı üzerinde düşünmeye çalışmıştır. Ancak yine de yoruma yer var çünkü bu terim, yargı yetkisine saygılarıyla dikkat çeken, her şeye gücü yeten olarak görülen ve korkunç ve öngörülemez bir dünyada cankurtaran halatı veren kişilerin kişiliğine dayanıyor. Tüm rekabetçi otoriter yönetimlerde periyodik seçimler yapılır. Bu seçimler hayati önem taşıyor çünkü teorik olarak muhalefetin kazanma şansı var ve her ne pahasına olursa olsun hem muhalefet hem de gazeteciler ve seçmenler açısından gözdağı veriliyor. Bu araştırma tezinin konusu yeni kabileci rekabetçi otoriterlik kavramıdır. Ülkedeki siyasi sahnenin yanı sıra görünürdeki otoriterizmin de kökeni, ülkenin oylama sistemi içinde meydana gelen siyasi kabilesel bölgelere ayırmaya kadar uzanabilir. Sierra Leone'nin sömürgecilik ve bağımsızlık sonrası seçimlerinin çekişmeli olduğu kanıtlandı. Çünkü onlara her zaman şiddet, kırınglık, cinayet, bölgecilik ve kabilecilik eşlik etmiştir. Çoğunlukla iki ana siyasi parti olan APC ve SLPP'den aday seçimi ve kampanyalar açısından bu özellikler 2018 seçimlerinde de göz ardı edilmedi. Siyasi kabilecilik, gruplar arası ilişkileri ve aynı zamanda gruplar arası önyargıları etkileyen sosyopolitik bir konumlandırma olarak görülebilir. Siyasette kabilecilik bir tür kimlik siyasetidir ve aynı şekilde otoriterlik de iç grubun olumlu değerlendirilmesi veya idealleştirilmesiyle karakterize edilir. Önceki araştırmalara göre, Sierra Leone'deki kabilecilik ve rekabetçi otoriterlik, Albert Margai'nin Mende kardeşlerini ve Siaka Steven'ı uzun süre iktidarda tutmasını ve siyasi baskıları tercih ettiği önceki rejimlerden çok daha eskilere dayanıyordu. Ancak yazar, ülkedeki seçim ortamının hem ampirik hem de teorik incelemesi yoluyla, ülkede kabilecilik ile rekabetçi otoriter politikalar arasında bir bağlantı olduğunu ve gerekli

önlemlerin alınmaması durumunda bunların 1996'dan 2002'ye kadar 11 yıl süren iç savaşın tam tersi bir krize yol açacağını kanıtlamıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Rekabetçi otoriterlik, kabilecilik, seçimler, bölgecilik, çok partili sistem.

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List of Abbreviations

ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data
ACRM	Anti-Corruption Revolutionary Movement
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
APC	All Peoples Congress
AU	African Union
C4C	Coalition for Change
COPP	Consortium of Progress Political Parties
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African State
GAP	Grand Coalition Party
NGC	National Grand Alliance
NPR	National Reformation Council
NRC	National Reformation Council
PMDC	People's Movement for Democratic Change
PPRC	Political Parties Registration Commission
RIF	Radio France International
RUFP	Revolutionary United Front Party
SLA	Sierra Leone Army
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UN	United Nation

CHAPTER I

Introduction

This chapter gives a brief historical background of the study area and the development of its formal governance system. It also provides the problem statement as it is stated to be a tribal and political dilemma. The chapter also factors in the aims of the study, its importance, research questions, and the methodologies used.

Background of the study

Sierra Leone is strategically located on the west coast of Africa, sharing boundaries with the Republics of Liberia and Guinea. The country traces its history of formal governance system back to 1787 when England founded a colony from freed slaves from England. In 1808 the colony became a crown colony with Britain administering affairs of the colony. The region on the West of the country where the capital, Freetown is located and its immediate environs fell under direct colonial rule and administration. Beyond this was the protectorate which was indirectly ruled and local authorities were in charge of administration, including tax collection (Takehiko, 2017). By the end of the 19th century, a system of local government fashioned after that of the United Kingdom was introduced in the directly ruled colony and the Freetown City Council was enacted in 1893. The local governance system was extended to the province only in 1937 (Takehiko, 2017).

Modern Sierra Leone including former colonies and protectorates now has local governments through the Local Government Act of Parliament in 2007. There are sixteen administrative districts and nineteen local councils. There are twenty-two (22) local councils in Sierra Leone including six city councils, one municipal council and fifteen district councils, and a traditional component of the traditional (paramount chiefs) administration system (Conteh, 2019, p.8). Sierra Leone gained political independence from Britain on 27th April 1961, after 153 years of colonial administration (1808-1961). “Parliamentary elections were held on May 25, 1962, and the Sierra Leone People’s Party (SLPP) won 28 out of 74 seats in the National Assembly” (Humphrey, 1969). Parliamentary elections were held after five years on March 17, 1967, and the APC won 32 out of 78 seats in the National Assembly, while the SLPP won 28 seats. The political

landscape was marred by coups, to the extent that the Cuban government provided military assistance (military advisers) in support of the government between November 1972 and May 1973. And after three successive military coups between 21st March 1967 to April 1971, parliament declared Sierra Leone a republic on the 19th of April, 1971, and Siaka Stevens of the APC (All Peoples Congress) became executive President and Head of government (John R. Cartwright, 1978). The 1995 constitution makes Sierra Leone a Republic with an executive president, a multiparty democracy, and a unicameral parliament. The president is the head of state and government. He appoints a cabinet together with a government, approved by the legislature. Presidential and parliamentary elections are held every five years under universal adult suffrage and proportional representation. Executive power is vested in the government and Freetown is both the capital and seat of government. There are sixteen (16) registered political parties scattered across the country. Apart from the two main parties, that is the APC and SLPP, the fourteen others have almost always demonstrated loyalty and allegiance during elections to either of the two major parties, such that there have been run-offs in three presidential elections as the minor parties took sides thereby by narrowing marginal differences between the two main parties (Zamani, 2022). There have been five general and presidential elections since independence and the two main parties, the APC and SLPP have always won in turns. The current government is SLPP-lead by Retired Brigadier Julius Maada Bio as head of state.

In 2002 a Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC) was enacted by an Act of Parliament to regulate the affairs of political parties and their functions include registration and supervision of the conduct of political parties; monitoring, and promoting political pluralism and constitutionalism, among other key functions. It is said that the emergence of so many political parties created security concerns for peaceful political contests. Most, if not all mushroom parties are splintering from one or the other of the two main parties.

Problem Statement

Sierra Leone is faced with a tribal and political dilemma that has its roots in the early post-colonial era. Its political landscape is at best rugged and divided along tribal and regional bases. Past and present governments are accused of promoting and practicing tribalism and regionalism in political stewardship. Generally, ineffective political parties, especially politicians whose prospects of winning or of making a meaningful impact would soon resort to using tribal campaigns using hate messages and pointing at other insignificant inter-tribal or inter-regional cracks. These rather crude strategies have contributed to inflaming and heightening inter-regional and inter-tribal tensions. In employment opportunities, successive governments have been accused of hiring and firing especially officials from opposition parties, regions, or tribes at the slightest pretext and based on those parameters rather than on competence (N’Jai, 2021). Stifling of democratic processes and manipulating of institutions is not a new phenomenon between the two main parties. Tribalistic Competitive Authoritarianism is prevalent in the democratic process of the country and is not limited to any single party. Tribal, regional, and political divide is so concrete that a person’s tribal background, and par consequence political and regional affiliation can be suggested by his surname and so it has turned out that President Maada Bio’s 36 cabinet ministers and deputies have an easy evaluation on the divide. His cabinet has 23 Mendes and 13 non-Mendes; representing 64% Mendes as opposed to 36%, representing all the other tribes put together (President Bio, 2021). This suggests that incumbents choose to surround themselves with members of their tribes, regions, or parties to cushion off the pangs of the opposition. Unfortunately, details of the 2022 President Maada Bio’s cabinet and other presidential appointments are difficult to come by.

The danger of the nation-states in Africa disintegrating along ethnic lines is noticeable by many scholars. This observation is always imminent each time any of the two parties assume the mantle of leadership. Sir Albert Margai who succeeded his elder brother (Milton Margai) as Prime Minister is accused of planting the seed of political discord soon after assuming power. He was accused of corruption and the use of ‘affirmative action’ in favor of his Mende ethnic group. He was unpopular and became

increasingly authoritarian, including an unsuccessful attempt to introduce a one-party system of government (John R. Cartwright, 1978).

Aim of the Study

The consequences of politicians using tribal hate speeches for their self-interest have caused challenges not only in Sierra Leone but Africa at large, for instance, the tribal war in Rwanda that led to the death of many citizens. Therefore, this work aims to examine the extent to which tribe and regional politics have contributed to the rise of competitive authoritarianism in the democratic development of Sierra Leone and proffer some recommendations that will be shared with key stakeholders in the country.

Significance of the Study

The concept of competitive authoritarianism has been in wide use by political scholars and researchers to provide answers to the decline in the quality and pace of democratic transition across countries in Latin America, Africa, and Eastern Europe. Scholars are unanimous that the concept has been used to study political regimes over regions and time; that the concept has hybrids and typological variances, but that there is a need for a shared understanding of its wider implication/s on democratic processes and political contestations. Many countries in Latin America and Eastern Europe have received detailed studies on competitive authoritarianism over the years. However, it is the observation of the researcher that studies of competitive authoritarianism in countries in the West African sub-region are curiously either too few or scanty.

The political evolution in Sierra Leone since independence and the concept of competitive authoritarianism have received less than adequate diagnostic analysis beyond a few publications and basic journal articles. This study is designed to systematically investigate evidence of the prevalence, practice, and impact of Competitive Authoritarianism from a tribal and regional divide perspective. The study will therefore contribute to the following:

- Provide evidence of the prevalence of competitive authoritarianism in the democratization process in Sierra Leone

- Establish the magnitude and forms of tribally and regionally based competitive authoritarianism
- Provide pointers on the impact/s of tribal-based competitive authoritarianism and how these can be harmonized to improve the system.

The study will therefore benefit researchers, policymakers, and students, apart from the general public who may desire to increase their knowledge of competitive authoritarianism of the type in Sierra Leone.

Research Questions

- How have Tribal and regional-based politics led to the rise of Competitive Authoritarianism in the democratization of Sierra Leone?
- What are the impacts of tribal and regional-based Competitive Authoritarianism in the democratization and national development agenda of Sierra Leone?

Methodology

This process involves the location, selection, processing, and evaluation of data on the topic of study, that is: To investigate the impact of Tribalistic Competitive Authoritarianism on the Democratic Process in Sierra Leone, using desk research is known as research methodology. The methodology aspect of research reports engenders opportunities for the reliability of the study.

Research Design.

This is a qualitative study, relying exclusively on descriptive issues and subjects of governance.

Research Method.

This study is focused on Sierra Leone, a country that has more than its share of military coups, and tribal and regional politics. The research will thus undertake a systematic evaluation of the elements, events, and major characters that have contributed to shaping the destiny of the country once referred to as the Anthem of West Africa.

Data Collection.

Gathering information that builds knowledge entails the gathering of such information using numerous tools such as questionnaires, voice recording, and where possible, video. However, for this study, non-numerical information and data shall be obtained from articles, journals, online sources, and newspapers with topics that are related to governance and democratic contests and processes.

Data Analysis.

Analysis of information collected is done based, as much as possible on the object evaluation process to present credible, unbiased judgment. Themes, subjects, and topics captured are assessed, weighed, and compared with as many possible instances as possible to arrive at a convincing conclusion devoid of doubts. Thus, concepts such as competitive authoritarianism, democracy, elections, and by extension election rigging, tribalism, regionalism, etc. are discussed in the most objective sense possible.

Timeline.

This study is conducted over six months, including a pre-study assessment of the suitability of the topic.

Limitations of the Study.

The study is limited to a specific time and place. It is limited to leadership style and the political process in post-independence Sierra Leone. It will examine evidence of the prevalence, practice structure, and nature of competitive authoritarianism in Sierra Leone. The study is limited to Sierra Leone and therefore findings may not be generalized to the context of other countries. In addition, it is limited to the period between postcolonial democratic contestation and the role incumbencies have played to sustain competitive authorizations in Sierra Leone unto the current regime.

Thesis Structure.

This thesis takes into consideration the relevance of governance and how governments that practice inconsistency in their democratic process risk the holistic

development of their country. To investigate the impact of Tribalistic Competitive Authoritarianism on the Democratic Process in Sierra Leone requires a comprehensive background analysis and that aspect is captured in chapter one. Governance systems are largely institutional and geared towards the good of society. As a country, the case of Sierra Leone is important in the context of the country and its relation to other countries. Chapter two presents a lengthy (though not exhaustive) review of literature spanning from Latin America, Eastern Europe, and Africa. Significant mention is made of the relevance of the post-Cold War period in Europe and the post-colonial period in Sierra Leone as strategic periods that engendered circumstantial environments for early regime testing. Chapter three is evidence-based on details on successive leaderships, party politics, tribalism, regionalism, corruption, the justice system, and conflicts and how these have conjured the image that makes Sierra Leone what it is.

Chapter four provides a carte-blanche on the discourse and extensive analysis of the preceding chapters is carried out, while chapter five ‘draws the curtain’ on the argument that tribalism and regional politics have contributed to competitive authoritarianism in the democratic process in Sierra Leone. A final concluding paragraph and recommendations form the final portion of the research.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter examines the concept of competitive authoritarianism in the Sierra Leone context and how the concept has been shaped by the country's unique sociocultural factors, especially tribal and regional loyalties, preferences, and persuasions. The reader should bear in mind that the concept of competitive authoritarianism has definitional ambiguities that defy a one-size-fits-all application, or appreciation, as a result of the fact that what prevails in one country differs from what prevails in another country. There is very little literature on 'Competitive Authoritarianism' as a concept in the democratic process in Sierra Leone and this has placed challenges to the research. However, the available historical accounts of the country provide fairly adequate information that readers can rely on to determine the type of 'hybrid' of competitive authoritarianism of the type in Sierra Leone. For example, attempts by Sir Albert Margai to introduce a one-party system of government and later Siaka Stevens' one-party system and the use of a democratic system of governance both by the past leaders and present all provide the opportunity for comparing and contrasting and finally drawing inferences from them.

Conceptual meaning of the terms Competitive-Authoritarianism

Control of political power (for relatively young democracies) through the process of democratic contestations and transition is agreed to be the ideal conduit to governance systems that ensure parity and equal participation, national stability, and national development across nations (Levitsky. Way, 2002). However, it is essential in the context of this discourse to determine what constitutes democratic contestation/s. The drive in many developing countries especially in Africa and Latin America to move or transit to democratic status through the ballot box has been agreed to be the start-off point. Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter argue in *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions About Uncertain Democracies*, (1986, 8), that at least the universal suffrage, regular voting (through the ballot box), political party participation, freedom of association, and freedom of expression (italics mine) constitute the democratic

process (Levitsky, Way, 2002). This implies that regular voting within specified time frames plays a vital role and incumbents are expected to adhere to this provision.

However, Maxwell and other scholars have emerged hybrids of democracies to be as competitive authoritarianism, and Levitsky and Way also refer to such systems as a situation where: civilian regimes and politicians in which formal democratic institutions exist and are widely viewed as the primary means of gaining power, but in which incumbents' abuse of the state places them at a significant advantage vis-à-vis their opponents (Cameron, 2018). Ruhanya also measured this on his Twitter page, "Such regimes are competitive in that opposition parties use democratic institutions to contest seriously for power, but they are not democratic because the playing field is heavily skewed in favor of incumbents and therefore, competition is real but unfair" (Ruhanya Twitter, 2020).

In a word, this is what generally constitutes competitive authoritarianism. However, Levitsky and Way point out theoretical technicalities to the definition, namely, 'not level playing field,' unfairness of the process, and 'opposition activities are seriously impaired' (Levitsky and Way, 2020). These ambiguities require extensive and comparative analysis to arrive at an acceptable understanding from at least a large segment of scholars and researchers. Therefore, it is most unlikely that this research would do justice to attempt a conceptual analysis of not level playing field, unfairness of the process, and seriously impaired opposition activities. This discourse will assume practical application of the definition of competitive authoritarianism so as not to lose focus of the topic of study, which is: To investigate the impact of Tribalistic Competitive Authoritarianism on the Democratic Process in Sierra Leone. Levitsky and Way see the rise of competitive-authoritarianism 'as the product of a particular historical moment, namely the end of the Cold War and the subsequent proliferation of a set of political systems in Africa and post-communist Europe that were neither fully authoritarian nor fully democratic'. The era was thus marred by a plethora of regimes, some of which were actually and supposedly transitioning from competitive authoritarianism to contemporary democracy, but with time changes in tactics from the incumbency stagnated the process. But on a more serious note, one must keep in mind the differing underlying sociocultural, historical, and what one may term political topography of countries. These differences and sometimes

similarities contribute enormously to sustaining or curbing the life-span of competitive authoritarianism. Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way argue that in Africa and the Soviet Union, many regions remained gripped or drifted towards authoritarianism such that one is restrained to ascribe them to the concept of transition towards democracy (Levitsky, Way, 2010). Transition entails set of gradual and interconnected processes that should be continuous and not static, or too slow to show any marked political progress. Competitive authoritarianism therefore lacks basic democratic characteristics such as political pluralism, fair and level playing ground, and the exercise of human and political rights. Bogaards, (2009) believes competitive authoritarianism to be a sub-set of authoritarianism because the latter lacks multiparty elections, freedoms of association, and freedom of expression as well. These elements are essential attributes and they make all the difference. Thus, competitive authoritarianism is perhaps the lesser of two evils as authoritarianism is characterized by “unelected tutelary powers,” (Levitsky and Way 2010a, p.365). Mention of authoritarianism brings to mind the likes of Fidel Castro of Cuba, Augusto Pinochet of Chile, and Field Marshal Idi Amin of Uganda.

Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way have proffered some characteristic distinctions between liberal democracy and competitive authoritarianism in four ways. According to them, Modern democracy should fulfill certain criteria and these are:

1. The executive and legislative arms of government must be chosen through popular votes.
2. The electorates have to be of voting age and are unhindered from casting ballots.
3. Human Rights, including political rights, rights of freedom of association, and press freedom are upheld as sacrosanct.
4. The executive and legislative arms have legitimate authority to rule without undue or militarized or religious doctrinal control systems (Levitsky and Way, 2010).

In competitive authoritarianism, by contrast, the above principles are often partially and initially observed but are often sooner or later progressively violated and abused. Competitive authoritarianism must thus be distinguished with its inherent characteristics, to include what O'Donnell describes as “delegates democracies” - a new system of political structures, thinking, and practices. According to O'Donnell, these regimes have unique (and perhaps differing characteristics) depending on the sociocultural, historical,

and what one may term political topography of countries) Competitive authoritarianism is marred in low levels of ‘checks and balances’ and thus exhibits plebiscitarian tendencies. O’Donnell further sees and describes competitive authoritarianism as a “new monster’ usurping genuine processes and systems. Many epithets have been framed by many other scholars, along with the annals to further the description of competitive authoritarianism. Zakaria describes the system as ‘illiberal’. This means that the system of governance lacks the elements of liberality in the expression of candid opinions, participation, or freedom of association, vis-à-vis the opposition. But as debates on the subject progressed it turned out that many of the countries Zakaria described as ‘illiberal’ were later classified as competitive authoritarian regimes, whereby incumbency devised strategies that tightened the strings to restrain opposition parties. Merkel, (2004) believes competitive authoritarianism is a defective democracy in that it lacks the essential elements that constitute popular democracy such as political opposition, pluralism, freedom of expression, and freedom of association. Evidence of competitive authoritarianism is widespread and not limited to a single continent. Levitsky describes the system as closed authoritarianism- non-competitive regimes, where a very tight and (un) enabling environment exists that restrains the participation of opposition parties or groups. Such countries included China, Cuba, and Saudi Arabia, among others (Merkel, 2004).

In a curious way, and perhaps demanding a better classification for the topic of this study, in the 1970s, the Siaka Stevens regime practiced a system of government that bore the attributes of Competitive Authoritarianism. A digression is necessary here for clarity. In May 1978, for example, the parliament of Sierra Leone approved a new constitution that made the country a one-party state (Takehiko, O., 2017). This system made the participation of opposition parties unsavory. In a way, there seemed to be no opposition as individuals from former opposition parties were obliged to contest elections under the only APC party. Under Stevens’ government formal democratic institutions existed but largely on paper. He dictated the pace, rhythm, and volume of governance pulses. Elections were marred by violence and repression and opposition candidates faced overt restrictions. Such regimes could qualify as ‘pseudo-democracy’ or ‘electoral authoritarianism.’ But, of course, Siaka Stevens was not the only misrepresentation of

the system of democratic governance in Africa. For example, Levitsky and Way analyzed an article titled *The Parable* by Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya who emphasizes that Politics is not like football and deserves a level playing field. “Here, you try that and you will be roasted.” Former Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi (Levitsky and Way, 2015). This shows a clear picture of the happenings of competitive Authoritarianism Beyond Sierra Leone and Kenya, many more, if not the majority of African states, were (are) undemocratic, and fit into the label of competitive authoritarianism. However, given contextual differences between countries, the nomenclature may have shades of differences as well. Levan stated that more than half of African states supposedly have competitive elections, yet lack basic political and civil freedoms thus earning the title ‘electoral authoritarian regimes (Levan, A. C, 2014). Then, there seemed a need to modify the terms or, practically, re-adjust the goalposts to reframe the concepts of different non-democratic governance systems across countries. Observations on the limitations of the typologies have been pointed out yet again. Gandhi argues this point when he points out that analyzing authoritarianism using so far-accepted concepts could blur the concepts in some cases if some attributes are absent (Levan, A. C, 2014). This is also true if some attributes are in surplus like Siaka Stevens’ eighteen-year repressive system in Sierra Leone from 1968 to 1985. The issue of an uneven playing field raised earlier in the discourse has many other bitter restraints. Although the tendency of the incumbency to have an advantage on essential facilities exists in most democracies, perhaps including Western democracies, in competitive authoritarianism, the uneven playing field lacks three major aspects, which can be equated to ‘live streams’ to the interest of the opposition. These aspects are lack of access to resources, media, and justice, which are often not as accessible to the opposition but which the incumbent enjoys unrestricted (Levitsky and Way, 2002 p.75). Resources include various enabling factors, such as finance, transport facilities, personnel, and infrastructural opportunities, including buildings or offices. The incumbent almost always has unhindered access to the media such as radio stations and the press. Shrewd authoritarian leaders may manipulate democratic institutions as long as they can avoid well and widely publicized abuses, such as massive election rigging (Levitsky and Way, 2002 p.58).

In Sierra Leone, for example, bribery and corruption during the Stevens era assumed a central stage in governance and private sector businesses, at the expense of other development objectives, good governance, including transparent elections, checks and balances, and fair opposition participation. Although ‘using bribery, co-optation, and various forms of “legal” persecution, governments may limit opposition challenges without provoking massive protest or international repudiation’. However, using the case of Sierra Leone under Siaka Stevens as an example, the early years of his regime witnessed tensions perhaps in unprecedented proportions in Africa. Such periods of large-scale democratic protestations point to the contradictions that use of tactics such as co-optation and bribery as part of the surviving tactics that characterize some competitive authoritarianism could sometimes not stand the test of time. The Stevens regime seemed to have characteristic similarities to the types of regime crises that occurred in Mexico (1988); Nacaragua (1990); Zambia 1991; Russia (1993); Ghana, Serbia, and Ukraine (2000) (Levitsky and Way, 2002 p.58). Perhaps it will do justice to elaborate on the Siaka Stevens dilemma a bit further since the topic of the study is exclusively Sierra Leone. Siaka Stevens’ APC (All Peoples Congress) party won a slight majority of seats in the 1967 general and parliamentary elections against the ruling SLPP (Sierra Leone Peoples Party). Siaka Stevens was sworn in as prime minister on March 21, 1967, but was ousted from power hours after he was sworn in in a bloodless military coup led by the commander of the army, Brigadier General David Lansana. On the 23rd of March 1967, a group of senior military officers led by Major Charles Blake seized control of the government. The new dispensation was headed by Lt. Colonel Andrew Juxon-Smith and an eight-man National Reformation Council (NRC) was constituted to lead the government. On 18th April 1968, another group of senior military officers, who called themselves the Anti-Corruption Revolutionary Movement, (ACRM) headed by Brigadier John Amadu Bangura overthrew the Juxon-Smith group. Thus, with time and under the pressure of coups, perceived and real, Stevens became more authoritarian, breaking allegiance with most former loyal supporters (Humphrey, J.C. 1969). Apart from the coups, there was a large-scale students’ demonstration on January 30th-31st, 1977 resulting in the death of 37 individuals. A state of emergency was declared on February 1st 1977 (Press, R. M. 2015).

All of these show to a large extent that (hybrids) of competitive authoritarianism may sometimes face herculean challenges.

It can thus be seen so far that the term competitive authoritarianism is both distinct in itself and bears contextual and situational differences. Situational differences should be understood because what obtains in one country may not and can hardly be equally identical to another. In his ‘devastating broadcast’, O'Donnell pointed out that the concept of ‘democratic consolidation’ was Eurocentric and teleological’ (Gunther, 1996).

Political History and Background of Sierra Leone

The development of party politics in Sierra Leone can be traced to 1950, two years before the attainment of independence and it has grown to the emergence of a multi-party system. Britain had colonized Sierra Leone for about one hundred and fifty-three (153) years (1808 to 1961). (Fyfe, C. 1962). By the end of the 19th century, Britain introduced a system of direct rule in the colony, whereby the white governors from Britain manned administrative and political business in the best of their interests. The rest of the country, or protectorate, was indirectly ruled under the administration of paramount chiefs (in charge of chiefdoms, comprising several sections) section chiefs (in charge of several villages), and village headmen. The paramount chiefs were answerable to district commissioners who in turn were answerable to the colonial administration (Takehiko, O. 2017). So, since the start, there was this permanent bottleneck and bureaucratic barriers between the protectorate populations and the colonial administration. Dissidents who might have experienced injustice or unjust outcomes regarding property or human rights would have to contend with the dictates of the system of power as administered by the local administrative system, referred to as the Native Administration (N.A.). Despite the indirect system of political administration, the protectorate had quite a good number of prominent educated elites during the colonial era and they included Milton Margai, the first prime minister, his half-brother Albert Margai, the second prime minister, John Kerifa-Smart and Chief Julius Gulama of Kayamba chiefdom in Moyamba district among others. They formed the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) in Bo in 1950 to advocate and aid in the transition to political independence and for self-rule (Wai, Z. 2011). The SLPP had the advantage of having the most educated protectorates at the time and respectable

leadership in the person of Milton Margai. Albert Margai was very prominent in his brother's-led SLPP government. For example, he was elected as the first protectorate member of the legislative council in 1951 and was made cabinet minister of education (Harris, D. J. 2014). These political leaders had started taking an active part in national politics. For example, Albert Margai and Siaka Stevens were elected to the legislative council in Milton Margai's government (1952-1957). Milton Margai however, soon came under criticism for leaning heavily on the traditional paramount chiefs in his administrative trajectory. He was accused severely by even his half-brother, Albert Margai, of being rather too conservative. Albert and other younger colleagues in the government posed a radical stance in running the country, emphasizing that traditional leaders should not mingle in national politics. But one might rightly suppose that Milton Margai's loyalty to the paramount chiefs may have stemmed from the system of indirect rule, whereby political, civil, and traditional matters were largely restricted to the protectorate and paramount chiefs. Or that paramount chiefs might have played a role in his election to power in the first place. A growing discontent within the SLPP will soon rear its ugly head. Milton Margai's government then hung on a thin thread and apparently, the traditional leadership could not save him. To salvage the situation, he chose what looked like the only plausible option; that of convening a national convention to elect the party leadership in 1958. Albert Margai won the leadership position of the party but stepped down out of respect for his elder brother who was then 62 years old while Albert was 48 (Wai, Z. 2011). But Albert's dissatisfaction over the state of affairs was not quelled by this arrangement and a breakaway was inevitable. Albert had now become an open antagonist to Milton Margai. He transformed his dissatisfaction by forming and heading a new political party, the People's National Party (PNP), and was soon joined by Siaka Stevens, who became deputy leader and Secretary General. Their number soon swelled by many others in the SLPP governments who must have shared Albert Margai's point of view. Prominent among them included S.T. Navo, Maigore Kallon, Abu Koroma from Kono, and T.J. Ganda (Wai, Z. 2011).

To imagine that acrimony would soon scatter the new fusion was least imaginable, Siaka Stevens, who, until then was a close ally of Albert Margai broke away and formed the All-People's Congress (APC). The number of political parties has started growing,

with the Creole elites, mainly in Freetown, forming the United People's Party (UPP) which collapsed too soon. The collapse of the UPP could not have been unconnected with the fact that the Creole hegemony in Freetown could not penetrate nor garner support among the protectorates. A possible reason for this reality was that the Creoles, by their closeness to the British (being brought from England to found the colony), apparently despised the 'Kontries', a derogatory term (they) used to refer to people from the interior. The latter, on the other hand, saw the creole as haughty. A colony-based Creole political leadership, driven mainly by Creole ideology, beliefs, and differing social and cultural outlooks was least imaginable. By being closest to the British, the Creole must have (wrongly) believed that they should be natural inheritors of political leadership after the departure of the colonial masters.

District council elections were held in 1959. The results put the SLPP in the lead while the PNP put up a very low ranking, indicating that the SLPP was still strong, despite Milton Margai's apparent weaknesses and the emergence of a new political party. Sierra Leone was now positioned for a forward leap. Milton Margai maintained a democratic trajectory that is still revered by many today. It is doubtful whether there has been any leader with a liberal and tolerant political dispensation. Concord Times Newspaper reported that Margai engendered mechanisms for consultative talks on an independence constitution. The talks progressed as planned and were finally concluded in early 1960, with his successful leadership support and approval from the other factions. A deal had been struck, at least in the area of advocating for political independence, and on 20th April 1960, a negotiation delegation comprising over twenty prominent Sierra Leoneans headed by Sir Milton Margai set off for Britain to a constitutional conference with Queen Elizabeth II and Secretary for the Colony, Iain Macleod in London. (Wai, Z. 2011). The Sierra Leonean contingent comprised some of the most outstanding citizens of the time and they included Sir (Lawyer) Albert Margai, Trade Unionist Siaka Stevens, SLPP strongman, Lamina Sankoh, the Creole Activist Isaac Wallace Johnson, Paramount chief (female) Ella Koblo Gulama, Educationist Mohamed Sanusi Mustapha, Dr. John Karefa-Smart, Professor Kandeh Bureh, Lawyer Sir Banja Tejan-Sie, former Freetown Mayor Eustace Henry Taylor Commings, Educationist Amadu Wurrie and Creole Diplomat Hector Reginald Sylvanus Boltman (Fyfe, C. 1962). Sierra Leone gained independence

probably on a silver platter on the 27th of April, 1961. With the achievement of political independence, parliamentary elections were held on May 25, 1962, and the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) won 28 out of 74 seats in the National Assembly. The opposition All-People's Congress (APC) won 16 seats (Cartwright, & John, R. 1978). Milton Margai's leadership was short-lived. He died suddenly in 1964 in what many suspected to be mysterious and he was succeeded by his younger half-brother, Albert Margai as prime minister to complete his term of office. This arrangement looked unconstitutional in the eyes of many and was challenged by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. John Karefa-Smart, but he received no support in his bid to strip Albert of the position (Harris, D. J. 2014). Albert Margai completed his brother's term of office all the same, but his administration was marred by accusations of blatant tribal politics. Dr. John Karefa-Smart's opposition to the latter's appointment will soon produce results, although maybe not for the unconstitutionality of the appointment of Albert as successor but for other reasons. For example, Albert soon resorted to dismissing the majority of ministers and government officers in the previous administration, mainly non-Mendes, accusing them of being traitors and undermining his administration. Perhaps it was time for those who had repudiated John Karefa-Smart's objection to realize their mistake. But it was too late. The eagle had grown wings and was set to fly unstoppable.

Parliamentary elections were held at the end of the tenure of the late Milton/Albert on March 17, 1967, and the APC won 32 out of 78 seats in the National Assembly. The SLPP won 28 seats. It was apparent that Albert Margai had successfully embittered most people around him and across the nation as a whole. The political squabbles that ensued after those elections slid into a protracted series of coups and counter-coups. It (much) later warranted the deployment of Cuban military aid in Sierra Leone. And a detail of the drama that unfolded is necessary here. The then Governor General, Sir Henry Lightfoot Boston, attempted to champion a coalition government between the two parties. Siaka Stevens would have none of that and the SLPP would not tolerate Stevens' leadership. Stevens pressed the governor for his appointment based on his simple majority. The Governor appointed Siaka Stevens as Prime Minister on March 21, 1967. The process was marked by tensions. In the middle of the swearing-in ceremony of the new Prime Minister, Siaka Stevens, the Sierra Leone Army made a dramatic entrance into the mainstream

political arena. The Governor General, Sir Henry Lightfoot Boston, was placed under arrest by a Mende Army officer called Lieutenant Samuel Hinga Norman, whilst the Governor was conducting the ceremony. Siaka Stevens and three other prospective APC Ministers were also taken captive. Lieutenant Hinga Norman, who was the Governor General's aide de camp, was acting on the instructions of the Force Commander, David Lansana, a Mende. Within twenty-four hours Brigadier Lansana announced that the swearing-in of Stevens was unconstitutional and declared martial law (Harris, D. J. 2014).

Siaka Stevens was overthrown in a military coup by General David Lansana barely hours after his appointment, with the latter claiming that the appointment was unconstitutional, because, according to him, the elections of twelve paramount chiefs (who also would eventually have representations in parliament) had not yet been concluded. General Lansana was a Mende from the protectorate and a loyalist to Albert Margai (of the SLPP). He declared martial law throughout the length and breadth of the country. There was a nationwide protest against the declaration and forty rebelling dissidents were gunned down, mainly in Freetown (Cartwright, & John, R. 1978). Major Charles Blake (a Creole) overthrew General Lansana on the night of 23rd/24th March 1967 and went ahead to form an eight-member National Reformation Council (NRC), and Lt Colonel Andrew Juxon Smith (a Creole) headed the council. The council disbanded political activities, suspended the constitution and declared martial law yet again, on 3rd April 1968. On 18th April 1968, another group of senior military officers, who called themselves the Anti-Corruption Revolutionary Movement, (ACRM) headed by Brigadier John Amadu Bangura overthrew the Juxon-Smith group. Thus, with time and under pressure of coups, perceived and real, Stevens became more authoritarian, breaking allegiance with most former loyal supporters (Cartwright, & John, R. 1978). He oppressed every opposition and was the sole man dictating the politics of the country.

Apart from the coups, there was a large-scale students' demonstration on January 30th-31st, 1977 resulting in the death of 37 individuals. "Resistance under Stevens was sporadic, dangerous, and devoid of any active civil society network. Everybody was afraid," (Press, R. M. 2015). A recall from Frank Kposowa, one of the founders of an opposition newspaper called *The Tablet* (1977–1981). Kposowa was arrested and tortured in 1980, but he continued his critical reporting after his release. As Kposowa noted, he

devised a chilling humor among activists. It was: “Make out your will before speaking against the government.” Siaka Stevens used a series of repressive measures to maintain a strong hold on power. A state of emergency was declared on February 1st, 1977. And colleges were closed down, further causing nation- wide strikes and demonstrations. (Harris, D.J. 2014). All of these show to a large extent that hybrids of competitive authoritarianism may sometimes face herculean challenges. Siaka Stevens’ regime faced sporadic resistance.

The stage had been set and a drama of coups and counter-coups continued. There was no central control system and factions operated in silos, apparently motivated by personal, tribal, or cabal interests. The former colonial masters were powerless, stayed aloof, and looked on. The NRC was likewise overthrown in a military rebellion led by Sergeant-Major Amadou Rogers on April 18, 1968, resulting in the deaths of two individuals. Sergeant-Major Rogers announced the formation of a seven-member National Interim Council (NIC) on April 18, 1968. The National Interim Council turned control of the government over to the earlier elected civilian APC government headed by Siaka Stevens who had been placed under house arrest and later sought asylum in neighboring Guinea on April 26, 1968. Some twenty opposing persons were killed in political violence in Bo, the SLPP stronghold, on September 24, 1968. Bo is the bastion of the Mende ethnic group to which Milton Margai and his younger brother, Albert, belonged. Prime Minister Stevens declared a state of emergency on November 20, 1968, after allegedly discovering a military plot to overthrow the government, and declared a state of emergency once more on September 14, 1970 (Humphrey J.F. 1969).

A third political party emerged. The United Democratic Party (UDP) was established by some well-educated and outstanding protectorate elites (mainly northerners) including Dr. John Karefa-Smart, Mohammed Forna, and Mohammed Bash-Taqi, among others in opposition to Steven’s government on September 20, 1970. Siaka Stevens had become too powerful and dominated everything that had to do with governance. (Apart from John Karefa-Smart, Mohamed Forna, Mohamed Bash Taqi, and many others were later executed by Siaka Stevens) Parliament ratified the state of emergency on October 21, 1970, and suppressed an alleged military rebellion on January 21-22, 1971. The government suppressed another alleged military rebellion on March 23,

1971, resulting in the deaths of four individuals. The situation was becoming precarious and conflict was imminent to such a level that Guinea deployed some 200 troops in support of the government on March 28, 1971. The parliament declared Sierra Leone a republic that year and Siaka Stevens was (re-) elected President on April 21, 1971. Some 100 individuals were killed during the crisis in opposition to the declaration and the (unfair) nature of the elections (Humphrey, J. F. 1969).

The 1995 constitution made Sierra Leone a Republic with an executive president, a multiparty democracy, and a unicameral parliament, the president is the head of state and government. He appoints a cabinet and forms a government, approved by the legislature. Presidential and parliamentary elections are held every five years under universal adult suffrage and proportional representation in the case of the 2007 presidential and parliamentary elections (Baturo, A. 2014). Executive power is vested in the government and Freetown is both the capital and seat of government. Siaka Stevens ruled for about 18 years and handed power to his handpicked army officer, Major General Joseph Saidu Momoh in 1985, not through elections, but through a nationwide referendum, whereby citizens had to choose between 'yes' and 'no' to Momoh's leadership. In the end the 'yeses' won and Major General J.S. Momoh succeeded Siaka Stevens until the coup of young army officers of 29th April 1992 that brought in Captain Valentine Strasser, Maada Bio, and others and formed the National Provisional Revolutionary Council (NPRC). As could be expected with military regimes, the NPRC resorted to dissolving the parliament and disbanding political activities - a shocking declaration that was made shortly on 4th May 1992. The NPRC's nomenclature was changed to the Supreme Council of State in July of the same year. Violence has always characterized political regimes in Sierra Leone. Every military regime spilled innocent blood. A few months after the change of name or better still, the metamorphosis of the NPRC, 26 individuals, military and civilians included, were executed for 'their involvement' in an alleged 'rebellion'.

An Animal Farm type of suppression evolved in the new regime. The regime lifted the ban on political activities probably with a hidden agenda to exterminate more 'apparent threats. For barely four months later an alleged rebellion was suppressed, resulting in the arrest of seven middle to senior-ranking military officers and Captain

Valentine Strasser, the 29-year head of state was bundled into a helicopter and deposited in neighboring Guinea on 16 January 1996 and Julius Maada Bio (current head of state) took over on 19 January 1996. Maada Bio, Sherbro with Mende's upbringing, will soon design a stratagem that would yield him political fruits later. He handed power to an SLPP leadership after about six months and departed the shores of Sierra Leone, only to come back and contest for the presidency on an SLPP ticket and win the election that is still believed by many to have been cooked by a suspected SLPP/ Mende loyalist electoral commission.

Tribalism in Politics

Tribalism is the identity, practice, beliefs, and cultural bonds that arise among a set of people out of belonging to the same tribe. The bond or tie has many roots and causes that hold the group together. Tribes have fought to stay together to protect their interests, resources, and territories. It is revealed that the stronger the spate of cooperation the more likely tribes appropriated land and other resources (Tooby & Cosmides, 2010). High levels of commitment, loyalty, and cooperation are essential for the survival of a tribe; thus, defectors were sanctioned and loyal members were rewarded with material and or non-material gifts. This implies therefore that members of a tribe are more loyal to their cause than to the interest of the wider community. This is so true that tribal bias is an inherent feature of tribal identity. However, and sadly so, tribal biases can lead tribes to ignore 'sound reasoning and judgmental accuracy for group belonging and commitment' (Kahan, Peters, Dawson & Slavic, 2017).

This discourse, so far, more than anything else, contributed and continues to contribute to the devastating characteristic of tribal politics in Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone's 2007 polls split the war-scarred country along ethnic and regional lines. Reacting to the results of the 2007 presidential and parliamentary results, Professor Joe A.D. Alie had this to say. "They have simply preached naked ethnic politics. It does not augur well for the unity of this county, especially when you consider we have just come from a very nasty war," he told Reuters. (Katrina Mason, August 2007 Analysis – Tribal Voting Key to Sierra Leone Run-Off). However, voting patterns are largely regional, and by extension, tribal, Themne (including Limba, and Loko) in the North East and the West, versus Mende

in the South-South East (including Sherbro and Kono). There are the Mandigo, Fullah, and Kuranko minority ethnic groups in the Northern region. These groups are largely Muslims and are believed to vote for the SLPP party. The turnabout in their voting pattern came about when a Mandigo candidate, the late Ahmad Tejan Kabba with mixed Northern and Southern background (Muslim and SLPP) won the 2002 presidency. The Mandigo, Fullah and Kuranko ethnic groups have always voted for SLPP, no matter the amount of poor performance or otherwise of the SLPP. In a strongly worded article, Alhaji U. N'Jai argues that Sierra Leone's 'DNA' was built on tribal politics; and that hiring and firing of the labor force is triggered by tribal sentiment more than anything else. (N'jai, A.U., 2021). The political development in Sierra Leone since independence is tainted with incidences of tribalism. Such periods of large-scale democratic protestations point to the contradictions that the use of tactics such as co-optation and bribery as part of the surviving tactics that characterize some competitive authoritarianism could sometimes not stand the test of time. The Stevens regime seemed to have characteristic similarities to the types of regime crises that occurred in Mexico (1988); Nicaragua (1990); Zambia 1991; Russia (1993); Ghana, Serbia, and Ukraine (2000) (Levitsky and Way, 2002).

Political Parties

The multitude of political parties that have risen in Sierra Leone in recent years can give the impression to the outsider that there are selfish interests among political leaders. First, there are perhaps more political parties than necessary, considering the country's population. Secondly, it looks like too many people want to become heads of state and contest state leadership at all elections, making the contest less savory. Third, most of the new and quickly dying political parties do not seem to have enduring political ideologies that can survive the test of time. Fourth, is the question: Could the preponderance of political parties result from what one could loosely term political tolerance? For example, over fifteen parties registered for the 1996 presidential and parliamentary elections. In the 2018 presidential and parliamentary elections 16 parties participated and they were: All People's Congress, Alliance Democratic Party, Citizens Democratic Party, Coalition for Change, National Democratic Alliance, National Grand Coalition, National Progressive Democrats, National Unity and Reconciliation Party, Peace and Liberation Party,

Republic National Independence Party, People's Movement for Democratic Change, Revolutionary United Front Party and the Sierra Leone Peoples Party. Of all these parties, power has always and may likely continue to switch between the two main political parties, the All-People's Congress and the Sierra Leone Peoples Party, with the latter currently in power (2018-2023). Over twenty (20) political parties have been in existence since independence (Osei, A. 2021). What is worth noting is the fact that the 16 or so parties are not drawn strictly along regional lines, although there is an element akin to tribalism that influences their formation. Another interesting element that makes our politicians and their political parties look like travesties of true democracy is that as those parties lose elections, they throw their support to the prospective winning team and go silent for the next five years. The mushroom parties demonstrate loyalty and allegiance during elections to either of the two major parties, such that there have been run-offs in three presidential elections as the minor parties took sides thereby narrowing marginal differences between the two main parties (M'Cormack-Hale, F., Akua, M., & Twum, A. 2022). There have been five general and presidential elections since independence and the two main parties, the APC and SLPP have always won in turns. The current government is SLPP-led with Retired Brigadier Julius Maada Bio as head of state.

In 2002 a Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC) was enacted by an Act of Parliament to regulate the affairs of political parties. Some of the functions of the Political Parties Registration Commission include registration and supervision of the conduct of political parties; it monitors, and promotes political pluralism and constitutionalism, among other key functions (Political Parties Registration Commission). It is said that the emergence of so many political parties create security concerns for peaceful political contests. There is always lots of campaigning and heightened tensions; the ordinary citizens fear and movements become unsafe. Most, if not all mushroom parties are splintering from one or the other of the two main parties. Most of the small political parties normally remain dormant in between elections and become only active when it is an election period.

Three Elections (2007, 2012, 2018)

2007 General Elections

Sierra Leone finally organized general elections in August 2007 after a devastating 11-year civil Revolutionary United Front (RUF) war and a four-year National Provisional Revolutionary Council (NPRC) military rule of Captain Valentine Strasser and Julius Maada Bio. (Sierra Leone Ready for Elections: Electoral Officials were set). The election euphoria was not without pageantry. Hopes among politicians as well as electorates were sky-high as seven candidates stepped forward for election to the presidency. The first round of voting failed to produce a 55% winner. As stated earlier, the mushroom parties almost always interfere with one-round voting, as they take small fractions of votes depriving the lead candidate. There was a need for a run-off between the two leading candidates, Ernest Bai Koroma of the APC and Solomon Berewa of the SLPP. Results of the election put Ernest Koroma at 54.6% (Fridy, K. S., & McCormack-Hale, F. A. 2011). The parliamentary seats were equally contested with a large number of candidates. Five hundred and sixty-six (566) candidates contested the elections in which 112 seats were at a stake out of 124. Voting this time was a system described as first-past-the-post, that is constituency representation, rather than a proportional, system of voting as was the case during the Tejan Kabba victory election, at least the result was an opposition victory.

2012 Elections, (7 November 2012)

One-off voting was witnessed in 2012, when Legislative elections were held on November 17, 2012, and the APC won 67 out of 124 seats in the House of Representatives, and the SLPP won 42 seats. President Koroma was re-elected with 59 percent of the votes in the first round of presidential elections. Many observers monitored both the presidential and legislative elections and such were: The African Union (AU) sent 40 observers from 14 countries led by Dr. Amos Sawyer of Liberia. Second, the Carter Center (CC) sent eight long-term observers from six countries and 34 short-term observers from an additional 12 countries. Another was the EU which sent 28 long-term observers and 72 short-term observers from 27 countries led by Richard Howitt from the United Kingdom. Again, the European Parliament sent four observers while the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) sent 150 observers led by Christian Edem

Dovlo of Ghana. Thud Ernest Bai Koroma was sworn-in as president soon after the announcement of the results (Khaleej Times online; People's Online Sierra Leone Holds Successful Landmark Elections).

Presidential and General Elections of 2018

The landmark run-off of elections in Sierra Leone was obvious once more in the 2018 elections. This was a repeat of previous elections, due, mainly to too many small political parties that managed to snatch away some small percentage of votes thereby reducing the chances of main contestants. The first round of elections (presidential) was held on 7 March 2018. Naturally, the incumbent Ernest Bai Koroma of the APC had no mandate to run, after completing his second term in office. This indicated that Sierr Leonean presidents might no longer remain in office after their mandated (maximum two) terms. The contest was therefore between Julius Maada Bio of the SLPP and a new entrant, Dr. Samura Wilson Kamara of the APC. Again, no candidate received the required 55% during the first round. A run-off was conducted on 31 March and Julius Maada Bio was the winner with 51.8%. International observers hailed the outcomes as orderly and fair despite it being hotly contested. In addition, it is believed that the results were doctored in favor of Julius Maada Bio. Likewise, in the presidential elections in 2007 no candidate won the required 55 percent of votes in the first round. A run-off was held between Koroma of APC who had received 44 percent of the votes and the outgoing Vice President Berewa (SLPP) who had obtained 38 percent. The PMDC supported Mr. Koroma in the run-offs. On 17 September Koroma of APC was declared elected winning 54 per cent of the valid votes (Fridy, K. S., & M'Cormack-Hale, F.A 2011). The election included seven parties competing for the presidency and parliamentary seats. There were only two main competitors, however, the SLPP party (the incumbent) and the APC party in power, had some ethnic and regional strongholds and ethnic groups who were ready to vote and willing to vote for either party. There was not much to differentiate them ideologically either because their platforms were very similar. They were based on clusters of political elites with historic ties to their parties (Lancaster, C. 2007).

In conclusion, relying on tribal and regional loyalties to garner support from politicians who lack the very basic quality and leadership potential is dangerous to the

progress of Sierra Leone. The practice is so common that the country may hardly produce quality leadership at least shortly. Available evidence points to the tendency that the democratic process in Sierra Leone may continue to maintain a unique path.

CHAPTER III

Research Paradigm

The 2018 General Election

Elections held in 2018 were widely reported as credible and fair because observers from the African Union and European Union reported that the elections have all that it takes for liberal democracy. Because citizens were able to go out and vote for their candidates, there were electoral bodies with trained polling personnel, there were representatives of party agents, domestic observers, and security personnel who observed throughout the process even though there were challenges found. In an RFI report, the National Electoral Commission (NEC) reported Sierra Leone police obstructed the electoral process, by unannounced entering into NEC premises, at random interrogating NEC staff especially when they are on duty. Although the police denied the allegations, they claimed to investigate over 200 cases related to electoral malpractices,” Ibrahim Samura, police spokesperson, told RFI. “Some of these cases involve NEC officials,” he added (Basheka, B., & Auria Combe, C. J. 2019) (RFI Report, 2018). This made the overall assessment contain some elements of both competitive authoritarianism and liberal electoral democracy

The practice of Competitive Authoritarianism in Sierra Leone has its origin in the fragile governance systems that evolved among local political leaders after independence. The colonial legacy of divide and rule, that of ruling one country with two separate legal systems bore some negative impact in the general political transformation. The colonial legacy of Sierra Leone has transcended governance structures, education, social, and to some extent, infrastructural developments. Bribery, nepotism, regionalism, political loyalty, tribalism, and corruption still determine jobs and other economic opportunities. Jobs and other economic opportunities such as contracts are awarded to individuals or businesses that belong to someone who knows somebody from within the ruling party, the region you come from, and the tribe you belong to. And the 2018 Elections like any other election recorded the tension of regionalism and competitive authoritarianism. Some facts proved the competition was rare but there were high levels of violence and political intimidation even up to date, a method used to silence the main opposition.

Political Clashes and Competitive Authoritarianism and the 2018 Elections

The 2018 presidential election was the fourth national election since the end of the civil war in 2002. It was held on March 7, 2018, and none of the 16 candidates received the 55 percent of the votes required by Article 42(2)(e) of the Constitution to win the election, therefore a second round of voting was required. As per Article 42(2)(f), the runoff election took place on March 27, 2018, with the top two candidates from the initial election Julius Maada Bio of the opposition Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) who had 43.3 percent of the votes and Samura Kamara of the ruling All People's Congress Party (APC) with 42.7 percent of the votes.

The runoff presidential election was held on March 31, 2018, but the outcome was delayed because of a disagreement over the tallying method. On April 4, 2018, by the rules outlined in the constitution, the Returning Officer announced Julius Maada Bio who received 51.8 percent of the votes as the president-elect. Less than two hours later, Mr. Bio was sworn in as President of Sierra Leone in conformity with Article 42(3) which requires the person elected to the office of the President to assume office on the day upon which he is declared elected, or upon the date that his predecessor's term of office expires. Mr. Bio succeeds former President Ernest Bai Koroma, who was constitutionally ineligible to run for office having already served the constitutionally permitted two terms of office (as per Article 46).

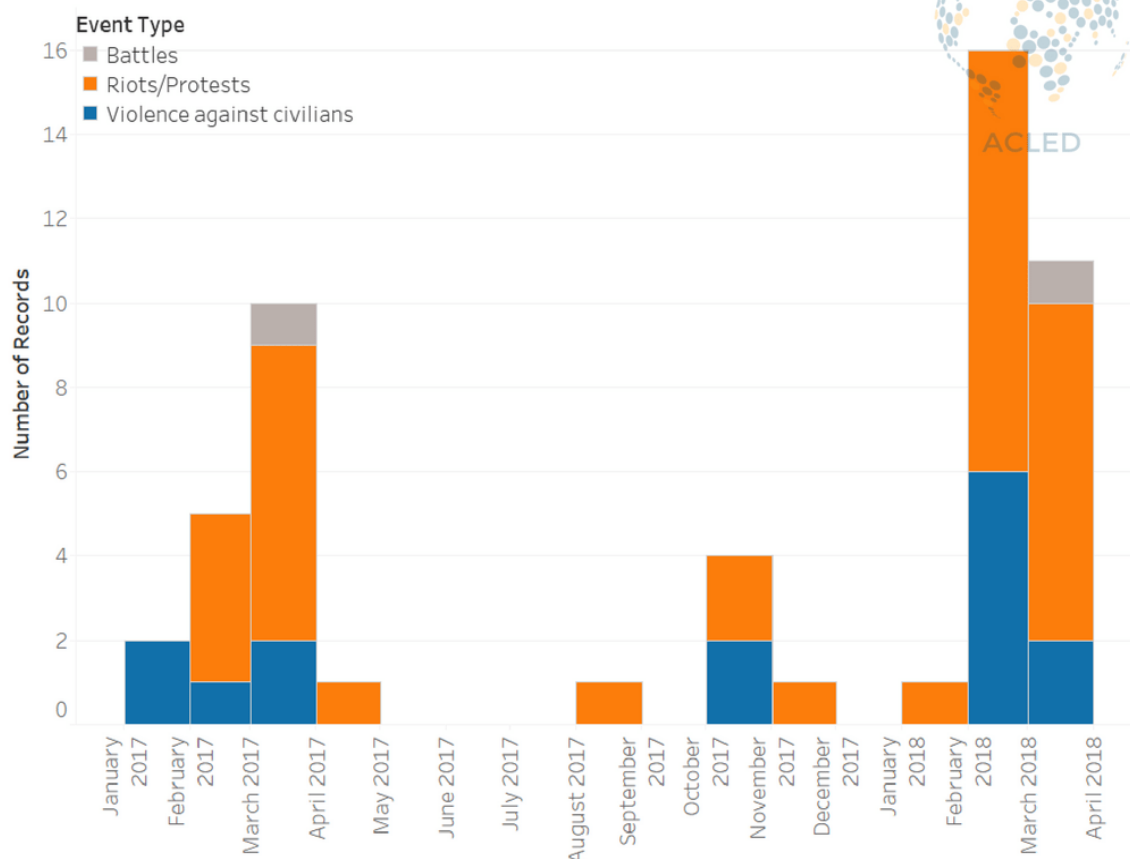
Even though the country enjoys political pluralism and participation, still opposition parties and leaders have faced intimidation and harassment by the ruling government. This means the competition was rare, the procedures were in place, there was an electoral body, 14 political parties officially registered to compete for the election on a popular vote, and the European and African Union sent their representatives to ensure a peaceful transition of power. Despite the tremendous effort made by the PPRC, religious leaders, civil societies, and musicians to calm the situation and preach peace talks, there was still violence in the country.

Analysts following the Sierra Leone election have also noted a worrying trend of ethnicized violence and rhetoric in this period. The APC and SLPP draw support from the two main ethnic groups in Sierra Leone: The Temne (APC) and the Mende (SLPP). However, ACLED in 2018 gave relevant points on the past clashes between the two

groups, which were driven by competition over access to resources, rather than ethnic rhetoric. In the 2018 election, however, analysts have noted an increase in ethnic, rather than political competition in the party clashes (Cilliers, J., 2018).

Figure 1: *The Acts of Violence Throughout the Elections (2017 to 2018)*

Figure 1: Political clashes in Sierra Leone, January 2017-March 2018



Source: Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED), Sierra Leone 2018.

The above figure recorded the occurrence of political clashes that resulted in battles, riots/protests, and violence against civilians in the country, from the 2017 to 2018 general elections. The high level of political violence is becoming a course of concern especially when compared to violence levels in the sub-regions. March 2017 recorded the highest level of protest and March 2018 which was the month of elections recorded the highest level of protest and the act of violence against civilians and these lasted till April 2018.

Competitive Authoritarianism, Regionalism, and Tribal Politics and its Impact on the Democratic Process in Sierra Leone

Successive postcolonial regimes have devised and adopted various strategies to hold onto power for as long as possible. Siaka Stevens devised his systems of clinging onto power for about eighteen years. He handed power to Major General Joseph Saidu Momoh in 1985, a move many saw as a stratagem that would protect him against prosecution after leaving power. The ex-soldier was more of a scout than a head of state. He soon exhibited political ineptitude and attempted to use his tribal social club known as Ekutay to uplift his tribe's political and social image. He failed the people and admitted so in a radio broadcast to the nation. He however initiated a drive toward participatory political pluralism, although he could not see the process to its end as a group of army officers from the war front toppled his government in April 1992 (Bakarr Bah, A. 2011). So far, and at least during Siaka Stevens' regime, Competitive Authoritarianism was the order of the day. However, he survived eighteen years of suppressing and assassinating political opponents. The African continent as a whole is the continent that was colonized by so many European powers more than any other and the types of competitive authoritarian regimes that flourished after independence differed from country to country. One characteristic they all had in common was the brutal nature of their leadership. In addition to suppression and assassinations, corruption was rife. Siaka Stevens legalized the practice. Thus, state defrauding was part of his competitive authoritarian regime. President Siaka Stevens was so corrupt that he ran the economy of the state with the Lebanese business community to the detriment of the interests of the locals.

Bad governance constitutes a lack of accountability, corruption of the highest order, and suppression of opposition and dissident voices. Although the debate on the type or hybrid of competitive authoritarianism of Siaka Steven's example may continue to evolve, what is certain is that the government of the late man practiced a very bad form of corruption and oppression. William Reno, a Cambridge scholar writing on the 'Corruption and State Politics in Sierra Leone' summarized the situation thus: "Lebanese businessmen from the financial network also organized joint ventures with foreigners to the advantage of themselves and foreign contractors. Politicians acted as partners in these deals," things have hardly changed since (Bakarr Bah, A. 2011). The rumors within

government circles at that time were that Lebanese contracts (or contracts where Lebanese acted as middlemen) would always be inflated five times the actual cost'. Looting, pillaging, and depleting natural resources whether to support a continuous grip on power by incumbents or to lavish on conspicuous consumptions cannot be far from the attributes that constitute competitive authoritarianism of the Sierra Leone type over the years. Plundering of state funds by politicians or allies is still common. Nearly everybody of mature age in Sierra Leone has heard of the current first lady's open defrauding of the country's economy. She is said to have constructed a first-class five-star hotel, not in Sierra Leone, but in the Gambia, her home. Scandals of embezzlement surrounding the first lady are so common that people choose not to discuss it. Beyond the confines of overt corruption, regional and tribal voting is another resinous threat to Sierra Leone's national unity. Although detailed data on the 2007 and 2012 elections were not accessible to the researcher, a look at the statistics of the results of the 2018 elections suggests that things may not have changed much in terms of regional and tribal voting.

The table below shows the voting pattern in the 2018 presidential run-off election between Dr. Samura Kamara of the APC and Julius Maada Bio of the SLPP. The APC party was then the ruling party and the SLPP was in opposition. While the results can be regarded as encouraging in that the opposition party was able to defeat the ruling party. However, the voting pattern was largely regional, and by extension, tribal. The Temne (including Limba, and Loko) in the North- North East and the West, voted for APC while the Mende in the South East (including Sherbro and Kono) voted for the SLPP. There are the Mandigo, Fullah, and Kuranko minority ethnic groups in the Northern region. These groups are largely Muslims and are believed to vote for the SLPP. The turnabout in their voting pattern came about when a Mandingo candidate, the late Ahmad Tejan Kabba with mixed northern and southern background (Muslim and SLPP) won the 2002 presidential election. The Mandigo, Fullah, and Kuranko ethnic groups have since always voted SLPP, no matter the amount of poor performance or otherwise of the SLPP. The relevance of the topic of this study cannot be overemphasized and it cannot have come at a better time- less than one year to the next presidential and parliamentary elections in 2023. And the table below is as eye-catching as revealing. The results of the run-off presidential

elections are still believed to have been cooked in favor of the incumbent, Julius Maada Bio.

Evidence of Regionalism in Voting: the 2018 Presidential Election Run-off

Table 1: *Record Regional and Tribal Voting in the 2018 Presidential Run-Off Between Dr. Samuara Kamara of The APC and Julius Maada Bio of the SLPP*

Region	District	Registered votes	Kamara Samura APC	Bio Maada SLPP	Total valid Votes	Total invalid votes
East (SLPP)	Kailahun	165,753	13,343	119,502	132,845	1,219
	Kenema	280,141	27,308	211,232	238,540	1,926
	Kono	286,695	34,636	91,823	126,459	2,524
North (APC)	Bombali	187,664	144,056	14,807	158,863	1,565
	Falaba	65,761	22,562	16,862	39,424	1,174
	Koinadugu	84,293	40,210	19,004	59,214	1,621
	Tonkolili	204,231	143,500	22,748	166,248	1,889
North West (APC)	Kambia	155,484	69,542	30,155	99,697	2,477
	Karene	101,160	73,544	9,146	82,226	1,109
	Port Loko	233,962	153,608	27,084	180,692	2,729
South (SLPP)	Bo	284,348	26,143	219,131	245,276	1,709
	Bonthe	92,183	3,804	76,119	79,923	671
	Moyamba	147,041	21,045	96,456	117,504	1,995

	Pujehun	101,250	6,704	73,121	79,822	752
West (Mix)	Rural	282,358	131,433	90,170	221,603	3,221
	Urban	606,939	315,764	202,046	517,180	5,113
	Total	3,178,663	1,227,171	1,319,406	2,546,577	31,694
	Per cent		48.19	51.81	100	

Source: EU Election Observation Mission – Sierra Leone 2018

The divisive voting patterns are the spate and level of political, regional, and tribal violence. These shall be elaborated in the sections below. Election-related violence is so common in Sierra Leone. For example, in the majority of cases, elections have almost always been marred by nationwide increased political violence between the All-People's Congress (APC) and the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) (Sierra Leone Telegraph, 2018). Election-related violence has always been on a regional basis. It is the Temne (in the APC stronghold in the North and West versus the Mende (in the South and East- the SLPP stronghold). Thus, each party's leadership demonstrates the tendency to hold onto power. However, on a more serious note, people tend to forget the divide after elections. But their allegiances and aptitude for violence are always rekindled no sooner than it is election time. And it is the politicians who machinate to change the mindsets of the ordinary people. If incumbents continue to apply the results of regional voting to oppress opposition groups, then successive governments in Sierra Leone will remain Competitive authoritarian.

Concerning the root causes of violence, all fingers point to later Albert Margai as 'planting the seeds' of tribalism in Sierra Leone politics. The passing away of the senior Margai remains a mystery. Albert Margai's tribal politics is said to have caused the loss of the SLPP's victory in the 1965 elections to Siaka Stevens of the APC. Albert Margai is said to have masterminded the first coup in Sierra Leone in 1965 and he introduced the 'infamous Public Order Act' which successive governments have implemented to silence

opposition and dissident groups over the years. Perhaps one could suppose Albert Margai had a hand in his brother's death. Albert Margai is arguably the man who has the worst record in the practice of tribalism and regionalism. President Siaka Stevens worked very closely with Albert Margai in the SLPP before the former broke away to form the APC and he had this to say in his memories 'What Life Has Taught Me' "While stuffing his henchmen into power centers of politics, he (Albert Margai) was cramming every vacancy in the civil service and armed forces with fellow tribes-men. Margai's retreat into tribalism was more divisive and sectionalism more acute than any previous SLPP regime and was the worst thing that ever had happened to Sierra Leone since independence. When we needed unity most, Margai set us at each other's throats. When we most needed to set tribalism aside, Margai exploited it with frantic ruthlessness... Large numbers even of his tribesmen rejected his divisive policies and voted for us." Said Siaka Stevens. The APC party won the election in question.

Sir Albert Margai died of a heart attack while on a visit to his niece in the US. Nevertheless, he was credited for some good jobs, when he served as Finance Minister in his elder brother's SLPP-led government. He spearheaded the establishment of the central bank and changed the legal tender from the British Pound to Leone. Albert Margai should also be best remembered for his prediction of the rebel war in Sierra Leone. After having keenly watched Siaka Stevens' leadership style, Margai also said this of his successor: "If the Stevens government does not do something to elevate the lives of the have-nots, the poor, they would one day rise to demand from the haves, the rich, their share of the economy." This sounds so much like a trade of accusations between the two, although the latter had an everlasting truism.

Few events that should Teach Sierra Leoneans Some Lessons on the Dangers of Competitive Authoritarianism

When Siaka Steven assumed power in 1968, Sierra Leone was a democratic nation, despite Albert Margai's failed attempt to introduce a one-party system. Sir Milton Margai had set the pace for a smooth democratic progression. When (Siaka Stevens left power eighteen (18) years later, Sierra Leone was a party country, far from sustaining the pace of democracy. This was after he had prepared the stage for a one-party system.

During the years of Siaka Stevens' regime and part of his successor, J.S. Momoh's nation reached the brink of collapse. Corruption, mismanagement, neglected youth population (collapse of the educational system), injustice, impunity, and political violence, all contributed to attracting the youth population to the RUF (Revolutionary United Front) appeal for a war that was believed to bring about positive changes. (Abdullah, p. 90, pp. 240–41)

The SLA (Sierra Leone Army) reverted to indiscriminate brutal 'mopping up' of retaken villages and towns and looting grew, leading to the development of the concept of 'Sobel's', across the country. The term means soldiers by day, and rebels by night. The Kamajors, - one militia group came into existence as a means of arming mainly Mendes to defend their families, territory, and political ideology. This was due to the perceived incompetence of the SLA (Sierra Leone Army) to adequately put the RUF atrocities to an end. Like the rebels and some elements of the SLA, the Kamajors too soon became tribalistic, corrupt, and lost their focus (Dalby, N. 2017).

The outbreak of the RUF war was a response to successive Comparative Authoritarianism under the Siaka Stevens' regime. It was characterized by massive injustice, elimination of political opponents, and large-scale corruption. The war itself was characterized by the mass killing of civilians, the Drafting of underage children into the war, the Mass rape of women and girls, Mass looting and burning of houses, and Mass displacements. All of these lessons arise as a result of incumbents devising strategies to oppress opponents and clinging onto power for as long as they desire.

Reports on the human rights abuses and political intimidation in Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone 2018 human rights reports that the country is a constitutional republic with a directly elected president and a unicameral legislature. In March the opposition Sierra Leone People's Party presidential candidate Julius Maada Bio, won the presidential elections. Maada Bio defeated Samura Kamara of the All-People's Congress (APC) party by a narrow margin though it was challenging. In the January parliamentary elections, the APC won a plurality of the seats. Observers found the elections to be largely free and fair because the majority opted for regime change. Since then, the country has been struggling with Human rights issues including unlawful killings, harsh and life-threatening prison

conditions, criminal libel, no freedom of speech, official corruption, and lack of accountability in cases involving sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls (Human Right Report, 2018). For instance, on August 10, 2022, people went out of the street to protest against the high recorded inflation, cost of living, and high prices of cost of living and this led to an unknown number of dead, and the government imposed a nationwide curfew.

This chapter raises some instances whereby the incumbent, Julius Maada Bio has been devising strategies to suppress the main opposition candidate, Dr, Samura Kamara. Violent events are numerous and frequent. Dr. Kamara has faced court charges about alleged financial matters while he was Financial Secretary. The matter has lasted for the better part of two years. After eleven years of killing, maiming, looting, and raping the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was set up to examine the causes and effects of the war and to provide lasting recommendations to avoid a repeat of the circumstances that led to the RUF civil war and it had this to say: “Years of bad governance, endemic corruption and the denial of basic human rights created deplorable conditions that made conflict inevitable” (Bakarr Bah, A. 2011).

The Incumbent’s Competitive Authoritarianism Strategies

A lot has been said about regional and tribal-based- political violence but it seems the problem is not going away. Currently, Sierra Leone is getting gripped in silent fear as the 2023 presidential and parliament elections approach. It is speculated that the incumbent Julius Maada Bio might resort to rigging to keep his grip on power. This prospect is certainly a prelude to violence and if it happens, it will be protracted on a tribal and regional basis. There was no such fear during Ernest Bai Koroma’s APC regime, nor of Ahmad Tejan Kabba of the SLPP on the prospect of clinging onto power after one term. (If securing a second term was not feasible). In under five years, the current regime has recorded more incidences of violence than the previous ten years of the APC rule. Protests, violence, and social unrest are not without a cause. They are reactions to repression, oppression, and state-sponsored violence. President Bio, in a widely broadcast message on the 8th of May 2020, referred to the protests as acts of terrorism Bah Chernoh Alpha M. and Anderson Matthew, May 2020 State Violence and Political Repression in Sierra

Leone. As recently as May 18th 2022, The Chairperson of the Consortium of Progressive Political Parties (CoPPP) in Sierra Leone, Madam Femi Claudius-Cole revealed a plot that the current regime had a sinister plan to smear the image of the Mayor of Freetown Yvon Aki-Sawyer and to cripple her chances of contesting the forthcoming elections (Chernoh, A.M., Bah & Matthew A., 2020).

Concerns are mounting that large-scale violence may erupt during the build-up to, during, or after the presidential and parliamentary elections in June 2023, as this contributor has put it: The tsunami of tribal violence is gathering its full force in Sierra Leone. If the heightening tribal tensions are not extinguished, the human catastrophe that looms on the horizon cannot be prevented. Be careful fellow Sierra Leoneans. The war began with the firing of a small rifle but later grew into a full-fledged war that killed thousands (Salifu, K.2022). The Freedom House reported that numerous independent newspapers are circulating freely in the country, and there are dozens of public and private radio and television outlets. However, public officials have previously employed libel and sedition laws to target journalists, particularly those reporting on elections and high-level corruption. In July 2020, Parliament voted to repeal Part V of the 1965 Public Order Act, which criminalized libel and sedition and introduced the Independent Media Commission Act, which was criticized by some observers who warned that it would no longer allow the registration of newspapers as sole proprietorships. In April 2020, soldiers in the city of Kenema physically attacked Standard-Times reporter Fayia Amara Fayia after he photographed a COVID-19 quarantine facility. Fayia was later arrested for attacking a soldier and was denied medication for a preexisting condition while in custody; his case was ongoing as of November (Freedom House, 2021)

CHAPTER IV

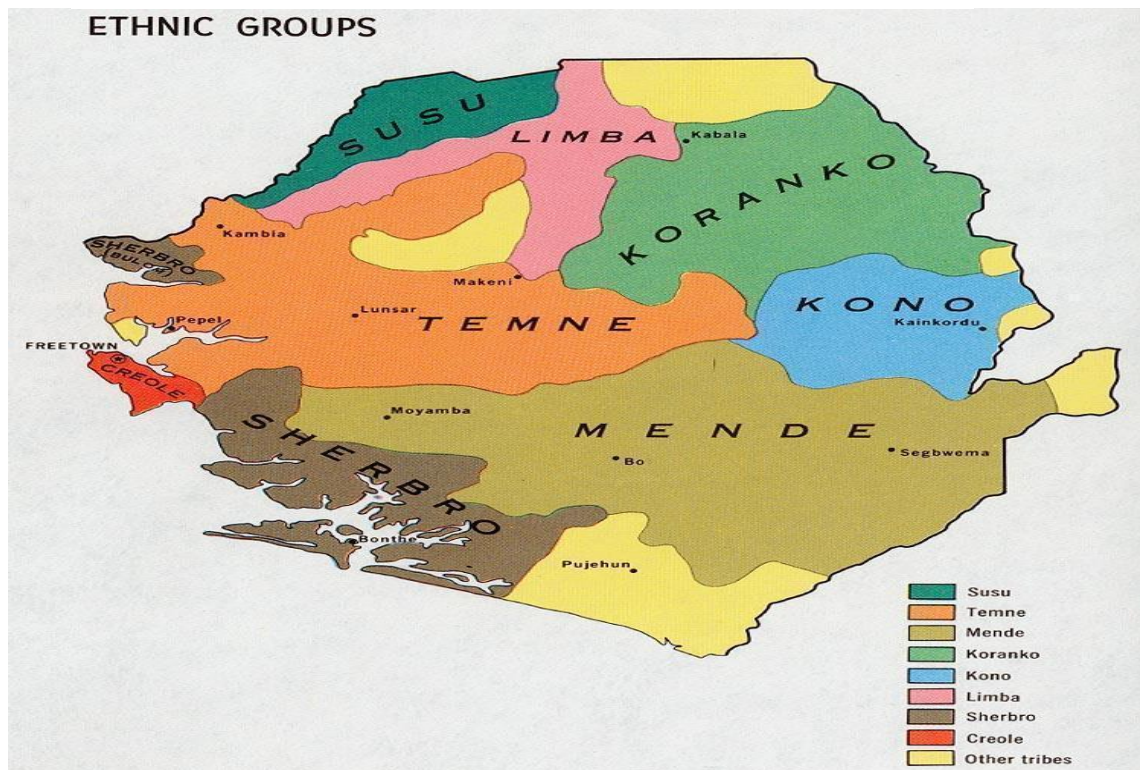
The 2018 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections

The voting turnout from the North and North-West for APC and the same from the South and South-East for SLPP and the acts of violence that come out from these regions give proof of regionalism.

Evidence of Regional Voting

This chapter examines more concrete incidents of competitive authoritarianism and regionalism that have been in practice since independence. The 2018 presidential and parliamentary elections, like the preceding elections, were not without the usual violent tensions and clashes. Election-related clashes are usually between supporters of the All-People's Congress (APC) and those of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) (Sierra Leone Telegraph, 2018). Election-related violence has always been on a regional basis. There are traditional and tribal loyalties that are persistent and may probably last for generations yet to come. It is the Temne (the APC stronghold in the North and West versus the Mende (the SLPP stronghold in the South and East). The two major ethnic groups of Temne and Mende have their following of smaller groups. For example, the APC has the Temne people and other northern ethnic groups, including the Limba and Loko) in the North- North East and the West, while the Mende have the Sherbro and Kono in the South/southeast). There are other smaller groups including the Mandigo, Susu, Yalunka, Fullah, and Kuranko ethnic groups in the Northern region. They are linguistically identical and are believed to have their original roots in the Republic of Guinea. These groups are largely Muslims and are believed to be the SLPP party loyalists. The turnout in their voting pattern came about when a Mandigo presidential candidate, the late Ahmad Tejan Kabba with mixed northern and southern background (Muslim and SLPP) won the 2002 presidency. These ethnic groups always vote for SLPP, no matter how abysmal the performance or otherwise of the SLPP.

Figure 2: *Sierra Leone Detailed Ethnic Map Of 1969.*

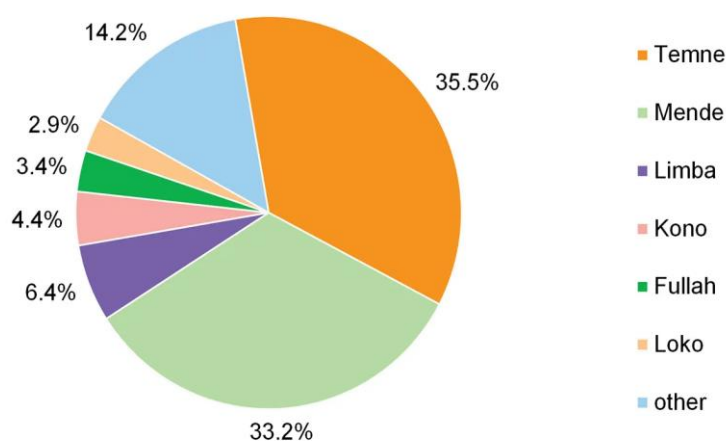


Source: vidiani.com maps of the world 2011

However, the above diagram is a map of Sierra Leone consisting of ethnic groups and ethnic composition from 1969 to 2013. The colors show the occupancy of each ethnic group in the regions. There are sixteen ethnic groups in the country but the Mendes who happen to be (mostly SLPP) and the Temne (mostly APC) appear to be the largest ethnic groups in the country followed by Limbas.

Figure 3: *The Sierra Leone Ethnic Composition 2013*

Sierra Leone ethnic composition (2013)

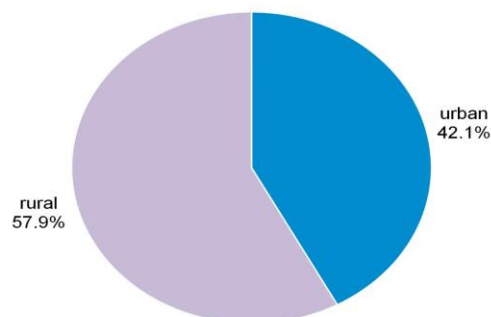


Source: Sierra Leone. Encyclopedia Britannica, 2013

The above figure shows the ethnic composition of the country and the percentages that comprise the population of each ethnic group. There are sixteen ethnic groups in the country but this composition focuses on the largest ethnic groups, for instance, the Temnes comprise 35.5% of the population while the Mendes comprise 33.2% of the population. The third largest ethnic group is the Limbas with 6.4%, followed by the Konos at 4.4%, Fullahs at 3.4%, and Lokos at 2.9%. The rest are minorities that comprise 14.2% of the population.

Figure 4: *Sierra Leone Urban-Rural Composition 2018.*

Sierra Leone urban-rural (2018)

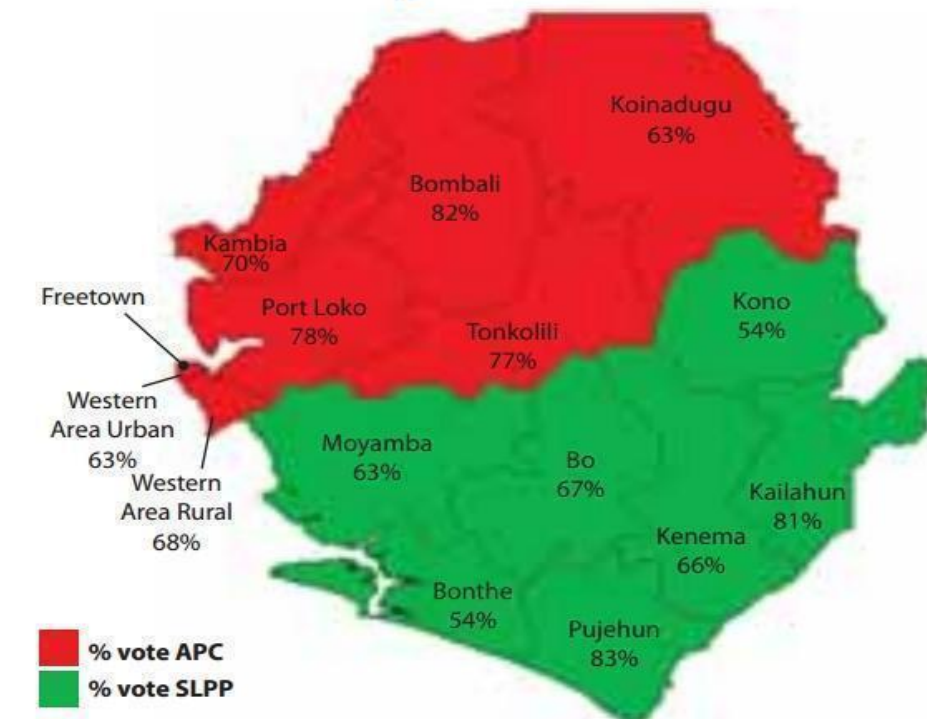


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Figure four is a composition of the Western Area which is the capital city (Freetown) in Sierra Leone and comprises the highest population in the country. The city is segregated into western-rural and western-urban percentages and they are a combination of different ethnic groups in the country.

Figure 5: *The 2007 Regional Voting Style*

2007 Parliamentary Election Results

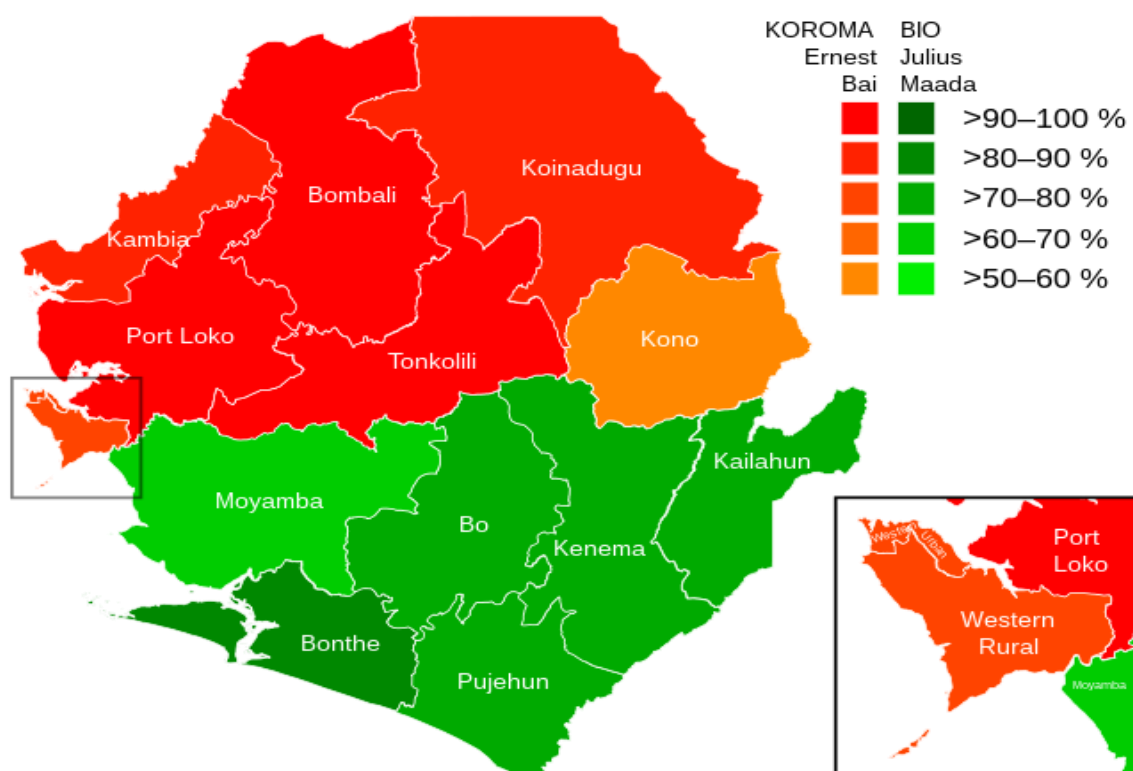


Source: Sierra Leone National Electoral Commission

The above map of the parliamentary election results in 2007 shows clear evidence of regional voting. The red represents the percentages of the All-People's Congress (APC) in their stronghold mostly found in the northern and north-west region while the green represents the percentages of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) stronghold in the south and south-east region. The APC stronghold area was Bombali District with 82% of the population voting for them. Second was Port Loko District with 78%, followed by Tonkolili with 77% of the population, Kambia with 70% of the population, Western Area Rural with 68%, and Western Area Urban with 63% of the population voted for them. The SLPP stronghold at that time was Pujehun District with 83% of the population voting for

them. Second was Kailahun with 81% of the population, 67% in Bo, 66% in Kenema, 63% in Moyamba, and 54% in Bonthe and Kono. Based on the above evidence, the elections were won by the All-People's Congress (APC) led by President Ernest Bai Koroma and the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) became the main opposition.

Figure 6: *The 2012 Regional Voting Style*



Source: Sierra Leone presidential election 2012 - Results by district. SVG - Wikimedia Commons

The 2012 general elections were also another evidence of regional voting between the two main political parties SLPP and APC. The colors show the % of regional voting. For instance, the APC strongholds were Bombali, Port Loko and Tonkolili with 90% voted out of 100. Followed by Kambia and Koinadugu with 80% out of 90%, the Western Area got 60% out of 70% and Kono voted 50%. The differences were APC gained more in the North and the Western Area. The SLPP strongholds were Bonthe, Bo, Kenema, Pujehun, Kailahun, and Moyamba, and lost more in the Western Area and Kono. The

above evidence made Ernest Bai Koroma of APC win the 2012 general parliamentary elections.

The 2018 Regional Voting

The key contestants in the 2018 presidential elections were Julius Maada Bio and Dr. Samura Wilson Kamara. The latter possesses overwhelming personal charisma, is a highly qualified economist, and has held top local and international positions including Financial Secretary, and worked with the World Bank and IMF. President Julius Maada Bio has served as a head of state for three months and was a former military man with a high school level of education. The first round of the election failed to produce an outright winner and a second round was conducted three weeks later. As the table below illustrates, Maada Bio had a majority of votes from the South/South East. Kailahun, Kenema, Kono, Bo Bonthe, Moyamba, and Pujehun voted overwhelmingly for Bio as opposed to Dr. Samura Kamara who trailed behind in each of those districts.

Table 2: *Records of Regional and Tribal Voting in the 2018 Presidential Run-Off Elections*

Region	District	Registered votes	Kamara Samura APC	Bio Maada SLPP	Total valid Votes	Total invalid votes
East (SLPP)	Kailahun	165,753	13,343	119,502	132,845	1,219
	Kenema	280,141	27,308	211,232	238,540	1,926
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West (Mix)	Rural	282,358	131,433	90,170	221,603	3,221
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Total		3,178,663	1,227,171	1,319,406	2,546,577	31,694
Per cent			48.19	51.81	100	

Source: EU Election Observation Mission – Sierra Leone 2018 run-off election

The above table records regional and tribal voting in the 2018 presidential run-off between Dr. Samura Kamara of the APC and the SLPP of Julius Maada Bio. On the other hand, Bombali, Tonkolili, Kambia, Falaba, and Koinadugu in the far North and Kambia in the North West voted APC in larger numbers than for Maada Bio's SLPP. The West Area is divided into rural and urban administrative blocks. Freetown, the capital has always remained an APC stronghold and the table below illustrates the APC had following, with nearly half the number of registered voters as against the SLPP. The Western Rural is mixed with a sizable Mende, Sherbro, and Kono presence. And as the table illustrates, the results were comparatively closely contested.

So, with divisive voting patterns is the spate and level of political, regional, and tribal violence. These shall be elaborated in the sections below. The passing away of the

senior Margai remains a mystery. Albert Margai's tribal politics is said to have caused the loss of the SLPP's victory in the 1965 elections to the APC. Albert Margai is said to have masterminded the first coup in Sierra Leone in 1965 and he introduced the 'infamous Public Order Act' which successive governments have implemented to silence opposition and dissident groups over the years. Perhaps one could suppose that Albert Margai had a hand in his brother's death.

Albert Margai is arguably the man who has the worst record on tribalism and regionalism. President Siaka Stevens worked very closely with Albert Margai in the SLPP before the former broke away to form the APC and he had this to say in his memory 'What Life Has Taught Me' "While stuffing his henchmen into power centers of politics, he (Albert Margai) was cramming every vacancy in the civil service and armed forces with fellow tribes-men. Margai's retreat into tribalism was more divisive and sectionalism more acute than any previous SLPP regime and was the worst thing that ever had happened to Sierra Leone since independence. When we needed unity most, Margai set us at each other's throats. When we most needed to set tribalism aside, Margai exploited it with frantic ruthlessness... Large numbers even of his tribesmen rejected his divisive policies and voted for us." Said Siaka Stevens. The APC party won the election under question.

Sir Albert Margai died of a heart attack while on a visit to his niece in the US. Nevertheless, he was credited for some good jobs, when he served as Finance Minister in his elder brother's government. He spearheaded the establishment of the central bank and changed the legal tender. Albert Margai should also be best remembered for his prediction of the rebel war in Sierra Leone. Having keenly watched Siaka Stevens' leadership style, Margai also said this of his successor: "If the Stevens government does not do something to elevate the lives of the have-nots, the poor, they would one day rise to demand from the haves, the rich, their share of the economy." This sounds so much like a trade of accusations between the two, although the latter had an everlasting truism (Bakarr Bah, A. 2011)

Evidence of Political Violence cataloged from 2013-2016 and more recent cases

The topic of the research titled: To Investigate the Impact of Tribalistic Competitive Authoritarianism on the Democratic Process in Sierra Leone has three broad objectives and they are:

- Provide evidence of the prevalence of competitive authoritarianism in the democratization process in Sierra Leone
- Establish the magnitude and forms of tribally and regionally based competitive authoritarianism
- Provide pointers on the impact/s of tribal-based competitive authoritarianism and how these can be harmonized to improve the system.

The foregoing discourse has provided some details on nearly all regimes since independence and has carefully presented the types of hybrids of competitive authoritarianism. It is hoped that the reader will agree that given the prevalence and high magnitude of tribally, politically, and regionally induced violence so far, that study has provided convincing proof of the relevance of unfair democratic manipulations. And that strategies for harmonizing and violent free democracy in Sierra Leone could be discussed. The table below is meant to provide further evidence of politically induced violence. It shows how the country is rapidly drifting to the conditions that engendered an eleven-year civil war. Certainly, at least with a hybrid of competitive authoritarianism comes oppression and suppression of dissident voices and the rise of protest/s and other violent atrocities.

The following accounts are recorded cases of political party, regional and tribal-triggered accounts of violence between 2013 and 2016, during the presidency of Ernest Bai Koroma. Readers will likely agree that these accounts are inimical to peace and stability.

Table 3: *Presents Cases of Violent Incidents Recorded Between 2007 And 2016 During Ernest Bai Koroma's Regime.*

Date	Major event	Comment/s
23rd July 2007	Tom Nyuma was attacked in a hotel in Bo by men who claimed that he wanted to attack Ernest Bai Koroma	There were no arrests, no punishment
30th Aug 2007	Presidential candidates Charles Margai of PMDC and Ernest Bai Koroma of APC were attacked in Kailahun	One SLPP Parliamentary aspirant named as leader of the attack was not investigated or punished. The man is now a national executive member of the APC.
13th Sept 2008	Post-election reprisal attacks in parts of Sierra Leone. SLPP headquarters	No one was punished
Mar 2009 13th Mar 2009	Multiple incidences of political violence occurred in Gendema (Pujehun District), Freetown (Western Area) and Kenema (Kenema District) Clashes between supporters of Mayor of Freetown city council and SLPP and at the SLPP headquarters. On the same date, the official vehicle of Resident Minister East set ablaze in Kenema.	

16th Mar 2009	SLPP national HQ very close to police HQ was attacked in Freetown, women allegedly raped, two vehicles burnt, offices vandalized and over two dozen youths wounded	A presidential bodyguard named in the incident was not arrested. The international community including the USA and the UN condemned the violence
On 2nd April 2009	APC and SLPP leaders, facilitated by the UN, signed a joint communiqué affirming the cessation of all acts of political intolerance and violence	A semblance of tolerance was observed but this was short-lived.
6 Mar 2009	In Pujehun, clashes occurred between rival supporters (SLPP, APC/PMDC) in the lead-up to a local bye-election in Gendema, Pujehun District.	Some people were arrested
Sept 2009	Two separate incidents of protesters clashing with police in Kailahun and Lungi, leaving two people dead and police posts burnt down.	Arrests were made and the matter prosecuted
Multiple dates in 2010	Violence in Tongo Fields, and Bo Ahead of Local bye-elections	A Government inquiry commission recommended the passing of a Political Violence Act, amending the PPRC Act to allow penalties against politicians and parties found to have been engaged in violence and banning

		of prominent APC politicians including the then Resident Minister South and Mayor of Freetown City Council from holding public office and other known party operatives guilty of violence. The Government white Paper acknowledged the recommendations but no action was taken on the individuals named or institutional development to contain violence.
13th Nov, 2010	SLPP party office situated on Kainkordu Road, Koidu City was splashed with human excrement in the morning before the arrival of the SLPP Delegates for a meeting in Kono.	There was no arrest, no punishment
18th Apr 2011	Clashes between supporters of SLPP flag-bearer candidates Mr. Usman Boie Kamara (now APC Ministry of Trade) and Rt. Gen. Maada Bio ahead of the party's convention.	There was no arrest, no punishment
9th Sep 2011	During his thank-you tour, a convoy of opposition presidential aspirant Julius Maada Bio was attacked in Bo. The opposition leader was wounded in his head and over 15	President set up an investigating panel that revealed that APC supporters started the skirmish by stoning, leading to reprisals by SLPP supporters who committed arson, and police personnel resorted to shooting.

	people were injured. SLPP supporters burnt down a building belonging to APC.	Key opposition leaders including a Member of Parliament were arrested and detained
Aa17th Nov. 2012	Dozens of opposition supporters were detained in various police cells following incidents of violence in parts of the country. Presidential and parliamentary elections were held, with incumbent President Koroma emerging victorious with 58 % of the votes	The day remained calm later.
6th Apr 2013	Rival musical fan groups clashed in Freetown.	Police investigated and effected arrests
27th April, 2015	15 members of SLPP and a Senior Officer from the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, were arrested in Kenema. Eight days earlier, 10 people were arrested for protesting outside the US Embassy, while in March a meeting of the Bar Association was broken up. In contrast, assemblies and events held by the governing party were allowed	An investigation was mounted but the outcome was slurred.
18 Dec 2015	Violence in Kono parliamentary Bye-election – houses were	

	burnt down and a vehicle of a minister was burnt.	
On 27th May 2016	Intra-party violence within the SLPP in Kenema led to the stabbing of one person.	Arrests have been made
21 Jul 2016	Violence between rival APC and SLPP supporters in bye-elections in Constituency 001 in Kailahun	Sierra Leone managed to restore order.
20th Aug 2016	Youth in Lower Banta Chief marched to Largo and burnt houses including the chief's house, Court Barry, and the chief's brother's house.	

Source: Sierra Leone Institute for Governance Reform 2007/2018.

Table 4: *Hate Messages 2012*

Newspaper	Date	Message
Awareness Times	28 th June 2012	Some of these Mende Boys misbehave all over the land unchecked by another Mendes.
Awareness Times	14 th May, 2012	SLPP defending fresh tribalism.

Awareness Times	21 st May 2012	SLPP's tribalism assisted the AFRC (Armed Forces Revolutionary Council) Freetown attack. ¹
Awareness Times	17 th May, 2012	SLPP is desperate to deploy Temne-Loko Cards

Source: Sierra Leone Institute for Governance Reform 2007/2018.

¹ The AFRC was the most infamous military junta. It ousted the Ahmad Tejan Kabbah SLPP led government in 1987/88 and was ousted by the West African peacekeeping force, ECONOMIC and Ahmad Tejan Kaba was restored to power one year later.

CHAPTER V

Conclusion, Discussion and Recommendations

This chapter aims to provide some essential findings obtained at the end of the research. The formal governance system in Sierra Leone started in 1787 when slaves were freed from England and a crown colony was formed, the British people established their administrations with local heads, and political businesses were manned in the best of their interest. Political development started in the 1950s before independence after the British people had ruled for 153 years. The country gained independence on the 27th of April 1961 and held the first election on the 25th of May 1962, Sir Milton Margai won but died before his term of office. The 1995 constitution made the country become a republic with an executive president, a multiparty democracy, and a unicameral parliament where the president has the power to appoint his cabinet ministers. However, the findings prove that the concept of tribalism has been in existence in Sierra Leone since the time of Sir Albert Margai, he assumed power after the death of his brother Sir Milton Margai though many accused the action to be unconstitutional. Margai's retreat into tribalism was more divisive and sectionalism more acute than any previous SLPP regime and was the worst thing that ever had happened to Sierra Leone since independence. This has cut across all over the country, especially among the Temne who are mostly (APC) and the Mandes who are mostly (SLPP). Today, the hiring and firing of labor is triggered by tribal sentiment more than anything else. The acquisition of economic status has turned to those you know either in the same tribes, political parties, or regions. This research proves some points on how the above dilemma has contributed to the rise of competitive authoritarianism and the impact it has caused in the struggle to achieve democracy in the country.

The findings also provide relevant information on the practice of competitive authoritarianism by Siaka Steven, through his means of holding power for too long. This has led to the outbreak of the RUF war as a response to successive Comparative Authoritarianism. It was characterized by massive injustice, elimination of political opponents, and large-scale corruption. The country finally gained its democracy and elections were agreed to be held every five years.

Sierra Leone finally organized general elections in August 2007 after a devastating 11-year civil Revolutionary United Front (RUF) war. Politicians rely on tribal and regional loyalties to garner support from politicians who lack the very basic quality and leadership potential and are dangerous to the progress of Sierra Leone. The practice is so common that the country may hardly produce quality leadership at least shortly.

Election-related violence has always been on a regional basis. There are traditional and tribal loyalties that are persistent and may probably last for generations yet to come. It is the Temne (the APC stronghold in the North and West) versus the Mende (the SLPP stronghold in the South and East). The two major ethnic groups of Temne and Mende have their following of smaller groups. For example, the APC has the Temne people and other northern ethnic groups, including the Limba and Loko in the North/North East and the West, while the Mende have the Sherbro and Kono in the South/southeast. Therefore, Competitive Authoritarianism, Regionalism, and Tribal Politics have a great impact on the Democratic Process in Sierra Leone.

Sierra Leone is far away from learning a lesson from the brutal RUF civil war (1991-2001). Generally, Sierra Leone is a peaceful country and can be counted as one of the most tolerant nations on earth. There are 16 ethnic groups. Inter-ethnic marriages are so common and are widely practiced with little regard to regional or ethnic nuances. In addition, inter-religious marriages between Muslims (who form the larger majority) and Christians are the norm, rather than an exception. Both groups take an active part in religious activities. Muslims go to churches when invited. Christians do the same. The glaring divide emanates from the political divide; politicians are quick to use the divide when they vie for political positions or when incumbents decide to stay in power or practice competitive authoritarianism. In the case of the current regime, the incumbent seems to have smelt the rat in the sense that his popularity (which has not been an enjoyable one) has waned drastically. He is said to have undertaken overseas trips more than all heads of state ahead of him. Many see this as a waste of national resources. In addition, his wife is given to flagrant behavior that raises questions over her fitness for the position of first lady. For instance, the first lady Son is fond of displaying some of her excesses on TikTok, often dancing and displaying hard USD currency while the masses

starve. Most quarters hold the opinion that the Head of State has a complex over his wife to the extent that the wife dictates his political pace.

With waning popularity, the incumbent is applying strategies that, if applied, have the potential to ignite another bitter experience. This is another example of the dangers of determining to stay in power at all costs. It involves the subversion of justice, good governance, suppression of political opponents, and upscaling violence. By June 2023, the predictions and fear of regional and tribal divide in the stipulated elections will be put to the test.

Recommendations

Recommendations Are Suggested on The Control of Competitive Authoritarianism in A Democratic State (Sierra Leone) By Sarah & Amy in an Article on Global Expansion of Authoritarian Rule: Freedom in The World, should be given new strength and should aim to achieve a global order that is grounded in fundamental rights among democratic nations.

The act of Coordinating multilateral action is extremely important as authoritarian leaders extend alternative sources of international support and investment, and resort to bullying tactics like imposing tariffs in retaliation for criticism of human rights abuses. Democracy coordinators should focus and pay attention to the importance of, and challenges to, the promise of democracy to address modern challenges and opportunities. For Instance, the Sierra Leone government strongly depends on international support to run the day-to-day affairs of the state most times in the exchanges on global order mostly on those that have to do with democracy and human rights values, with this, it will be easy for the international committee to help shape the laws of democracy in the country.

The authors also recommended reform of civil society support and grassroots movements that are calling for democracy and those peaceful protest movements that reform and drive long-term democratic change. But these groups are facing daunting odds because they lack international support. Democratic governments should agree to provide vocal, public support for grassroots pro-democracy movements, and respond to any violent crackdown by authorities with targeted sanctions, and public condemnation. It has

been like a tradition in Sierra Leone, civil society groups are always in support of the government of the day for fear of being intimidated and losing their jobs.

Another important recommendation made was this issue of supporting free and independent media and protecting access to information. Allowing the public access to quality on-the-ground reporting and information about current events is one of the best ways to combat authoritarian power. Because independent media are increasingly at risk from hostile regimes, many lack sufficient and sustainable funding. As a result of this, citizens are left with a big doubt about which independent sources of information to believe, especially when reporting on critical political engagement and the exercise of basic rights. Recommendations were also made on how to expand protections for journalists who face physical attacks and harassment. All those laws in democratic nations should be geared towards protecting the free flow of information and granting journalists access to elected officials. Also recommended that Governments and internet service providers should make every effort to support and maintain reliable access to the internet. To support these facts, the people of Sierra Leone have lost their trust in all the radio stations in the country because the staff is left with no choice but to support the interest of the President in power. If the CEO of a most popular radio station (AYV) took an ambassadorship position with the current government, what would the people expect?

Authoritarian leaders depend on election rigging therefore the recommendation to protect free and fair elections is in place. Free and fair elections are vital to any democratic nation and there is a need for transparent electoral processes; to foster a competitive electoral environment and citizens should trust in election integrity. It should be a fundamental right for citizens to be able to exercise their right to vote peacefully. The complaints of irregularities in voting during the electoral process in Sierra Leone have been the order of the day. Many times, police officials interrogate the National Electoral Council (NEC) for electoral malpractice, besides the President of the day is responsible for choosing the electoral commissioners (Sarah, R., & Amy, S. 2022).

Recommendation to address modern tribalism

Stakeholders are key in resolving conflict of tribalism, and conflict of this should be seen as a better way to appreciate each other's stories of grievance, this will help the

forces of tribalism to start fading. Those involved in conflict should see each other as human beings with complex motivations and morals and identity turns from a source of division into a basis for unity. Learning about the other side's story takes courage, thus, it may go against a disputant's fundamental values and may cause them to be seen as a traitor to their tribe. These risks can be reduced by organizing safe spaces for identity-based storytelling between sides. In Sierra Leone the issue of tribalism pops up when it is time for elections, candidates will base their campaigning messages based on tribes rather than performance in governance and this sometimes leads to regional voting. The best way to solve this in Sierra Leone, citizens should be wise enough to cast their votes for those they think are capable of handling power instead of voting based on their tribes.

In negotiating the way out of tribalism Daniel and others made a relevant recommendation that Civil society should engage a diverse set of stakeholders to disrupt the tribalistic mindset and address the broader issues at stake. Otherwise, unassuming stakeholders engaging in a conflict is the equivalent of holding up a mirror not only to the stakeholders but also to the conflict itself, revealing the dynamics and dangers of conflict and resolution. Civil society advocates on this could help a long way, because tribal fights can lead to war in any nation and Sierra Leone is not an exception.

It is the responsibility of any government to factor in the key elements and try to address the substantive and identity-based conflict, and this is also called 'systemic dialogue', This approach helps parties jointly problem-solve their differences and repair the confrontations faced by each other. This model supports the inclusion of a diverse set of stakeholders (Daniel, S., Jasper, J., Ethan, H., & Balim, B., 2018). The case of Sierra Leone is different, those government officials that are responsible for systematic dialogue are the ones engineering tribal and regional conflict especially the times for elections. Therefore, the international community that has worked hard in peacebuilding in Sierra Leone should pay attention to this.

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Appendices:

Appendix A.

Sierra Leone Facts and Figures

Population	6.5 million [UNDP HDR 2016] 7.092 million [Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Census]
Ethnic Groups	Mende 31.9%, Temne 31.4%, Limba 8.4%, Kono 5.1%, Koranko 4.4%, Fullah 3.8%, Susu 2.9%, Kissi 2.5%, Loko 2.3%, Mandingo 2.3%, Sherbro 1.9%, Krio 1.3%, Yalunka 0.7%, Krim 0.2%, Vai > 0.1% [Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Census]
Languages	English (official), Temne, Mende, Krio
Religions	Islam 77%, Christianity 21.9%, other 0.9% [Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Census]
Life Expectancy at Birth	51.3 years [UNDP HDR 2016]
GDP per Capita	\$1,497 (2011 PPP) [UNDP HDR 2016]
System of Government	Constitutional democracy [TCC 2012]
Legal System	English common law & customary law [TCC 2012]

Source: Carter Center Expert Mission for the 2018 Sierra Leone Election

Appendix B

Ethics Committee Approval



14.05.2024

Dear Adama Conteh

Your project "**Investigating the Impact of Tribalistic Competitive Authoritarianism: The Case of Sierra Leone**" has been evaluated. Since only secondary data will be used the project does not need to go through the ethics committee. You can start your research on the condition that you will use only secondary data.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. KIRAZ'.

Prof. Dr. Aşkın KIRAZ

The Coordinator of the Scientific Research Ethics Committee

Appendix B

Similarity Report

