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Morabito, Andrea

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*To what extent does the use of PMSCs in the resolution of conflict enhance
the human security goals of a UN peacekeeping mission.*

The emblematic case of Sierra Leone



Name: Andrea Morabito

Student number: s2495481

Supervisor: Dr. Muge Kinacioglu

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List of Abbreviations

AFRC (Armed Forces Revolutionary Council)

CDF (Civil Defence Forces)

ECOMOG (The Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group)

ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States)

EO (Executive Outcomes)

FMG (Female genital mutilation)

GSG (Gurkha Security Guards)

PKOs (Peacekeeping operations)

PKs (Peacekeepers)

PMCs (Private military companies)

PMSCs (Private military and security companies)

PMF (Private military firms)

RSLFM (Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces)

SC (Security Council)

UN (United Nations)

UNAMSIL (United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone)

UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola)

RUF (Revolutionary United Front)

Keywords

PMCs, PMSCs, peacekeeping, privatization of security, human security, humanitarian intervention, Sierra Leone, human rights

1. - Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War, there was a great evolution in the conduct of warfare, where one of the most notable changing trends was the outsourcing of certain basic functions of the state, such as the protection of the civilian population by non-state actors, in this case, private military and security companies (Diallo, 2017). Private military and security companies (PMSCs) are not a new feature in the international security arena, especially now that they provide security and military services to a multitude of actors. PMSCs also perform services for the United Nations (UN), becoming an integral part of their operations, as well as for states, other international organizations, NGOs, and private entities. Due to their contested definition and involvement in the use of force, PMSCs are a subject of interest and study for many scholars, political advisors and scientists that seek to explore the complex nature of these influential private companies. In recent years, thanks to the evolution in the understanding of security as strictly related to the nature of the Westphalian state, the industry of private warfare and privatized military services have grown exponentially. This growing tendency was experienced particularly since the practices of the use of private military contractors (PMC) in the conflicts of Angola and Sierra Leone in the 1990s, which "became famous for missions involving the use of armed personnel on the battlefield" (Avant, 2005, p. 122). While the case of Iraq is just the last notable manifestation of a two-decade long term, where PMSCs provide military and security services that after 11th September 2001 had seen a rapid increase (Avant, 2005). Undeniable is the pejorative bias toward PMSCs, which denigrate the actions and nature of these non-state actors that sometimes are proven to be the last resort in the confrontation for a peaceful agreement or ceasefire (Diallo, 2017). Thus, this shows how they have now become "necessary actors in the contemporary security governance, to such an extent that many states depend upon them in many areas" (Diallo, 2017, p. 7). Arguably, IOs such as the UN could implement the

legality framework and transparency of these private corporations and use them as a support for their peacekeeping operations.

In this thesis, PMSCs are studied in the context of a United Nations peacekeeping operation, with a specific focus on the case of Sierra Leone. As a growing number of these companies are involved in the peacekeeping process, the central focus of this thesis will be on their operations, especially looking at their role in enhancing the human security of the affected populations during the conflict. Thus, this thesis firstly aims to answer the question:

“To what extent does the use PMSCs in the resolution of conflict enhance the human security goals of UN peacekeeping missions?”

Considering the multifaced threats that states, and organizations fight and suffer from, the role of PMSCs is more than ever relevant if we want to address the security of individuals and the human rights protection that is central to the liberal humanitarian ideals of the UN. Thus, the focal discussion of this thesis will be on the use and services of PMSC affecting the human security of the local population as this is one of the major goals of the UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding mission.

This exploratory study will try to answer the research question through textual qualitative analysis. It will first explore the papers of different scholars in the field of international peacekeeping and on the use of PMSCs affecting human security. Then it will provide a relevant case study that entails the services of these PMSCs and the role they played in a peacekeeping mission. In conclusion, the research aims at the formulation of an explorative argument that could expand into further studies of a causal relationship between the PMSCs and their effect on human security in peacekeeping operations.

2. - Literature review

A plethora of research has been conducted on the topic of Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs) and their impact on human security and peacekeeping operations. Different authors and scholars all emphasized a distinguished approach with various degrees of analysis. This is done by applying the topic in different contexts and subjects, although mostly relative to social and political sciences (Diallo, 2017). As will follow, truly is that most scholars have criticized and highlighted the negative side of the use of PMSCs in humanitarian and peacekeeping missions. Especially by utilising different degrees of analysis to compare their operations with one of peacekeepers' forces, such as effectiveness, and costs-benefits calculations looking at their specific mission mandate. However, this paper wants to fill this gap in the literature by also including the positive features of PMSCs.

This literature review will help with summarizing the main arguments and positions by scholars on the actions of PMSCs in the context of conflict resolution and peacekeeping, with a special emphasis on the contribution to human security. Then it will build on the contested argument for the efficiency and the moral and legalistic feasibility of PMSCs with the humanitarian and peace goals of the UN missions. In addition, it will touch upon the evolution of state security norms as a favourable way to introduce a private army to the resolution of conflicts and violence. This coming section will set the stage for the main argument of this thesis, which will mostly build upon the main concepts presented in the literature and the conceptual framework that will follow.

2.1 - Outsourcing humanitarianism and the privatization of conflict resolution

Firstly, this literature review will touch upon the aspect of outsourcing the humanitarian intervention and look at the work by authors that asked to what extent the privatization of peacekeeping is deemed firstly useful, then effective and finally successful in a humanitarian context. Many scholars have recognized the opportunity for PMSCs to emerge after the end

of the Cold War as there was a “vacuum in the security market” next to a “downsizing of the military” (Diallo, 2017, p. 11) (Singer, 2003; Avant, 2005; Cusumano, 2009; Mandel, 2001; Krahnmann, 2009; Percy, 2009). There is a present ideology that explains the rise of private companies in military operations with the advent of economic neoliberalism, moreover, this new ideology highlights the deficiency of the government in handling matters of security compared to the efficient private market (Leander, 2007; Singer, 2008; Cusumano, 2009; Mandel, 2002; Abrahamsen & Williams, 2009). Alternative works by scholars study how the emergence of PMSCs affects the resilience of state-building and state institutions. For example, Cilliers and Mason (1999) researched the expansion of PMCSs in weak and failing African states. Other authors explore the development of the private security market in Africa to secure their private interests. The most notable example in the literature of this phenomenon is the firm Executive Outcomes, “a pioneer in the private security business who intervened in Sierra Leone and Angola to protect the interests of multinational oil companies but also to help those countries' governments to fight insurgency movements such as the RUF and UNITA” (Diallo, 2017, p. 11)

Some authors have argued that PMSCs were going to take over and substitute the role of peacekeepers, most of them expressed a negative stance toward this argument while others explained how it is highly unlikely to happen due to the nature of these companies. As a fact, these private corporations are usually composed of diverse personnel and do not capitalise effectively on collective actions as would be the case with state armed forces (Østensen, 2018). Moreover, in the literature, it is widely known that the UN has progressively developed a relationship with PMSCs, especially to tackle global challenges. In the context of peacekeeping, Østensen (2013) explains how public acknowledgement is still limited by the UN's practices of requesting services from PMSCs. She also argues that only a few studies, recently illuminated the question of PMSCs' involvement in UN operations but even fewer

have asked if the participation and use of their services may influence UN objectives and which are the main implications. Her interesting article attempts to create and implement a discussion “by addressing how PMSC services can affect practices and perceptions in UN operations” (Østensen, 2018, p. 34).

Another recurrent and debated theme in the literature about PMSCs' interactions with the UN, as well as other states, concerns the contract stipulated, the military and strategic role and the main activities that these companies perform in a situation of conflict and instability. The functioning and performances of PMSCs in conflict regions have been historically the cause of disagreements and complications (Zedeck, 2007). The key issues that created a negative connotation and image of the use of PMSCs are lack of transparency, democratic oversight, and accountability. Consequently, all those negative features decreased the legitimacy of these actors, especially in front of the local governments and civilian populations (Zedeck, 2007, p. 99). Civilian populations have increasingly reported the misuse of force and the violation of international law and human rights by these private companies, as most of the time they operate outside a legal established framework. Such cases happen where PMSCs do not follow the rule of law and are left without strong accountability to the state in which operate, mostly failing states and countries in the middle of conflict, or regulation from the state in which the company originates (notably United States, United Kingdom, and South Africa). This double-sided situation has generated an interesting debate in the literature about the use and misuse of these companies by other sovereign states, appealing to a need for stricter regulations. From this debate Zedeck (2007) produces some questions that need to be answered, namely “how do local populations perceive the operations of PMSCs? How do PMSCs affect human security?” (p. 100).

When looking at the evolution of state practices in resolving civil and armed conflict and the consequent “loss of strategic interest in civil wars and ethnic conflicts, and the unwillingness

of western governments to suffer casualties in international operations,” Moesgaard (2013) underline how several other authors have devoted their studies to the emergence of a new private market directed at the use of force and international operations (p. 7). Indeed, the market in which PMSCs operate is regarded as flexible and efficient in comparison to rigid and ineffective state bureaucracies in the managing of security issues (Moesgaard, 2013). Especially economically weak states benefit from the use of PMSCs as this enhances the authority of the state through more efficient use of resources and “enables an activist foreign- and security policy, by lowering the political costs of involvement” (p. 14). In line with this argument presented in the current literature, humanitarian problems in Africa are seen as an opportunity to implement the mandate and operations of these private companies. In this case, PMSCs operations could be possibly proven effective and strategically better coordinated, especially regarding military aspects that consider the use of force as a prevention measure for the protection of civilians.

2.2 - The blurry line between economic and humanitarian motives/incentives for the intervention.

The lack of an established international legal framework that regulates PMSCs together with this condition of “impunity” led to a feeling of resentment towards military corporations that profit from war and economic instability in these regions (Zedeck, 2007, p. 99). Moreover, this feeling was exacerbated by the fact that most employees of PMSCs never received proper training and screening of their obligations toward international legal standards and the respect for human rights. A fundamental set of rights was established in 1948 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations (Zedeck, 2007). For example, the operations of certain PMSCs in resource-rich countries such as Angola, Sierra Leone and DRC have profoundly damaged their reputations (Schreier & Caparini, 2005). Most of these

companies would make concessions for mining and take control of the extraction area securing the business that eventually would pay them out since the resources of the country's government were extremely poor and limited, especially in a situation of conflict and state failure says Clapham (1999, p. 40). The latter creates a condition in which some African states are heavily dependent on these private security forces and where the contract stipulated between them and the requesting states becomes a matter of sustaining a highly lucrative business such as one of the diamonds, in the case of Sierra Leone. Which is a clear example of the contested nature of these companies that arguably they profit over the shoulders of a failed state and economy. As a fact “corporate security involvement in Sierra Leone has always been associated with mining operations” (Dokubo, 2000, p. 54). This invalidating dependence is just sustained through the shady protection of economic interest driven by external buyers and private companies that most of the time have deals with the government, this contributes to creating a strong contradiction with the original mandate and contract signed by those companies (Clapham, 1999). Other than great economic benefits for a few elite members of the government and some industrial entrepreneurs the wrong side of this phenomenon is the lack of accountability, especially regarding human rights violations. This condition results in a “sense of exclusion and worthlessness among affected populations” (Jennings, 2006) “and a feeling that their lives do not matter but their oil and mineral wealth is the primary objective” (Zedeck, 2007, p. 101).

In a final tone for this section, different authors have asked several questions regarding the influence of PMSCs on UN peacekeeping missions. As Østensen (2018) points out, the decision making and the operating environment of UN operations were majorly driven by the gathering of intelligence of these companies. Which arguably created new conceptions and ‘educated’ thousands of local soldiers and security officers with their practices, moreover, these notions can have wider implications for security discourse for the UN. Thus, the latter

can be used as the justification for setting a successful or failing precedent and must be considered as an approach to modern UN peacekeeping (Østensen, 2018, p. 42).

3. - Conceptual Framework

The following section of the text will provide the important analytical concepts and tools that are going to be central when conducting the analysis addressing the research problem. These concepts and definitions are necessary to understand the main theoretical and conceptual framework that pervades the studied literature on PMSCs and peacekeeping missions.

3.1 - A definitional problem

Firstly, different authors have investigated what constitutes private security or private military company as there is no overarching consensus over a precise definition of this terminology. There are different labels found in the existing literature. This is the one by Singer (2003), who addresses them as “Privatised Military Firms” (PMF) and “Private Security Providers” (PSP) to include the wide range of tasks that make up the military functions together with their actual military operations (Diallo, 2017, p. 9). Secondly, when looking at the International Code of Conduct for private security services providers (ICOC) Private Security Companies are defined as “any company whose business activities include the provision of security services either on its own behalf or on behalf of another, irrespective of how such company describes itself” (ICOC, 2010). However, for this thesis, the definition taken will be accordingly to Moesgaard (2013). She introduced the term PMSCs for the urge to « blur the lines between ‘security’ and ‘military’ » because « PMSCs challenge the traditional line of demarcation between the military sector (armies) and security (police forces) by applying their services in both spheres » (Moesgaard, 2013, p. 6). Finding a universal academic definition is notably important because it avoids the situation in which a

lack of legal clarity and an established legal framework allows states, such as Germany and the United Kingdoms to disguise/conceal the actions of these PMCSs in international interventions, (Diallo, 2017, p. 9). when deployed in another state from the one where they originate.

3.1.2 - A shifting understanding of security and peacekeeping

When considering the relevant reconceptualization of security at the global level, at the last UN General Assembly of the twentieth century Kofi Annan called for a process of 'thinking anew' about the role of peace operations in global politics". "An emphasis was placed on the globalization of 'human security' as a standard in peacekeeping missions. In addition, this new thinking brought a reconceptualization of peacekeeping as well, by establishing a more robust use of force that allow the protection of civilians under the emergent norm of responsibility to protect (R2P), and that enables the post-conflict development by focusing on creating political and humanitarian space" (Curran & Woodhouse, 2007, p. 1055).

Transcending from the state-centric version of peacekeeping, the cosmopolitan ideal, developed by scholars such as Mary Kaldor and David Held, more recently, but originated from the Kantian ethics and philosophy, explains through a normative argument the reconceptualization of peacekeeping, and gives more space to the consistent application of international humanitarian norms via the operationalization of human security (Curran & Woodhouse, 2007). There is an ongoing transformation in the development of peacekeeping as much more than just a solution for ending a conflict, instead, the focus of peacekeeping is on the continuation of a positive peace dimension. This positive peace dimension includes the creation of space for civilian actions in the political arena by creating a long-term commitment to the promotion of democracy and fair elections (p. 1061). Other than the political sphere there is a cultural emphasis on the peace that addresses power asymmetries, ethnic preservation, poverty, and marginalization. The UN missions are the instruments of the

modern conceptualization of cosmopolitan peacekeeping ideals and norms that should be the standard for intervening in failed states or civil conflict situations (pp. 1055-1056). When writing about peacekeeping operations and for the purpose of this short study it is important to define which concepts are an integral part of peacekeeping in the 21st century. The main principles behind peacekeeping intervention as we know it nowadays follow a doctrine of liberal intervention practice, that is largely intended to protect or promote a certain set of values namely democracy and human rights (Heinze, 2017). These “universal” liberal norms have been used prominently to justify military intervention by another external sovereign state or by multiple member states in the case of UN (United Nations) humanitarian and peacekeeping interventions.

3.1.3 - Human security as an established norm in the UN agenda

Another element central to the cosmopolitan nature of peacekeeping that this thesis wants to explore is the norm of ‘human security. With the emergence of the term ‘human security’ in the 1990s, there was a major shift in understanding security as strictly national and confined to the border of the state and the traditional Westphalian notion of security. Instead, this new term encompasses various categories that fall under securitization policies and norms such as gender protection, economic security, environmental, related to health, education, and basic sanitary access, to food and minority communities' rights (Thomas & William, 2002). It is in 1994 when the UNDP Human Development Report New Dimension of Human Security coined the term, moreover, the report underlined seven interconnected elements that are part of this new understanding of security: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political. Later in the year 2000 at the UN Millennium Summit, then Secretary-General Kofi Annan advanced the humanitarian goals of the new millennium and “freedom from fear” and “freedom from want” are important objectives of the human security goals. After that, the UN published its report “Human Security Now” (2003), to

mobilize support and contribute to the creation of an established framework, in 2004 the Human Security Unit (HSU) was established with the principal objective of placing human security in the mainstream of UN activities. To specify, in this thesis the term 'human security' "refers to the 'complex of interrelated threats associated with civil war, genocide and the displacement of populations' (HSRP 2005). It is primarily concerned with the protection, particularly from violence and the fear of violence, of the civilian population. However, human security may also relate to threats associated with poverty, lack of state capacity and various forms of socio-economic and political inequity" (Zedeck, 2010, p. 98). In this thesis human security, which is the focus of the research, differentiates itself from human rights because it provides a more inclusive definition that not only includes the observance of the Geneva Conventions and other aspects of IHRL (International human rights law). Instead, it focuses as well "on the immediate needs and stabilisation of local populations living within the areas where the conflict takes place" (Zedeck, 2007, p. 99). Human security tends to address the root causes of the conflict trying to understand where they struggle for economic and social development originates for the local populations, this is what the consequent analysis aims to do. Just a few scholars mention the importance of human security and stress the relevance of protection of civilians, especially women and children, in the context of commercial military and security operations, leaving a gap in the literature. This thesis will try to fill that gap.

As African states have seen an increasing number of private military actors involved in managing civil and political conflict, typically arising from the reactions to an authoritarian ruler, a debate emerged about which were the best possibilities to fight economic deprivation, inequity, undemocratic governance, and the lack of political control by the institutions, all elements included in the conceptualization of human security. In 1998 UN secretary-general Kofi Annan, in a report to the UN security council, addressed the causes and the nature of

such wars in the African continent (Mills & Stremlau, 1999). He stressed, that the importance of peace for the economic and social development of Africa is too relevant, thus the prevention of such wars is no longer a matter of defending a state but rather it shows a clear and strong stance for humanity, that must be protected at all costs. As of today, 90 per cent of the casualties in deadly conflict are civilians, this is a call for the UN to implement the use of force by peacekeepers to protect equally UN civil personnel and the local civilian population (pp. 3-2).

Consequently, the recurrent use of PMSCs in African states after the end of the Cold War must have been a sign of the need for a revolution in the approach to UN peace missions and intervention, solely because of the consequences that could derive from the privatisation of peacekeeping. Which include the deprivation of sovereignty and the lack of political self-determination of states. “Although armed crises demand a humanitarian presence, these situations are often too unsafe for aid agencies to operate without protection. At the same time, humanitarian actors typically under-invest in security” (Singer, 2006, p. 107) Thus, PMSCs offer a solution to overwhelm the collective international capacity and to respond effectively without the need to resort to traditional state military assistance. To a certain extent, the power of PMSCs lies in their short-time effectiveness and training that distinguishes them in their operations, and at the same time, they could be the outsourcing for the political consequences of soldiers or PK personnel being killed during the action.

On one side there is the possibility of reducing the costs and increasing the chances of success when hiring specific groups trained for a sole purpose also by realising some of the pressure that the UN face from its member states and civil societies in deploying civil personnel in combat zones as an example. On the other, the privatization of certain coercion-related tasks and goals could possibly entail a shifting cultural conception of peace and security for states and individuals (Malamoud, 2014). Therefore, it is important to understand

which are the implications of the privatisation of warfare, both positive and negative, for state and peace-building efforts and not commit the error to underestimate them.

4. - Methodology of the research

4.1 - Exploratory Case Study

4.1.1 Case selection

This small research will explore the contested issue of the impact of PMSCs on the human security goals in a UN peacekeeping mission. A textual qualitative research method will be applied because it provides an opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge of the case under study (Olivova, 2020). This method will help to obtain a detailed analysis of the human security situation in Sierra Leone during the civil war and after the Lomé Peace Agreement of 1999 (was signed) and the UNAMSIL mission was established when the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1270, because of the continuation of violence, civil unrest, and the protection of human rights (Maričić, 2017). The case of Sierra Leone has been selected because arguably it represents “one of the world's most successful cases of post-conflict recovery, peacekeeping and peace-building” said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at a press conference held in Freetown on the 5th of March 2014 as UNIPSIL (UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone) completed its mandate. He added that Sierra Leone saw many UN 'firsts' as the country hosted the UN's first multi-dimensional peacekeeping operation with political, security, humanitarian, and national recovery mandates. In fact, UNAMSIL was the first mission with a mandate to use force to protect civilians (Oloniasakin, 2008, p. 42).

4.1.2 - Research Design

The research design will be an exploratory case study because there is no single set of outcomes. The purpose of an exploratory research question is of selecting cases that maximise the opportunity for developing academic arguments, hypotheses and plausible new causal mechanisms that explain a particular social phenomenon (Bleijenbergh, 2010, p. 63). This is because human security is a relatively new norm and the protection of human security as a standard in peacekeeping and peacebuilding studies is developing and reconceptualizing its fundamentals. This is done already by experts and scholars in the field, that aim at getting away from the old-fashioned state-centric understanding of security complex and adapting to the growing relevance that PMSCs have in the resolution of conflict and the peacebuilding involving the use of force. This is why this study wants to suggest a new proposition to possibly test the effect of PMSCs on the human security goals of a UN peacekeeping mission. This specific research approach, moreover, empower the researcher with a high degree of flexibility and independence regarding the research design and the data collection (Streb, 2010, p. 372). Thus, the generalization that originates from the intuition of the authors, that is central to developing arguments in exploratory studies is just a “precondition to developing successive causal studies” (p. 372). This peculiar intuitive nature is both a strength and a weakness of exploratory case studies type of research.

4.1.3 - Limitations of the research

In addition to the limits of exploratory case studies and qualitative textual analysis, this study presents some limitations. For example, the lack of official reports available on Sierra Leone specifically focused on human security. As most of the documents from the UN that look at the civilian's situation refer to the Commission for Human Rights or the SC. Furthermore, the case study could have been more in-depth in assessing the economic, social and cultural

connotations that made the conflict in Sierra Leone such an emblematic case in the study of PMSCs and peacekeeping.

5. - Analysis

5.1 - Case Description: PMSCs and Human security in Sierra Leone

This bachelor thesis will explore the PMSCs' use in the civil war in Sierra Leone and how it affected the human security goals of the mandate of UNAMSIL (United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone). The civil war in Sierra Leone started in March 1991, four years into the war the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) which was a strong and violent rebel fraction, continued gaining military control against the “government’s small, disorganised and ineffective Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces (RSLMF). Fearing that the RUF were close to seizing the capital of Freetown, the government of Sierra Leone hired Executive Outcomes (EO), a South Africa-based PMC specialising in the provision of peacekeeping services. In less than two years EO managed to secure the capital, ousting the RUF from the peripheral districts of Freetown, stabilise the area around the diamond mines, and destroy the RUF headquarters” (Hough, 2007, p. 9).

There were three major PMSCs actively involved in Sierra Leone in the period between 1995 to 1999, these are Gurkha Security Guards (GSG), Executive Outcomes (EO) and Sandline International. GSG was disregarded by the government because they offered mostly training to special forces and officer cadets of the Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces (RSLMF) but were not carrying out offensive operations or assisting the government army directly on the battlefield, this was seen as a breakthrough. GSG in fact “had agreed to provide training – not to do whatever was necessary to ensure the safety of the Army either while it was training or in the field” (Avant, 2005, p. 85). However, the ‘solely’ training could have been

influential in the resolution of conflict years later, as Dobuko (2000) points out how “it is extremely unusual for any nation-state to entrust the training and welfare of its future military officers to a commercial company composed solely of foreigners” (p. 56).

Surely, Executive Outcomes (EO) offered a contract in which they were ready to deploy around 200 soldiers to “support, train, and aid the RSLMF in their war against the RUF” (Avant, 2005, p. 86). But the more interesting aspect to study when addressing human security for the local population was the EO’s decision to work alongside the Kamajors (an ethnic Mende group from the southeast of the country), which had a strong civil militia and was the cause of long-lasting political effects (Avant, 2005, p. 90). The empowerment of local chiefs and villages, together with the provision of armaments and the enhanced training of these forces, contributed to creating a parallel force of civil militias, spreading the use of force away from the control and oversight of the government or any legal entity. This situation created destabilization and tensions between the RUF and RSLMF that led to the destruction of villages and the killing of civilians. It is clear how militia forces mainly trained and equipped by EO, contributed to the continuation of violence and “to the crimes against civilians, particularly through reprisals against suspected supporters of the RUF, and reportedly worked as spoilers in the period before the Lomé peace accord in 1999” (Avant, 2003, pp. 90-91). But there is a double argument when analysing “the degree to which government’s contract with EO led to a more meaningful integration of violence with international values” (p. 91). For example, many reports state that the citizens of Sierra Leone were happy to see an end to the violence thanks to the intervention of foreign soldiers. Eventually, the unfortunate record of humanitarian violations of EO looks “stellar” in comparison to the militias, the RUF and the RSLMF (p. 91). Furthermore, some critic the commercial interest behind the mining industry that profoundly influenced the political, the following elections, and economic outcome of the intervention rather than the values

associated with human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. Despite tensions created by the RUF and RSLMF, in February 1996, Ahmed Tejan Kabbah (a lawyer who had spent many years working at the UN) was elected president, from the Sierra Leone People's Party. In the meanwhile, EO continued its mandate till January 1997 when it finally withdrew after receiving criticism from the government and public pressure, having received \$15.7 million from a \$35.3 million contract. Generally, the role of EO was considered the key reason for the success against the RUF as they aided the Kamajors in being a greater counter-offensive of the RUF militants. After the departure of EO, more authority was given to the Kamajors and other militias groups as they were integrated and formalized into the Civil Defence Force (CDF) of Sierra Leone (p. 92). Fractions between the government and the army led to the overthrowing of the Kabbah regime in May 1997. As chaos and violence erupted again, "the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) sent in Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) peacekeepers (primarily Nigerians) to maintain law and order and, eventually, reverse the coup" (p. 93). As clashes increased, in July Kabbah resorted to another PMSC (Sandline) for help, the role of Sandline "was to train and equip 40,000 Kamajor militia, plan a strategy for (and coordinate) the assault on Freetown, provide arms, ammunition, transportation, and food for the assault coalition, coordinate with the 20,000 ECOMOG troops in control of the Lungi airport, and provide air support and intelligence gathering" (p. 93). The political impact of Sandline's mandate was less debated than the EO contract but like EO, the Sandline contract was sustained economically through mining interests that most of the time collide with criminal links. Combined with the Nigerian troops and the Kamajors, Sandline directed the offensive to regain Freetown and restored Kabbah to power in March 1998, however, the return of the President-elect did not mean the end of the civil war. To a certain extent, it is relatively true that Sandline personnel complied with international laws and norms in conflict, for instance, the Kamajors were more engaged in

actions that go “in sharp contrast with the international norms that regulate military personnel” (p. 95). When in 1999 the capital Freetown fell again under rebel control, Nigeria together with the UK pushed for the need for new negotiations and after the Lomé peace agreement in July 1999, UNAMSIL was deployed. After the efficient British intervention, which surely facilitated the goal of achieving peace, which was then enhanced by the UN mission, finally, the war was declared over in January 2002 (pp. 95-96). In conclusion, the effect of PMSCs on human security is debated, as some authors emphasize the positive impact of deploying a small contingent of trained troops to secure and maintain peace through the civilian population and including them in the process by training and arms civil militias. However, none of these firms had the capabilities to ensure the long-term development of humanitarian norms and laws that regulates the peace, instead, they were gaining short and localized respite from the conflict, mainly because of the distinctive use of coercive power (Dokubo, 2000, p. 61). Surely, they have not contributed to the economic stabilization or encouraging business investments in the region. Sierra Leone was still too far away from asserting its independence and sovereignty, this was a result of the intercourse of private corporate forces for the control of internal politics and natural resources (Dokubo, 2000, p. 62). Finally, “their poor human rights record, their lack of transparency, their engagement in arms transfer, their training in psychological warfare against civilians, their erosion of national self-determination and sovereignty in situations of crisis, and their use of people with track records of human right abuses, does not bode well for the upholding of international law” (p. 62).

5.2 - Data collection and data analysis

The next section will study and explore relevant official reports that addressed the human rights and security situation during and after the civil war in Sierra Leone. Three of these reports are looking at human security conditions during the year 1999, which saw the end of

operations by PMSC and the initiation of UNAMSIL in October. Two other reports instead look at the human security situation some years after the end of the civil war in 2002, as UNAMSIL completed its mandate by December 2005. These conditions apply to the following analysis to better see the improvements and positive patterns toward the protection of human security after the deployment of UNAMSIL. As human security norms focus intensively on the protection of individuals caught up in violent conflicts, as well as the issue of gender protection, the analysis will focus on two vulnerable categories that unfortunately are left out in the academic debate that speaks about PMSCs and their influence on human security goals. These are women and children, that had a key role in the portrait and use of violence and fear as a tactic in Sierra Leone. Women represent more than 50 per cent of the population of Sierra Leone thus they “were not only victims of some of the worst abuses and atrocities of the conflict, but were also a moderating force on the violence and strong advocate for the peace process” (Curran & Woodhouse, 2007, pp. 1062-1063). The first report analysed is the “*Report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolution 1999/1*” on the situation of human rights in Sierra Leone. One of the most prominent and horrible treatments that were reserved for women and children and that was reported by medical teams on the field is the amputation of the limbs or other forms of mutilation. Women and children as young as six years old were victims of this inhumane treatment. Moreover, sexual abuse and rape were common among the rebels, there were several incidents reported where young women and girls were victims of group rape. Many rape victims were subsequently abducted, killed or mutilated by the same group. Most of these severe allegations regard the RUF and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), which abducted children and women used them as sex slaves, recruited them and trained them to be on the battlefield (p. 5). The 2nd report from 1999 is the *U.S. Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices 1999 - Sierra Leone*. The report explains

how women were subject to violence and discrimination and also being involved in illegal and forced prostitution. Disappearances were really in common in Sierra Leone during the civil war, as the UN estimates that between 1991 and 1999 approximately 20,000 persons were abducted by the RUF. Children were used mostly as soldiers, women and young girls as sex and labour slaves. RUF forces continued to use rape as a terror tactic against women. Women, in general, suffered from social discrimination, domestic violence, especially wife beating was really common. Following the constitution women should have equal rights, instead in practice women faced both legal and societal discrimination, they did not have equal access to education, health facilities or anything related to social and political freedoms. Children, especially girls were commonly subject to FGM (Female Genital Mutilation). Up to 5,000 child soldiers at the time served alongside both sides of conflicts, mostly within the RUF but unfortunately, also the CDF and government forces continued to use children for military services. The third and final report from the year 1999 is from the international NGO 'Human Rights Watch', *Sierra Leone Getting Away with Murder, Mutilation, Rape. New Testimony from Sierra Leone. July 1999, Vol.11 No 3(A)*. Again, the report shows that, when Freetown was under rebel control, there was a systematic targeting of civilians and the widespread perpetration of all classes of gross human rights abuses. These sexual crimes were most often characterized by extraordinary brutality and frequently preceded or followed by violent acts against other family members. Some of the atrocities inflicted on children by the RUF were unthinkable, children reportedly were thrown into burning houses, girls as young as 8 were sexually abused and most children were traumatically separated from their families and villages, that most of the time was raided and then destroyed. The atrocities of the conflict were so evident, that in some cases 'rebel children's soldiers' were summarily executed by ECOMOG and government forces. Unfortunately, scores of executions involving women and children were perpetrated by

ECOMOG and to a lesser extent CDF and by the Special Security Division (SSD) of the Sierra Leonean Police. Children were also detained irregularly and being beaten under detention by the Kamajor Civil Defence Forces.

Now the analysis will focus on two other reports published after the end of the mandate of UNAMSIL, in December 2005. The first report is from the Human Rights Council of the UN, named *Assistance to Sierra Leone in the field of human rights - Report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/4/96) March 2007*. The report says that gradual progress has been noted in the promotion and protection of children's rights. However, there is a continuation of harmful practices against children affecting their health, education, and social development. Unfortunately, especially young girls are still initiated through FMG into secret and traditional societies, most of the time this happens in a forceful manner. Child labour is still common, especially in the mining sector. When looking at women's rights considerable progress has been made in including women's issues on the national agenda, thanks to the intervention by the United Nations, international partners, and civil society groups. However, "truly little has been achieved in terms of actual implementation due to several factors including (a) lack of political will; (b) existence of entrenched cultural and traditional practices; (c) lack of robust and vibrant women's groups" (p. 8). Especially in rural areas violence against women is still a salient problem, cases of domestic violence, mutilation and rape were still reported daily. Even if there is not been an appreciable reduction in the reported incidence of rape, at least some attempts have been made to routinely investigate charges and prosecute perpetrators (p. 9). Women are still excluded from the socio-political process and their general well-being and access to public services are still largely restricted, as they are still majorly considered just for their role in the household. The 2nd report is from the *World Report Book of 2007 by Human Rights Watch*. The report highlights how, in 2006, the rampant corruption and the inadequacy of the financial and social sector, accompanied by

a weak rule of law still pose difficult challenges for the future stability of Sierra Leone. However, thanks to the UN work and the establishment of the Special Court of Sierra Leone, “significant progress continues to be made in achieving accountability for war crimes” (p. 147). By institutionalising the National Human Rights Commission, due to the adoption of key recommendations made by Sierra Leone’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in 2006 the parliament passed several laws with the objective of ensuring better protection of women’s rights.

5.3 - Discussion of the findings

After having a better understanding of the human rights violations that civilians suffered during the conflict and when it finished, we can discuss some of the findings based on the arguments presented in the conceptual framework. Arguably PMSCs like EO and Sandline played an essential role in Sierra Leone, in the defeat and disarmament of the RUF rebel faction, they were efficient and coordinated, thus their operations against them were successful. The signing of the Abidjan Peace Accord in 1997, is the result of that victory that conciliated with the return of an estimated 200,000 displaced individuals in January 1997, a month later the number was grown to 500,000 (UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs, 1996;1997;1998). Which at the time was considered a humanitarian success. However, that same efficiency was not amplified in the bigger picture. Because when at the end of 1999 when all the PMSCs had left the country and it was the period of the initial deployment of UNAMSIL, there was a problematic situation for the state of human rights. Arguably at that time, the possibility of pursuing freedom as such was inexistent, and “freedom from fear” remained just a utopian claim. Due to the rebel control of more than half of the provinces, especially in the northern and eastern regions of the country, there was an impossibility the monitoring human security by UN personnel and other aid agencies and the implementation of the respect for human dignities that were central to the mandate of the mission. For the

time being some successes were remarked by UN reports of the Security Council and UNAMSIL managed to have a tangible improvement in the field of human security. As human rights officers together with other international relief agencies were able for the first time to access some districts which were before under hostile protection, especially remarkable was the release of almost 4000 children liberated by the RUF, in December 2001 (UN Security Council, 2001, p. 9). Thus, with the mandate of UNAMSIL, an overall improvement of human rights conditions was achieved, but as the UN Security Council have reported in 2005. “The main root causes of the conflict have not been fully addressed, and there still exist several internal human rights challenges which are both causes and effects of the civil conflict. This includes the weakness of the judicial sector, and slow progress in the area of economic, social and cultural rights, which is compounded by a disturbing level of youth unemployment and inadequate basic services. Furthermore, a culture of respect for human rights and basic freedoms has yet to be fully established. Civil society remains weak and does not have the capacity to serve as a countervailing factor for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms” (UN Security Council, 2005, p. 7). Drawing from some of these empirical data, reports, and publications after the abandonment of private security forces in 1999, the textual data show a deterioration of human security in the country. This eventually could be a possible consideration for causal mechanisms when assessing the influence of PMSCs over UN security and humanitarian goals.

6. - Conclusion and recommendations for future studies

After having analysed the impact on human security with empirical knowledge and reports this thesis aim at formulating a conceptually based argument that could possibly explain the impact of PMSCs in the resolution of conflict, in the pursuit of the human security goals of the UN peacekeeping missions. After studying the reports and the context of the operation, a coordinated and complementary approach to ensure the protection of civilians from harm

should be considered a valuable method of integrating private and public practices of humanitarian interventions. Thus, the final proposition of this thesis will be that *PMSCs can have a significant role in supporting and achieving the human security goals of a UN peacekeeping mission, considering their reliability and experience in military-based operations, which could be used as an opportunity to act together toward the implementation of human rights in civil conflict.* Furthermore, the cooperation between the UN and private agencies should be enhanced more in the resolution of conflict and the restoration of human security by protecting citizens from threats in a coordinated manner. This is because it has been argued that the lack of efficiency and rapidity in the deployment of UNAMSIL could have been overcome using PMSCs. In conclusion, the study has some implications and recommendations for further research. Firstly, it has been acknowledged the importance of PMSCs in modern warfare and discredited the view that sees them just as ‘corporate warriors’ or highly qualified mercenaries. Secondly, there is to consider the uniqueness of the case of Sierra Leone, that further research could expand and compare to other PKOs in which the use of private military and security actors played a role in the resolution of conflict. Finally, the human security implications should be studied extensively and quantitatively in the long term, by looking at the human development index or other numerical indicators of wellbeing, social and economic inclusion, as well as access to education, food, basic sanitary products, and medical facilities. In a conclusive note, the research was successful and reached its aim of formulating an academic argument that wants to be an input for creating a solid debate on the use of PMSCs in peacekeeping operations that involve the use of force to protect civilian populations, and thus the achievement of human security goals.

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