

Corruption and Political Stability in Post-Conflict Countries: Is there really a Trade-Off?



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Abstract

The assumption of a trade-off between the levels of corruption and political stability in a post-conflict situations is not new to the peacebuilding debate, but expert opinions deviate significantly on how the former may affect the latter.

The study at hand asks whether corruption is a significant obstacle for peacebuilding in post-conflict societies, or might even have a stabilizing effect. The concept of Hybrid Political Orders is used to model post-conflict societies. The basic assumptions of the literature analysis of central concepts of peacebuilding and corruption are tested against the case study of Sierra Leone for the period 2002-2012.

Assuming different concepts of factors of political stability, such as legitimacy, it becomes clear that the effect of corruption on political stability can vary significantly, depending on the socio-economic and socio-cultural context, and is not necessarily destabilizing.

Keywords: post-conflict society, Sierra Leone, corruption, Hybrid Political Orders, Political Stability, Peacebuilding.

Zusammenfassung

Die Annahme, dass es einen Trade-Off zwischen dem Korruptionsniveau und der politischen Stabilität in einer Nachkriegssituation geben könnte, besteht seit längerem in der Peacebuilding Debatte. Aber hinsichtlich der Wirkung von Korruption auf politische Stabilität gehen die Expertenmeinungen stark auseinander.

Die vorliegende Studie geht anhand von Nachkriegsgesellschaften der Frage nach, ob Korruption ein nennenswertes Hindernis für Peacebuilding darstellt oder aber eher einen stabilisierenden Effekt hat. Hierbei wird das Konzept der Hybriden Politischen Ordnung genutzt, um Nachkriegsgesellschaften zu modellieren. Die Grundannahmen der Literaturanalyse zentraler Konzepte des Peacebuilding sowie der Korruptionsbekämpfung werden anhand der Fallstudie Sierra Leone im Zeitraum 2002-2012 geprüft.

Ausgehend von unterschiedlichen Konzepten von Faktoren politischer Stabilität, wie beispielsweise Legitimität, wird deutlich, dass der Effekt von Korruption je nach sozio-ökonomischem und sozio-kulturellem Kontext, sehr unterschiedlich ist und nicht notwendigerweise destabilisierend sein muss.

Schlüsselworte: Nachkriegsgesellschaften, Sierra Leone, Korruption, Hybride Politische Ordnungen, politische Stabilität, Peacebuilding.

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Abbreviations

ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
AI	Amnesty International
APC	All People's Congress
AfDB	African Development Bank
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
CSP	Center for Systemic Peace
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DFID	Department for International Development
GCB	Global Corruption Barometer
GOVNET	DAC Network on Governance
HPO	Hybrid Political Order
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICG	International Crisis Group
IDPS	International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding
NPFL	National Patriotic Front Liberia
ODA	Official Development Aid
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SFI	State Fragility Index
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TI	Transparency International
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UN	United Nations
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNCAC	United Nations Convention Against Corruption
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIOSIL	United Nations Integrated Office Sierra Leone
UNIPSIL	United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office Sierra Leone
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOMSIL	United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone
WGI	Worldwide Governance Indicat

1. Introduction

Corruption is frequently cited as the biggest obstacle to development. It is suspected to undermine democracies, the rule of law and human rights, distort markets and facilitate organized crime and terrorism. Thus, it poses a threat to human security and sustainable development. Donors face pressure to reduce incidents of corruption from two sides. They have the responsibility to make sure the influx of their official development aid (ODA) does not encourage dysfunctional and predatory structures in the recipient countries. Additionally, the debate on the poor impact of aid has added momentum to the issue of corruption in development cooperation and peacebuilding. Donors are increasingly liable to ensure tax payers that ODA is put to effective use and does not end up in the pockets of corrupt bureaucrats. Accordingly, there is a broad international consensus on the relevance of fighting corruption. It is documented by an array of international agreements such as the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), the Global Compact, the Paris Declaration, the Accra Agenda for Action and the G-20 Anti-Corruption Actionplan. The fight against corruption is also a focal point of German development cooperation with Africa in 2014 (Auswärtiges Amt 2014, p. 6).

Due to the developments in Iraq and Afghanistan corruption in peacebuilding has become a salient issue in the political and public debate. Corruption in post-conflict situations poses a very distinct set of problems to international peacebuilders. Post-conflict states belong to the most corrupt states in the world (e.g. Liberia, Sierra Leone (Hardoon, Heinrich 2013)), due to their weak state capacity and a lack of public consent on rules and norms (Cheng, Zaum 2012b, p. 1). The influx of peacebuilding and reconstruction funds further fuels corruption by providing vast opportunities and incentives for illicit behavior in situations of extreme scarcity (Cheng, Zaum 2012b, pp. 12ff). Meanwhile, a country's risk to succumb to violent conflict also increases significantly within the post-conflict state. Corruption is expected to trigger considerable grievances. In many cases, the original outbreak of the conflict is indeed linked to corruption of the political elite. Coups and uprisings are often justified with the claim to overthrow a corrupt regime. The issue of corruption in post-conflict peacebuilding is therefore a very relevant question of donor responsibility, as a short-term toleration of corrupt activities in peacebuilding may feed into a vicious cycle of renewed conflict.

Accordingly, corruption in post-conflict situations was identified as one priority area of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in 2008 and donors agreed to investigate how anti-corruption approaches could be integrated into early post-conflict peacebuilding processes (2010, p. 2). Transparency International (TI) launched a study in the context of the Munich Security Conference named "Corruption as a Threat to Stability and Peace". It makes the argument that corruption is a blind spot of security politics as it fuels grievances, offers incentives to stir conflict in order to access rents and harms a

state's legitimacy and capacity (TI 2014a, p. 13). The World Development Report 2011 likewise indicated an especially harmful impact of corruption on the stability of post-conflict regimes, as it is assumed to diminish state capacity and undermine the justice system (IBRD 2011, p. 7).

However, the call for swift anti-corruption actions in post-conflict situations is not unambiguous. Some experts assume a trade-off between levels of corruption and levels of violence. Joseph Nye outlined already in 1967 the possibility of a positive effect of corruption on stability (Cheng, Zaum 2012b, p. 5) and Huntington suggested in 1968 that corruption may function as the less harmful substitute to violence (1968, pp. 63f). Peacebuilders are indeed often forced to tolerate or even support certain corrupt activities in order to end or prevent violence, to persuade possible veto-players to participate in negotiations, or to simply deliver their services. This is certainly not desirable, but often necessary to end violent confrontation. This trade-off between political stability and the fight against corruption as part of the liberal peacebuilding agenda is a disputed issue in corruption and peacebuilding research. Official donor strategies started picking up on it by acknowledging that anti-corruption strategies may sometimes do more harm than good, if not conducted in a context-sensitive manner.

Nevertheless, actors such as TI demand that corruption should be tackled early on in a post-conflict peace process, as it could otherwise jeopardize the success of the entire intervention (TI Defence and Security Programme 2013). TI's calls for a fiercer stance on corruption are grounded in the assumptions that corruption triggers conflict by fuelling public grievances, by provoking violent actions in order to gain access to rents and by undermining the capacity and the legitimacy of the state (2014a, p. 13). Many experts share these deep concerns about the consequences of corruption on the development of post-conflict states (cf. Bolongaita 2005, Rose-Ackermann 2008, Le Billon 2008, Heilbrunn 2012). It is said to undermine the formation of effective and legitimate state institutions and is, along with the violation of human rights, regarded as a central feature of fragility and deteriorating governance (Rose-Ackermann 2012; OECD 2011). Studies also show a strong negative impact of corruption on overall economic growth and social equality (Gupta et al. 1998; Mauro 1995).

The view that the effects of corruption will necessarily have the harmful effects described is recently challenged by an academic discourse which is going beyond the perception of corruption as a mere obstacle to development and discusses potentially functional effects of corruption. Indeed, a strategy to persuade potential spoilers to enter into a peace agreement may be crucial to reach a badly needed ceasefire and to end violence (Stedman 1997, pp. 12f; Cheng, Zaum 2012b, p. 8). Corruption can also have functional economic effects, in terms of cutting red tape and speeding up lengthy processes etc. (Nye 2005, p. 285; Leff 2005, pp. 311ff). Corrupt practices may also serve social or distributive functions. Regarded from this angle, corruption does not necessarily fuel grievances or spark public outrage. It also has to be taken into account that corruption in a post-conflict society is eventually not only the action of greedy "rogues" (Philp 2012, p. 36), but also the survival strategy of common

citizens in a context of extreme uncertainty and scarcity. Most importantly, it has to be acknowledged that the effect of corruption on legitimacy is crucially dependent on the sources of legitimacy and perceptions of authority within a regime (OECD 2010b).

Eventually, the assumptions underlying calls for early engagement in anti-corruption issues are not as imperative as they may appear at first sight. Regarding the recent cases of international peacebuilding, the normatively desirable goal of clean, quick and effective postwar reconstruction and the formation of a peaceful, effective and legitimate democratic state is probably in the fewest cases realistic. Mark Philp correctly demands a prudent prioritization of peacebuilding goals (2012, p. 42).

The controversial discussion essentially revolves around the question of long-term and short-term goals. Through the incremental merging of peace- and statebuilding strategies a conflict of interest can be observed. Peacebuilding focuses on immediate outcomes and primarily seeks to avoid a relapse into conflict, whereas statebuilding focuses on long-term goals such as democratization (Gänzle et al. 2009, p. 8). Democratization, however, is often a very conflict-prone process and is likely to trigger violence, whereas strategies to contain violence, such as the buy-in of spoilers, can in return undermine the democratization process (Höglund 2008, pp. 80f). The question of peacebuilding strategies towards corruption in post-conflict situations is thus part of the bigger question if post-conflict peacebuilding should aim for a broad good governance agenda or a rather pragmatic agenda. It often revolves around normative questions such as: should peacebuilders wait to pursue good governance? Does the international community have a responsibility to enforce the best possible standards, to ensure the best possible development? Or does it have the responsibility to end immediate human suffering? These questions are mostly concerned with generalized assumptions on long-term effects and path dependency.

Surprisingly, the trade-off has not been subject to much in-depth analysis in current research, yet. While there is abundant academic literature on corruption as well as on corruption and development, research on the interface between corruption and political stability in liberal peacebuilding is still relatively scarce. A more in-depth theoretical discussion on the phenomenon of post-conflict corruption is only beginning. Additionally, the recent debate is often morally loaded, when researchers ask if peace is being "bought" (Le Billon) or "sold" (Cheng and Zaum). The study at hand shall provide the additional value of shedding some light on the dynamics between corruption and political stability. A better understanding of the diverse and probably adverse ways in which corruption affects different aspects of political stability may facilitate the structured assessment of a feasible strategy on how to deal with the critical issue of corruption in a given post-conflict state (keeping in mind its particular contextual factors).

The study seeks to answer the question how corruption affects the factors that constitute the political stability of a society in a post-conflict state, by critically discussing current assumptions and hypotheses on the functional and dysfunctional effects of corruption with regard to the distinct contextual factors of a post-conflict state. In order to do so, it seems most suitable to conduct a literature-based study and test the underlying assumptions of the literature on a case study. Since research on the interface of corruption and post-conflict stability is still scarce, the study has to draw on different strands of literature. It pools findings of the literature on corruption research, the academic debate on political power and current academic and political approaches to liberal peacebuilding.

To approach the question, the study conducts in a first step a brief analysis of relevant policy papers on peacebuilding strategies. The analysis provides the reader with an understanding of the conceptualization of the relationship between political stability and corruption as perceived in current peacebuilding. This allows to locate the academic debate within its political framework. The study focuses on the relevant contributions on the issue of international peacebuilding by the United Nations (UN) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

An initial discussion of the applied terms and definitions establishes a shared understanding of the terms 'corruption', 'political stability' and 'post-conflict state' and highlights recent scientific approaches to the concepts. A characterization of post-conflict states is conducted based on the relevant post-conflict literature and recent models of hybrid statehood. This helps to identify a regime-type which reflects the diverse scope of post-conflict regimes and provides conceptual clarity.

The study then proceeds to answer the core question how the political stability of a post-conflict state is affected by corruption. To operationalize the concept of political stability, the study first identifies the underlying factors constituting the stability of different regimes. Therefore, several sub-questions need to be answered: Which factors affect the political stability of democratic and autocratic regimes? How are they affected by high corruption levels? Which factors constitute the political stability of a post-conflict state? How are they affected by corruption?

First, the factors of democratic and autocratic political stability are aggregated through a review of literature on regime theory and political power. Based on these factors and the previously conducted conceptualization of post-conflict states, it is then possible to aggregate a set of factors which affect the political stability of a post-conflict regime. The subsequent chapter accordingly reviews the potential effects of corruption on the aggregated factors of the political stability of democratic, autocratic and post-conflict states. The initial assumption underlying the discussion is that a democratic understanding of legitimacy is being applied to a de facto non-democratic state (and society for that matter). The discussion of the potential effects of corruption on the aggregated factors

helps to outline a more differentiated set of assumptions on how this affects the political stability of post-conflict regimes. The argument is based on the latest research on the subject, but also draws from the concept of neopatrimonialism, which provides extensive insights on the social dynamics of political patronage.

The study eventually conducts a plausibility testing case study. A plausibility testing case study helps to conduct an initial test of relatively new and under-researched theories, to assess if a more in-depth approach would be worthwhile (Schäferhoff 2009, p. 22). The case allows to test the previously assembled and partly competing assumptions of the current political and academic debate, as well as a closer assessment of the contextual factors framing the theories in question, on a practical example. Post-conflict Sierra Leone in the time from 2002 to 2012 serves as a paradigmatic case (Flyvbjerg 2006, p. 232). It is prototypical for a post-conflict state under international peacebuilding, as it is one of the indeed very few recent examples of successful peacebuilding. Sierra Leone additionally promises interesting insights, as it is on the one hand hailed by the UN as an example of successful post-conflict peacebuilding, with relatively positive trends regarding its political stability, while on the other hand being one of the most corrupt states in the world. Thus, it may offer valuable findings on the interface of peacebuilding, corruption and political stability. It is also a very recent case reflecting the current practices of international peacebuilding and offering a comparably good documentation.

It is certainly not the intention of this study to trivialize the negative effects of corruption. It rather aims to encourage further academic debate on the empirically observable effects of corruption on post-conflict peacebuilding beyond shortened and morally loaded general assumptions. This will eventually increase the knowledge to tackle corruption in post-conflict peace-building, in line with current peacebuilding imperatives of "a light footprint" in order to "do no harm".

2. Review of International Post-Conflict Peacebuilding Strategies

In order to embed the question of the effects of corruption on the political stability in post-conflict states into the context of current donor practices in post-conflict situations, the following chapter will examine UN and OECD strategies regarding their stance on anti-corruption measures. The review shall clarify the extent to which recent strategies acknowledge the presumable trade-off between corruption levels and political stability.

The analysis focuses on contributions by the OECD and the UN, as they are the main agenda setting actors in the field of liberal peacebuilding within the international community. The current principles of liberal peacebuilding are largely rooted in the former UN Secretary General Boutros-Boutros Ghali's *Agenda for Peace* (1992) (Tschirgi 2003, p. 1). The agenda, which aimed to

suggest a peacebuilding design in the post-cold war era considerably broadened the scope of traditional peacebuilding missions towards a stronger focus on developmental aspects (Gänzle et al. 2009, p. 2). While the UN focuses largely (not exclusively) on peacebuilding, the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) has considerably furthered the discourse on statebuilding. Due to its focus on aspects of governance these contributions offer in tendency richer insights on the issue of corruption in post-conflict situations.

This duality already points to an inherent problem that occurs when dealing with international peace interventions in fragile contexts: terminology. The terms peacekeeping, peacebuilding and also statebuilding are often used synonymously and sometimes contradictory. Especially the relation between peacebuilding and statebuilding is not clearly defined and the concepts are used in very different ways.

The terminology has blurred as the agendas are expanding and overlapping in order to meet the challenges of increasingly complex intervention environments (UN DPKO 2008, p. 22). The UN divides the post-conflict peace process conceptually into 'peacekeeping' and 'peacebuilding', whereupon peacekeeping starts initially after the end of fighting and provides the basis for subsequent peacebuilding missions (UN DPKO 2008, p. 18). It is a distinctly military operation focusing on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform (SRR) processes, but also assisting elections and the restoration of state authority (UN DPKO 2008, p. 26). Peacebuilding missions have a broader political mandate in order to avoid a relapse into conflict and focus on capacity development regarding security and the rule of law, support for legitimate and participatory institutions and resettlement issues (UN DPKO 2008, pp. 18;25). The overall process may well be labeled 'statebuilding' by others, as it can include the whole range from DDR, the implementation of a peace agreement and basic reconstruction, up to democratic capacity building (Grävingholt et al. 2012, p. 7). The term statebuilding was re-introduced into the discussion especially against the historical backdrop of 9/11 and the interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq (Gänzle et al. 2009, p. 2).

The most crucial difference to peacebuilding is the underlying question whether aiming for a negative peace (the absence of violence) is suitable or whether international interventions should aim higher for the greater goal of a "real peace" through a sustainable state order (Brahimi 2007, p. 3; Gänzle et al. 2009, p. 3).¹ Therefore, some experts regard the concepts at odds with each other, considering that the aim of statebuilding to establish an effective and legitimate state may contradict the aim of peacebuilding to secure immediate

¹ Whereas the envisioned state is nowadays not necessarily a liberal democracy, as statebuilding concepts are increasingly taking other forms of governance and legitimacy into account (Gänzle et al., 2009, p.3).

stability, which may include concessions towards the warring factions (Grävingholt et al. 2012, p. 8).

Other experts suggest that they are related but not similar concepts aiming at the same goal (structural stability) from different perspectives (Gänzle et al. 2009, p. 4). Cheng and Zaum, on the other hand, regard statebuilding as "an essential part" and thus a sub-category of peacebuilding as functioning institutions are beyond doubt conducive to post-conflict stability (Cheng, Zaum 2012b, p. 2). TI, for example, has called for an inclusion of anti-corruption measures into the earliest peacekeeping phase – thus adding a good governance dimension to the equation (TI Defence and Security Programme 2013). Thus, it appears as if the concepts were slowly merging, as both concepts increasingly overlap and both adapt to the same calls of the academic discourse (Gänzle et al. 2009, pp. 1f).

To reduce confusion in terminology, the study at hand will subsume all activities aiming to enhance the structural stability of a post-conflict situation under the label 'peacebuilding', which therefore may include peacekeeping as well as statebuilding activities. This conception matches the applied definition of political stability as 'the absence of violent political change' and also allows the inclusion of the rich findings of statebuilding research on international intervention regarding the issue of corruption in post-conflict peace processes.

In the following the study will examine UN and OECD strategies with regard to their stance on corruption and anti-corruption measures in post-conflict peacebuilding processes. Following the analytical approach of Grävingholt et al., the issue of corruption in post-conflict peacebuilding is viewed as an aspect of state-society relations, more specifically as one aspect of the 'building legitimacy'-agenda and one out of seven dimensions in which development assistance may affect peacebuilding (Grävingholt et al. 2012, p. 18; OECD 2011, p. 20). Anti-corruption measures are generally used – along with measures to foster good governance, political decentralization, justice and the rule of law – to further legitimate state-society relations (Grävingholt et al. 2012, p. 28). Accordingly, the question of the effect of corruption on political stability is mostly approached via the proxy of legitimacy. Corruption is commonly assumed to have a corrosive effect on the legitimacy of a regime by triggering public frustration and undermining its citizens' trust in government and thereby threatening its stability (OECD 2008, p. 42, 2010a, p. 48; UNDP 2010, p. x).

A shared understanding of corruption was established in 2004 with the adoption of the *United Nations Convention against Corruption* (UNCAC). The intention was, to "send a clear message that the international community is determined to prevent and control corruption" (UNODC 2004, p. iii).

The convention does not give a definition of corruption but it lists a set of actions that shall be considered a criminal act:

- 1) Bribery of national public officials,
- 2) Bribery of foreign public officials and officials of public international organizations,
- 3) Embezzlement, misappropriation or other diversion of property by a public official,
- 4) Trading in influence,
- 5) Abuse of functions,
- 6) Illicit enrichment,
- 7) Bribery in the private sector,
- 8) Embezzlement of property in the private sector,
- 9) Laundering of proceeds of crime,
- 10) Concealment,
- 11) Obstruction of justice (UNODC 2004, pp. 17ff).

Post-conflict situations are especially prone to such activities. While young institutions are typically weak and resources are scarce it appears to be a rational strategy to support an individual cause by corrupt means, as it is not expected that the legal processes will allow for a fair and efficient distribution of goods (Andvig 2007; Billerbeck 2012; Cheng, Zaum 2012b; Le Billon 2003).

The general assumptions of potential effects of corruption on the socio-economic development, security, and legitimacy of the state by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) are strictly negative. Corruption is expected to have a highly corrosive effect on democracy, as it undermines the trust of the people and reduces the effectiveness of democratic institutions (UNODC 2004, p. iii). The independence of the justice system is threatened as the impartiality and fairness of the rule of law is distorted. Violations of human rights are therefore likely to go unpunished in a corrupt system. A weak justice system is also assumed to worsen the business climate and discourage foreign direct investment (UNODC 2005, p. 1). Moreover, the sustainable development of the state is likely to suffer as public funds are drained and the markets distorted (UNODC 2004, p. 5). The security sector is also supposedly affected, as corruption facilitates the formation of organized crime networks and terrorism (UNODC 2004, p. 5). Regarding the aspect of corruption and conflict, it is assumed that corruption tends to prolong conflict and impede post-conflict reconstruction and institution-building (UNODC 2004, 2005).

More recent publications by the OECD and UNDP take a more balanced view with respect to the effects of corruption in fragile situations, taking a differentiated look at corruption and anti-corruption measures from a less normative angle.

A paper by the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS, funded by the OECD) on the priorities and challenges of the peacebuilding process highlights the ambiguity of the issue of corruption in peacebuilding practice from an ODA-recipient perspective. On the one hand, weak rule of law, and corruption in particular, are considered to be key causes of conflict and therefore a threat to the peacebuilding process (2010, p. 32). On

the other hand, the countries identified a political settlement as a key priority to get the peacebuilding process on track. These settlements shall be reached, amongst other options, through power sharing and elite bargaining and shall pay special attention to a balance of center-periphery power relations (2010, p. 28). All these processes are especially ripe with opportunities for the entrenchment of war-time elites and opportunities to capture resources to maintain patronage structures. Nevertheless, they are crucial to integrate all relevant actors into the process.

In 2009 the DAC Network on Governance (GOVNET) launched a report *Integrity in Statebuilding*, which follows the general understanding that accountability mechanisms strengthen the stability of a fragile regime. However, the authors emphasize the local embedment of corruption – meaning, what is persecuted as corrupt behavior – needs to be aligned with local perceptions (2009, pp. 6;11). Too often, a generalized understanding of corruption and good governance mechanisms collides with local norms and respectively the priorities of the peacebuilding process. The report generally criticizes that too many donor approaches still follow a linear understanding of the development of statehood as "skipping straight to Weber" (2009, p. 8). A too narrow focus on the goal of modern statehood may seriously jeopardize the long-term perspectives of stability and resilience (2009, p. 8). Although not spelled out by the author, the fight against corruption can be regarded as one strand of the development of a modern state and must therefore also be subject to these concerns.

The ground-breaking study *Do No Harm* by the OECD in 2010 also promotes a highly context-sensitive approach and actively discourages anti-corruption measures that ignore the local patterns of legitimacy as potentially harmful (2010a, p. 57). It elaborates on different sources of legitimacy and underlines that a lack of process-legitimacy can be substituted with other, from a democratic point of view less desirable, sources of legitimacy such as output or ideology/religion/identity (2010a, p. 48), which may even trump process-legitimacy due to local norms and values. In a case where donor policies are unaware of battles for legitimacy between the state and non-state actors, good governance measures may indeed weaken the position of the state by shutting out non-democratic sources of legitimacy to which the non-state rivals can appeal (such as ethnic or religious interests) (2010a, p. 57). One feature identified as relevant for most post-conflict situations is the overall primacy of the provision of security as a source of state legitimacy. As long as the state is not the sole provider of security, but challenged by rivals of the state, it will struggle to strengthen its legitimacy in the eyes of the public, regardless of its performance in areas such as economic management and good governance (2010a, p. 57). Thereby, the study incorporates a ranking to prioritize peacebuilding actions, which grants primary concern to matters of security over measures to combat corruption.

The notion of different understandings of corrupt behavior and legitimacy in different political regimes is further elaborated in a 2010 OECD paper *The*

State's Legitimacy in Fragile Situations:

[P]atronage in the Western state model is viewed as corruption that undermines both process and performance legitimacy. However, in hybrid political orders, patronage can provide sources of both input and output legitimacy; and in fragile situations it can provide the main means of managing violence, creating political alliances and maintaining social stability (2010, p. 9).

The trade-off between corruption and stability is also acknowledged in the 2011 DAC Guidelines and Reference Series paper *Supporting Statebuilding in Situations of Conflict and Fragility*. It recognizes that while corrupt activities can de-legitimize the state, patronage may also support the creation of political settlements and strengthen legitimacy. The authors advise to conduct a thorough analysis of the local political economy and find out how different forms of corruption may affect the peacebuilding process (2011, pp. 46;66).

The aforementioned 2010 UNDP report *Fighting Corruption in Post-Conflict Recovery Situations* takes a skeptic position towards a higher tolerance of corruption for short-term purposes. The report takes the stance that corruption will become more and more entrenched and therefore needs to be tackled early after the conflict ends. It criticizes the willingness of development partners to tolerate corruption in order to achieve quick impact gains while ignoring the harmful long-term effects (2010, p. 47). Thereby it assigns lower value to the possible gain in 'output-legitimacy' compared to assumed long-term harm on 'input-' or 'process-legitimacy'. It conceptualizes corruption as a process deeply adverse to the goals of peacebuilding; "When it becomes endemic, corruption can derail political and economic transitions, undermine state capacity and legitimacy, exacerbate poverty and inflame grievances linked to conflict" (2010, p. iii). More specifically it refers to threats posed to the *democratic* peacebuilding project: "Corruption threatens not only governance in general but also the establishment and stability of democracies" (2010, p. x). It particularly stresses the risk that corruption may cause public frustration and thereby increase the risk for renewed violence (2010, p. 86). Therefore the authors underline the importance of curbing post-conflict corruption to build up public confidence within the state (2010, p. viii). A 2007 OECD *Governance, Peace and Security* paper likewise assumes a long-term negative development, stating that "tolerance of corruption in early recovery leads to its institutionalization and the undermining of political processes in fragile situations" and specifically discourages the "buy-in" of former elites entrenched in war economies (2007, p. 99).

Thus, the core question regarding the evaluation of the trade-off is the assumption of long-term effects. Supposing that initial corruption can be weeded out in the long run makes it a favorable strategy to ensure initial stability in fragile contexts. Assuming a fatal path dependency with ever increasing corruption levels seriously hampering socio-economic development corruption has to be regarded as a potential trigger for a relapse into conflict.

But despite the criticism, the UNDP report explicitly acknowledges that anti-corruption measures can jeopardize the peace process. Political settlements may sometimes rely on patronage networks (2010, p. 86). Also, powerful actors who benefited from corrupt practices may be alienated from the process and trigger renewed violence and sabotage elections to maintain their resources (2010, p. 46). The authors of the *Do No Harm* report stress another potential ambiguity of anti-corruption measures. In cases where a high-profile anti-corruption campaign is combined with little changes in practice – because of a lack of donor-leverage or insufficient capacities in the bureaucracy – the campaign may eventually not only be ineffective but also potentially unsettling. The increased public awareness regarding the issue could trigger public cynicism towards the state and actually undermine regime legitimacy (OECD 2010a, p. 50).

Reports such as *Do No Harm*, which promote context-sensitive approaches, do not actively advise donors to tolerate corruption but they do urge donors to weigh the possible effects of an intervention very carefully. They give no indication on their assumptions of the long-term effects of corruption but eventually prioritize matters of security and stability above matters of good governance. Altogether, the recommended strategies to deal with corruption differ substantially in their degree of 'interventionism'. The 2010 UNDP report *Fighting Corruption in Post-Conflict and Recovery Situations* stresses that anti-corruption measures need to be context sensitive to avoid potentially unsettling effects. But its recommendations nevertheless follow a rather conservative good governance approach. It suggests to design integrated anti-corruption programs that are "sectorally cross-cutting, embedded in government reforms and able to adapt to shifting post-conflict political realities, policies and procedures" (2010, p. 87). To that end a procedure including donors as well as recipient governments and civil society is recommended, which can be broadly subsumed in six steps:

- 1) Identify political will and politically feasible options to enhance accountability and transparency and mainstream measures on the bureaucratic level to build sustainability;
- 2) Support the establishment of the rule of law and security, by facilitating a shared national understanding of the rule of law according to the adopted outside model;
- 3) Initiate anti-corruption reforms early after the end of the conflict, i.e. mainstreaming of transparency into processes such as tax collection and DDR (disarmament, demobilization and reintegration);
- 4) Provide a good example by setting up transparent funding mechanisms and fight corruption in its own service delivery;
- 5) Support the establishment of democratic non-state actors such as chambers of commerce to enhance accountability, i.e. by initiating joint councils;

- 6) UNDP as an actor should develop a strategic roadmap as a tool to apply in statebuilding missions, take the lead on the topic and facilitate the dissemination of information (UNDP 2010, pp. xiii ff).

The OECD study on *Concepts and Dilemmas of State Building* suggests a bottom-up approach by primarily tackling the economic realities that drive low level corruption in local communities most affected by corruption (2008, p. 42). They also advise donors to empower citizens through increased transparency of government and to "address [...] grievances while simultaneously re-enforcing state legitimacy" (2008, p. 42).

Table 1: Overview of the development of the issue of corruption in international peacebuilding.

	Source	Assumptions on corruption in post-conflict peacebuilding
UN	2004 UNCAC	- corruption is harmful and needs to be eradicated - corruption undermines the trust in and the effectiveness of democratic institutions.
OECD	2007 Governance, peace and Security	- corruption has negative long-term effects, by institutionalizing corrupt practices and entrenching war-time elites
OECD	2008 Concepts and Dilemmas of Statebuilding	- corruption should be tackled in a bottom-up approach - the economic realities driving low-level corruption need to be tackled
OECD	2009 Integrity in Statebuilding	- local embedment of corruption: what is prosecuted as corrupt behavior needs to be aligned to local perceptions
UN	2010 Fighting Corruption in Post-Conflict Recovery Situations	- skepticism towards a higher tolerance of corruption - corruption has negative long-term effects if it gets entrenched in the system
OECD / IDPS	2010 Peacebuilding and Statebuilding – Priorities and Challenges	- acknowledges ambiguity of corruption in peacebuilding - the importance of settlements to establish peace is highlighted
OECD	2010 Do No Harm	- focus on context-sensitivity - awareness for potentially negative harmful side effects of anti-corruption measures - highlights that legitimacy may arise from different sources
OECD	2010 The State's Legitimacy in Fragile Situations	- acknowledges that societies may have different understandings of corruption as well as legitimacy
OECD	2011 Supporting Statebuilding in Situations of Conflict and Fragility	- explicit acknowledgement of the trade-off - observation that patronage may sometimes strengthen legitimacy

In accordance with its support for context-sensitive measures, the *Do No Harm* report describes the anti-corruption agenda as a "difficult tightrope donors need to walk" (2010a, p. 50). The aftermath of a conflict and the transition towards a new model of society offers the chance to alter public attitudes that facilitate corruption (2010a, p. 161). However, it may simultaneously raise expectations

in the public, which they may not be able to serve. It recommends an adaption of salaries of public employees, the regulation of party finance, reconstruction contracts as well as corporate practices and legal reforms to promote transparency and accountability (2010a, p. 161). These suggestions are not particularly innovative and may fall victim to the limited financial and operational capacity of a post-conflict state. The report also suggests, however, that in order to enhance the legitimacy of the system, it may be more conducive to initiate "processes that link the government to its citizens" rather than democratization and anti-corruption efforts (2010a, p. 50). Unfortunately it does not provide any examples for these processes.

The OECD guidelines *Supporting Statebuilding in Situations of Conflict and Fragility* set the considerably lower goal to achieve "more rules-based practices" instead of good governance and "integrity" instead of legitimacy (2011, p. 66). As already mentioned above, it recommends to conduct an "indepth analysis of the political, historical, cultural, economic, institutional and social context to understand how it is shaping the incentives and interests of local actors" (2011, p. 66) and to align anti-corruption measures accordingly. Thereby, donors should be able to identify "key entry points" (i.e. public services and taxation). Furthermore, they propose to approach local actors who are perceived as legitimate by the public and "whose interaction with formal state structures can be facilitated and encouraged in ways that are accepted as legitimate" (2011, p. 66). They urge donors to develop an understanding of which forms of corruption harm the legitimacy of the state and "how to approach trade-offs between corruption and stability" (2011, p. 66).

The relatively conservative agendas are able to offer concrete guidance to the practitioner. But they suffer from the assumption that they are able to reduce complexity by assembling all possible theoretic solutions in an all-embracing tool-kit. They represent a review of best practices to fight corruption and establish a well governed democracy, all of which individually offer viable solutions in a certain context. However, they leave the practitioner with a blind spot for the post-conflict environment by solely focusing on the goal which is a consolidated democracy. By designing a strategy that intends to tackle a problem on all levels and at the same time, they fail to take the limited capacities of both the donor agencies and the local bureaucracy into account and lack an understanding of potentially adverse effects of individual measures. The approaches that stress the adverse effects and the need for context-sensitive application, on the other hand, remain vague and leave practitioners in the field with little guidance and the responsibility to collect expansive intelligence.

In review, one can observe a stepwise differentiation in the approaches to the issue of corruption in post-conflict peacebuilding. Recent policy papers explicitly mention probable functional effects of post-conflict corruption and warn against harmful side-effects of anti-corruption measures. A tendency can be observed

to view corruption as a profoundly local and context-bound phenomenon which goes beyond the scope of a one-size-fits-all approach.

The review of the donor strategies on post-conflict peacebuilding makes it clear that the stance on the corruption-stability trade-off is at its core a question of the primacy of short- versus long-term effects. Grävingholt et al. rightly summarize that it is thus always subject to a political assessment depending on the respective context (Grävingholt et al. 2012, p. 8). Accordingly, the OECD and UN do not (and cannot) offer a unified answer how peacebuilding strategies should deal with corruption in the aftermath of a conflict. Certainly, no strategy contradicts good governance goals in general and recommends a toleration of corruption as a means to strengthen political stability. Suggested measures to cope with the problem are either overly complex, by trying to fight a complex problem on all levels simultaneously, or too vague to serve as a concrete guideline. But the most recent recommendations for anti-corruption measures are so substantially toned down that they imply a serious concern for the effects on political stability. The academic pursuit of the study at hand is thus in line with current political reasoning.

3. Conceptualization of the Effects of Corruption on Political Stability in Post-Conflict Situations

The following chapter provides a structured discussion of the current literature on the effects of corruption on the political stability of autocracies, democracies and post-conflict regimes. To approach the question, the concepts used need to be clarified in a first step. In a second step, different models of political regimes will be discussed regarding their conceptualization of political stability. Finally, the effects of corruption on the political stability of democracies, autocracies and post-conflict states will be individually discussed based on recent contributions from the peacebuilding literature and corruption research.

3.1. Introducing the Concepts

The study applies the terms "corruption", "political stability" and "post-conflict state" which can be defined and understood in broadly varying and even contradicting fashions. A clarification of the concepts is necessary to provide a foundation for further discussion. Similarly, the means of measurement for corruption and political stability used for the case study will be critically assessed.

3.1.1. The Concept of Corruption

Assessing the effects of corruption *per se* is an almost impossible undertaking. Corruption can occur in a variety of different sectors, involve different actors

with different rationales and different stakes. Accordingly, many diverse forms of corruption exist, which then again interact with various contextual factors. That said, a certain type of corruption can have different effects within two different contexts, and two different types of corruption can have broadly varying effects in one and the same setting. Thus, the subject can only be approached by approximation, keeping in mind the impossibility to make definite claims.

Post-conflict states are likely to experience extraordinarily high levels of corruption (Andvig 2007, p. 41; Cheng, Zaum 2012b, p. 1). One can assume that corruption in post-conflict states will most likely be systemic, meaning it will occur on all levels of society (Le Billon 2008, p. 346). Due to the focus on political stability, the study at hand will explore the effects of *political corruption* as opposed to economic corruption. Political corruption can be divided into "grand corruption" or "state capture" by high level officials and lower level or "petty corruption" (Cheng, Zaum 2012b, p. 6; Rose-Ackermann 2012, pp. 47ff). The study at hand will not consider this distinction, as post-conflict states are usually subject to both forms of corruption (Bolongaita 2005, p. 8). Additionally, there is currently no reliable index to illustrate this distinction and it is not clear if one of the two types has a more severe effect on the stability of a state. "State capture" may drain more funds, but "petty" corruption is directly affecting the perception of the public (Cheng, Zaum 2012a, p. 6). Additionally, one would need to take more inherent distinctions into account (e.g. which sectors are affected? Is the law-making process affected? Which institutions are captured? Which types of benefits are reaped? Etc.) (Philp 2008, p. 319). Further distinctions on the type and context of corruption enhance the ability to make predictions about the effects of corruption (Johnston 1986, p. 463), but go beyond the scope of this study.

Corruption shall be understood as a distinctly social concept, which implies that it can vary between different cultural contexts, closely linked to local perceptions of authority and legitimacy (Cheng, Zaum 2012b, p. 4). Many researchers have recently engaged in dismantling the social mechanisms and rationalities that sustain corruption within a society. The cultural relativist literature calls for a differentiated approach to corruption and stresses the embedment of corruption into underlying cultural concepts and behavioral codes. Actions which would be considered corrupt by international standards might only mean to abide by the informal codes of conduct of a certain society (Le Billon 2003, p. 415). Regarding the question of the effect of corruption on the political stability of a state, this underlines the importance of local perceptions of corrupt actions as fair or scandalous. Radical anti-corruption measures which contradict local institutions may in some scenarios rather upset the local order and create unrest instead of increased justice (Le Billon 2008, p. 353). This perspective carries the risk of lowering the governance standards of peacekeeping, making them ineffective to contain the negative effects of the ODA influx, but it widens the perspective enough to realize the very clear boundaries of external intervention in post-conflict contexts.

Definitions of corruption can be broadly categorized by being based on either

legal, public interest, market or public office criteria (Muno 2013, p. 1; Johnston 2005a, p. 65). Corresponding to the wider focus on post-conflict peacebuilding, it seems viable to apply a definition based on public office, as an entity directly involved in the peacebuilding process. Office-based definitions of corruption are manifold. The "prototype" of definitions dates back to Joseph Senturia² and defines corruption as "the misuse of public power for private gain". TI and the World Bank apply quite similar definitions "the abuse of entrusted authority for private gain" (TI 2014c), and "the abuse of public office for private gain" (The World Bank Group 2014). Based on these efforts, Nye proposes a more specific definition, replacing the relatively vague words "abuse/misuse" and "private benefit/gain" with more detailed descriptions:

Corruption is a behavior which deviates from the formal duties of a public role because of private regarding (personal, close family, private clique) pecuniary or status gains; violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private-regarding influence (2005, p. 284).

The standards demarcating corruption are "formal duties", i.e. the law and "rules" covering the realm of societal norms. Such a definition is not suited for a cross-country comparison of corruption, as laws and norms may vary substantially. But it can capture the different forms and the effects of corruption beyond a euro-centric perspective, while still allowing a clear differentiation from other criminal practices. Thereby, it highlights the importance of *contextualization*.

The additional value of this definition also lies in its implication of a diverse range of possible 'benefits' – including social factors, such as societal pressures and non-material incentives such as status – for the corrupting party. Philp points out that the reduction of corruption incentives to "private gain" blinds definitions towards the common incentive of benefitting "one's party, sectional interest, or some organisation or group" (2012, p. 30). In an attempt to define the "objective core" of corruption, which captures the universal, as well as the distinctly local and cultural standards, he suggests:

Corruption in politics occurs where a public official (A), acting in ways that violate the rules and norms of office, and that involve personal, partisan or sectional gain, harms the interest the public (B) (or some sub-section there-of) who is the designated beneficiary of that office, to benefit themselves and/or a third party (C) who rewards or otherwise incentivises A to gain access to goods or services they would not otherwise obtain (2012, p. 34).

The "objective core" definition is – compared to Nye – slightly flawed regarding the aspect of formal and informal norms by only referring to the "rules and norms of office". But by stressing the competing sets of interests between certain societal groups, it reflects the political landscape of a post-conflict state, which is often marked by a highly fragmented societal structure. This broad

² According to Muno 2013, p. 1.

understanding of 'private benefit' also allows to categorize patronage and clientelist practices as corrupt. Thereby, it is especially well suited for the assessment of corruption in a peacebuilding context and shall be applied to the following analysis.

The political arena of post-conflict states is in most cases riddled with practices of patronage and clientelism, as the capacity of formal institutions for service delivery is usually weak (Le Billon 2008, p. 346; Philp 2008, pp. 317f). Informal channels are used to exchange material gains for political support. In the corruption literature the relation of clientelism and patronage is frequently contested. The study adopts an understanding of Erdmann and Engel distinguishing both concepts by the number of actors involved. Both concepts explain the exchange of political support for material favors. While clientelism implies a personal, "dyadic" relationship, between the patron and the client, patronage refers to an individual patron *vis-à-vis* a group and the dispersion of collective goods (Erdmann, Engel 2006, p. 21). Clientelism is an important factor driving cronyism on the bureaucratic level. Patronage, however, affects the high-level political process and is an important tool to build cohesion and maintain power (Erdmann, Engel 2006, p. 21).

The measurement of corruption has recently triggered substantial academic debate, which has revealed some serious problems in the data collection and interpretation. One of the most prominent tools to measure corruption, the *Corruption Perception Index* (CPI) by Transparency International, will be used to measure the corruption levels in Sierra Leone in the following case study. It is a "poll of polls", analyzing polls of different (currently up to thirteen) organizations (TI 2013). Although it is one of the most commonly used indices on the topic, its methodology has been widely criticized. Data collected on the basis of 'perceived corruption' implies a range of difficulties. Perceptions can even within a coherent social group vary substantially, and even more between different social groups, and different forms of corruption differ in their public visibility (Johnston 2005b, p. 874).

Michael Johnston assessed the CPI along three factors *reliability*, *validity* and *precision* (2005b, p. 267). The *precision* of the indicator suffers from its inadequate country-to-country comparability. On the one hand, different sets of surveys are used to assemble the rating for the individual. On the other hand, the index cannot reflect differences in forms of corruption and variations within a country (Lancaster, Montinola 2001, p. 11; Johnston 2005b, p. 873). Therefore, analysts need to be careful in drawing any cross-country conclusions. The study at hand, however, is interested in an over-time comparison, which may only be distorted by a change in the primary surveys over the years. The CPI performs well in terms of *reliability*, as it is based on the view of thousands of interviewees and produces broadly consistent results over subsequent years (Johnston 2005b, p. 871). In terms of *validity*, Johnston points out that the results of the CPI are both plausible as well as statistically relatable to other indices (2005b, p. 274). Being based on the perception of corruption, they nevertheless suffer severely from the above-mentioned limitations. Despite

these flaws it remains one of the most adequate tools for the purpose of this analysis. Because whether or not corruption affects the political stability of a state, depends on the perception of the level of corruption by the public, and not necessarily the actual corrupt incidents – especially regarding the question of state-legitimacy.

The sixth indicator of the World Bank's *Worldwide Governance Indicator* (WGI) "Control of Corruption" will be used to cross-check the findings of the CPI. The WGI allow an overtime comparison of the situation in Sierra Leone for the timeframe in question and can thereby confirm or question the assumed trends by the primary index. The WGI is not considered as a primary source as it is frequently criticized as overly complex and not sufficiently transparent, as it relies on expert opinions which may be biased. Furthermore, the applied datasets vary over time, which distorts the over-time comparison (Fabra Mata, Ziaja 2009, p. 78).

3.1.2. Definitions of Political Stability

The question of political stability can be understood and operationalized in various different ways. In 1973, Hurwitz identified four different isolated approaches to define and operationalize political stability, namely; the absence of violence, governmental longevity/duration, the existence of a legitimate constitutional regime and the absence of structural change (1973, p. 449).

Political stability understood as the "absence of violence" implies that political processes are handled in an institutionalized, non-violent manner and that any "rapid turnover of a system's governors by violent processes is evidence of instability" (Hurwitz 1973, p. 450). This aspect appears central to a post-conflict peacebuilding context. It describes a genuinely desirable political situation, regardless of the democratic quality of institutions and processes and also coincides with the overall political goal of peacebuilding to avoid renewed violence. It shall be however refined as 'the absence of *political* violence', political violence meaning "violence outside of state control that is politically motivated" (O'Neil 2011).

Applying the duration of a government as an indicator for political stability is only effective if one focuses on extra-constitutional regime change, as it would otherwise define autocracies with a long incumbency as more stable than a democracy with regular changes of incumbency (Hurwitz 1973, p. 453). While slightly simplistic, this factor provides an easy access to operationalize political stability. Arriola uses his approach to assess the stability of African regimes with regard to patronage structures (2009).

The criterion "absence of structural change", a concept put forward for example by Claude Ake, suffers from the same lack of differentiation – disregarding of the nature and causes of changes, a regime is either stable or unstable (Hurwitz 1973, p. 457). It is thus not viable in itself, but only if the capacity of the state to cope with structural changes is taken into account. Gerschewski et al., for

example, promote a broader understanding of stability as the positive capacity to cope with environmental changes (2012, p. 3). This approach is very ambitious in the context of post-conflict peacebuilding.

Equating the existence of a legitimate constitutional regime with political stability is problematic, as the approach has a strong democracy bias considering that an authoritarian regime may be able to stabilize itself through means of cooptation and repression (Gerschewski et al. 2012, p. 2).

Nowadays, as research has made considerable advances in the field of data collection and aggregation, most studies apply a comprehensive definition of political stability and most indices are able to reflect diverse aspects and sources of political stability and thereby reflect its systemic character. They accordingly vary in the degree of their inclusiveness. A report by Monty Marshall on regional trends in warfare and political instability in Africa defined political stability as "the absence of major armed conflict and lack of serious disruptions to the central regime's ability to make, implement, and administer public policy" (2006, p. 10) thus broadly subscribing to the 'absence of political violence' category. He assesses the factors aid dependency, political discrimination, elite ethnicity, political factionalism, state-formation instability, population density, land area, forest cover, leadership succession, democratic neighborhood, armed conflict in the neighborhood and whether the country is Muslim by majority (2006, p. 75). Thereby, the assessment is very detailed and limited to the geographic region of Africa.

Political stability can also imply the sustainability of a certain mode of governance (i.e. democratic or autocratic) and the likelihood of institutional transformation, as for example applied by Fjelde and Hegre, assessing the effect of political corruption on institutional stability (2006b). Dix et al. likewise understand political stability as "the sustainability of governments and state institutions" (2012, p. 6). This is assessed with regard to the factors: economic system, the rule of law and validity in a society, the length of government tenure, the degree of coherence of government policy and the sustainability of institutions (Dix et al. 2012, p.6).

Gerschewski et al. apply a very challenging understanding of stability as the positive capacity to cope with changing environmental circumstances and endogenous challenges (2012, p. 3). In the context of post-conflict peacebuilding, however, a minimalist understanding better reflects the focus of the peacebuilding mission: the immediate threat of renewed violence and the relapse into conflict. The understanding of political stability in the study at hand, shall therefore follow a very basic, narrow understanding of stability as the *absence of violent political change*. The degree of political stability thus depends on the level of political violence, resulting in the worst case in extra-constitutional violent change. Taking the heightened risk of a post-conflict state to revert to violence (the 'conflict trap') into account, it seems appropriate to focus on minimalist standards.

Current indicators in peace and conflict research focus on the *instability*, or *fragility* of regimes and assess political stability mostly within the fragility continuum ranging from 'resilient' to 'fragile' or 'failed'. Established indicators are for example the *State Fragility Index* (SFI) by the Center for Systemic Peace, the *Index of State Weakness* by the Brookings Institution, the *Failed States Index* by the Fund for Peace or the *Country Indicators for Foreign Policy* by the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs. Fragility indices are appropriate to estimate the levels of political stability of a state following the previously outlined understanding, as they intend to "identif[y] states most likely to experience political violence and instability" (Marshall 2008, p. 15). Therefore, an estimated high level of fragility will reflect a low level of political stability.

As Monty G. Marshall pointed out, there is no consensus on the factors that constitute a "weak, fragile, failing or failed state" (2008, p. 5). The varying aspects taken into account in the diverse assessments of state fragility will thus mirror different understandings of 'political stability' or 'resilience'. Regarding the focus of the thesis at hand on the political stability within a post-conflict peacebuilding context, it appears adequate to use an index which reflects the primacy of the impact of security and human development on political stability. The SFI appears suitable, as it was developed in cooperation with USAID and reflects a development perspective (Fabra Mata, Ziaja 2009, p. 74).

The SFI is authored by Monty G. Marshall, Jack Goldstone and Benjamin Cole at the Center for Systemic Peace, which is affiliated with the George Mason University. The concept of fragility applied by the SFI reads: "A state may remain in a condition of fragile instability if it lacks effectiveness or legitimacy in a number of dimensions; however a state is likely to fail, or to already be a failed state, if it has lost both" (Fabra Mata, Ziaja 2009, p. 73). This matches the assumption of the study that there is not one definite factor on which the stability of a state crucially depends, but a variety of factors which can to a certain degree subsidize one another.

The index is based on the PESS-EL framework, which aligns indicators along a two by four matrix. It operationalizes fragility as the sum of effectiveness and legitimacy, both considered in terms of security, politics, economy and social-demographic factors (Marshall 2008). Thereby, it is possible to assess both the effectiveness as well as the perceived legitimacy in the eyes of the public of service delivery in the key areas of security and human development. Each of the eight indicators may range from zero (no fragility) to three (high fragility). The aggregation of the indicators is additive, whereas all indicators are equally weighed (Fabra Mata, Ziaja 2009, p. 74). Accordingly, the accumulated score may range from zero to twenty-four. The index uses a data-mix of expert opinions and public surveys provided by the World Bank, the US Census Bureau, UNDP, and several studies by the Center for Systemic Peace and other institutes (e.g. *Minorities at Risk* and *Political Terror Scale*) (Fabra Mata, Ziaja 2009, p. 73). Data on Sierra Leone is provided for the timeframe of 1995 to 2012.

Similar to the measurement of corruption, the measurement of political stability by the SFI will be cross-validated using the WGI. The WGI Indicator "Political Stability and Absence of Violence" has a strong focus on security and matches the minimalist definition of political stability applied in the study at hand (Fabra Mata, Ziaja 2009, p. 76).

3.1.3. Post-Conflict States

A post-conflict situation shall be conceptualized as the time-span of ten years (following Collier) after the end of a conflict, officially marked for instance by military victory, sustained armistice or a negotiated peace agreement, even when this date does not mark the end of violent action in general (Cheng, Zaum 2012b, p. 2). Despite the conceptual flaw that a post-conflict situation is per se a fluent process with no clear starting or ending point (Brown et al. 2011, p. 4), it is still a valuable concept, to provide a clear cut time-frame for applied research. The UN refers to the first three years after a conflict as the "immediate aftermath" or the "early peacebuilding phase", whereas longer-term peacebuilding is labeled "peace consolidation" (no precise time frame given). The long-term project of statebuilding however is approximated to take 20-30 years (McCandless 2012, p. 15).

In theory, conflict can occur in any state. Empirically, however, the risk of conflict is considerable higher in low-income countries (roughly 15 times higher than in an OECD country), as deteriorating socio-economic conditions are both triggers and consequences of conflict (Collier et al. 2003, p. 5; Hegre et al. 2011, p. 2; Brown et al. 2011, p. 3). The study at hand will accordingly focus on low-income post-conflict states.

But the variety of political systems which can be labeled a post-conflict state still remains substantial. Thus, in order to reduce complexity, it is important to identify a concept that can capture this variety. It can be assumed, that the pre-conflict regime was not a full-fledged democracy, as these rarely succumb to violent conflict due to institutionalized conflict resolution mechanisms. The study at hand additionally focuses on such post-conflict states which are subject to international peacebuilding. According to Reychler and Langer, a post-conflict state under liberal peacebuilding is subject to "multiple transition processes" (2006, p. 4). While the state transitions from war to peace, the international peacebuilding efforts will simultaneously push reforms to open up its system towards more democratic rule and liberalize its economy (2006, p. 4). Thus, assuming the state was not a full-fledged democracy and is now developing towards a more liberal political and economic system, it is likely to belong in the category of *hybrid regimes* on the continuum between democracy and autocracy.

Since the 'third wave of democratization' it has increasingly become clear that many different subtypes to the two regime-archetypes democracy and autocracy exist, and that they are not necessarily of transitional nature (Bogaards 2009, p. 404). These regimes, broadly subsumable under the

category of hybrid regimes, are rated as 'partly free' by the Freedom House Index or categorized as an 'anocracy' by the Polity IV dataset. Freedom House assesses the quality of political rights and civil liberties in a given state under the criteria of 1) the electoral process, 2) the possibility of public participation, 3) the accountability of political representatives, 4) existence of freedom of speech and religion, 5) existence of freedom of association, 6) quality of the rule of law, 7) quality of social and economic liberties (Freedom House 2014d). Any state which underscores a minimum threshold and cannot be rated 'free' but surpasses the bar to be 'not free' falls in the category of hybrid regimes.

Currently, about 30 per cent of the world's states are neither fully democratic, nor fully autocratic (Freedom House 2014a). The label 'partly free' by the Freedom House Index is basically as far as the homogeneity goes in the group of states in this 'grey area' (a term coined by Carothers) (Goldstone et al. 2005; Merkel 2004). Attempts to create typologies of such regimes have led to a proliferation of terms such as pseudodemocracies (Diamond 2002), electoral democracies/ autocracies (Schedler 2002), defect democracies (Merkel 2004), illiberal democracies (Zakaria 1997), competitive authoritarianism (Levitsky, Way 2002) among others, reflecting the diversity of the different subtypes. Their common denominator is that they assume a dyadic typology of 'grey area' regimes, being characterized along their deviance from either autocracies or democracies (Gilbert, Mohseni 2011, p. 271). These approaches are accordingly based on the assumption that a hybrid regime will eventually develop towards a full-fledged autocracy or democracy. But not only have hybrid regimes proven to be surprisingly persistent, they even account for 30% of all regimes on the political world map 2014 (Freedom House 2014c). Therefore, most current publications agree that hybrid regimes are not necessarily of transitional nature, but persist as distinct regime types (Merkel 2004, p. 55; Heathershaw, Lambach 2008, p. 269; Morlino 2008, p. 15).

Nevertheless, current research on the stability of such hybrid regimes focuses on a understanding of political stability in terms of regime change. The concepts are designed to assess the likelihood of a transition towards a consolidated democratic or autocratic regime. Regrettably little attention has been devoted to the question of the political stability of a hybrid regime understood as the likelihood of violent political change (Timm 2010, p. 97). This is surprising, as researchers of the Center for Systemic Peace (CSP) found that such 'partly free' regimes face a considerably higher risk of conflict and instability than autocracies or democracies (Goldstone et al. 2005, p. 16). The factor 'regimetype' is even the one exhibiting the strongest correlations with the risk of conflict, as compared to economic, institutional or demographic factors (Goldstone et al. 2005, p. 16).

To assess the constitution of stability understood as the absence of violent political change, it is therefore not feasible to work with approaches which understand non-democratic, non-autocratic regimes as diminished subtypes of the two 'idealtypes'. Such regimes need to be understood as an independent form of regime. Attempts to overcome the dichotomy of the early approaches

focused on the *hybrid* nature of a non-democratic, non-autocratic regime (Gilbert, Mohseni 2011; Morlino 2008; Timm 2010). They have also been applied in the scarce research on political stability of such regimes (Ekman 2009; Mehler 2009). The OECD uses this terminology to classify non-democratic, non-autocratic regimes of 'the global south' (2010b, p. 18).

Hybrid systems are marked by a duality of formal and informal rules, i.e. constitutional norms and such norms that "have their roots in non-state, indigenous societal structures that rely on a web of social relations and mutual obligations to establish trust and reciprocity" (OECD 2011, p. 25).³ The higher importance of informal rules in hybrid regimes as compared to liberal democracies implies a different perception of legitimate political authority:

MPs and other officials may derive their power and legitimacy not only by virtue of being elected or appointed and operating according to formal rules, but also because they were nominated on the basis of kin affiliation and patronage, and are therefore supported by traditional, non-state sources of legitimacy (OECD 2010b, p. 18).

Accordingly, the codes of conduct for public officials differ from those in liberal democracies (OECD 2010b, p. 17). Resources are allocated along patronage networks instead of bureaucratic governance, access to political and economic rights are not universal but depend on exclusive personal ties and the distinction between the private and the public realm are genuinely blurred (OECD 2010b, p. 17). The prevalence of traditional rule can be explained by the weakness or outright absence of the state in large parts of the country. In such cases the social reality and the basis for daily livelihood are to a high degree shaped by traditional authorities and local strongmen (OECD 2010b, p. 17).

This duality does not necessarily imply higher levels of fragility or risks of violence. The two sets of norms have the potential to reinforce or undermine each other. If a leader is able to draw on traditional and modern sources of legitimacy, he will most likely enjoy a very stable access to power (OECD 2011, p. 25). But in fragile situations, the competition of two sets of rules can also impede the creation of an effective monopoly over the means of violence by the state and diminish state capacity and authority, as traditional leaders challenge the state with militias, service delivery and local systems of justice (OECD 2011, p. 25).

One of the most in-depth approaches to the issue of hybridity is the concept of 'hybrid political orders' (HPO) put forward by Volker Boege et al. as an attempt to challenge the democracy bias of the fragile states debate (2008, p. 2). It stresses the duality of 'traditionality' and 'modernity' (i.e. the Weberian state). Often the outreach of the modern state is limited to a certain area around the capital, whereas the peripheral and rural areas are governed by traditional structures. Traditional structures include "extended families, clans, tribes,

³ An informal rule can, however, be modern, as it does not necessarily derive from a traditional source and a traditional rule can also be formal, if it has been included into the constitution.

religious brotherhoods, village communities" and figures of traditional authority such as "village elders, headmen, clan chiefs, healers, bigmen, religious leaders, etc." (Boege et al. 2008, p. 7). In some cases, if neither the state, nor traditional authorities are perceived as capable to provide basic services or security, people might turn to warlords, gang leaders, organized crime and new forms of tribalism etc. (Boege et al. 2008, p. 9). The citizens are part of a "network of social relations and a web of mutual obligations" which outweighs their obligations as citizens of a democratic state (Boege et al. 2008, p. 10).

The concept is evidently indebted to the concept of neopatrimonialism as put forward by Erdmann and Engel (Boege et al. 2008, p. 10; Timm 2010, p. 105). A recent attempt by Timm to establish a more comprehensible hybrid subtype of post-transformative regimes, discussed Erdmann's "neopatrimonial multi-party system" as a possible anchoring concept for hybrid regimes. The parallel observation of the formal, i.e. constitutional, set-up of political decision-making processes and the functional logic of political power, i.e. the neopatrimonial logic, shall broaden the perspective to provide a solid base for the analysis of the regime (Timm 2010, pp. 101f). But the concept of neopatrimonialism remains blurry and is often used to capture different aspects of corrupt behavior within a non-democratic state (such as rent-seeking, tribalism, personalist rule etc.), which reduces its functionality (Erdmann, Engel 2006, p. 30; Timm 2010, p. 103). Neopatrimonialism is eventually not a 'type' of regime, but rather a 'logic' of power, which can occur in combination with different types of governance (Erdmann, Engel 2006, p. 30; Timm 2010, p. 105). Thus, the neopatrimonial multi-party system will also fail to reflect the diversity of hybrid regimes. Boege et al. accordingly point out that the inclusion of neopatrimonial aspects would exclude too many states from the analysis, as not all states in the grey area are marked by neopatrimonial domination (2008, p. 10). But despite these limitations, the concept should not be neglected when assessing post-conflict regimes. As previously mentioned, many display neopatrimonial features according to the assessment of the OECD and the extensive literature on neopatrimonialism can offer valuable insights on the complex interplay of corrupt mechanisms and legitimacy (Fjelde, Hegre 2006b, p. 3).

Eventually, the HPO concept appears to be the most suitable conceptualization of non-democratic, non-autocratic regimes. Thus, the study at hand will approach the phenomenon of post-conflict states through the HPO concept. This will reduce complexity and the pooling of the literature on HPOs and post-conflict situations will further refine the analysis of factors of political stability. It also seems viable, as the OECD acknowledged the criticism of the hybrid states debate and incorporated insights of the concept into their statebuilding strategies (2011, p. 25).

3.2. Factors of Political Stability in Different Regimes

To assess the effect of corruption on the political stability of a regime, the concept of political stability needs to be operationalized by dismantling the underlying factors constituting the stability of a regime. Unfortunately, there is

currently no consensus on such factors (Marshall 2008, p. 4). The study at hand approaches the issue by deduction. Concepts of political power will be analyzed to derive a set of national factors which constitute a regime's political stability. International factors (such as 'bad neighborhoods') are not taken into account, as they are not immediately relevant for the corruption-stability trade-off. This approach is necessarily only an approximation, as 'real' regimes will always deviate from certain ideal types.

The study is based on the assumption that different types of regimes rely on different sources and mechanisms of political stability. Thus, it can be presumed that corruption will have profoundly diverging effects on different regimetypes. Therefore, the study will analyze which factors underlie the political stability of the two Weberian archetypes of democracy and autocracy. They mark the two poles of the spectrum within which a state may fluctuate. By assessing how these single factors of democratic and autocratic stability are affected by corruption, based on the current academic debate, the study can establish a set of individual assumptions how corruption may affect a certain aspect of political stability. However, the study furthermore assumes, that there is no single factor for the stability of a regime, but a range of factors. That said, any of the individual assumptions (i.e. how does corruption affect output-legitimacy) has to be regarded as one element of an interrelated system.

As previously discussed, the study will approach post-conflict states using the HPO model. Assuming that similar to its hybrid institutional nature, the stabilizing factors of a post-conflict state will fluctuate between democratic and autocratic features, the factors aggregated for the political stability of democracies and autocracies may also apply to a post-conflict state. They will be discussed individually in the following, drawing from the literature on post-conflict states and HPOs. Thereby, the chapter will aggregate a set of defining factors of post-conflict stability.

3.2.1. Political Stability in Democracies and Autocracies

To assess factors of democratic and autocratic regimes the study will primarily refer to the works of Alan Siaroff as well as Wolfgang Merkel et al. Siaroff identified an academic consensus of the broad field of democratic consolidation on factors of democratic stability in his essay on "Democratic Breakdown and Democratic Stability" (1999). Research on autocratic consolidation by contrast, has just recently begun to gain special attention (Gerschewski 2013; Pickel 2010). Merkel, Gerschewski, Schmotz, Stefes and Tanneberg (2012) provide a comprehensive summary of the hitherto existing academic debate on the issue of autocratic stability.

Taking into account the work of Max Weber, one can identify legitimacy as the most prominent factor regarding the sustainability of political power. This is also reflected in the discussed peacebuilding approaches. Regarding the *legitimacy* of a democracy, the most immediate link is the 'process legitimacy' deriving from the electoral system, granting sovereignty to the public. Thus one could

assume an inherent legitimacy of democratic regimes. But Siaroff points to the interrelation of perceptions of legitimacy and a political culture. A democratic system is more likely to be perceived as legitimate when it is embedded in a culture conducive to democracy, when "tolerance, willingness to compromise, trust, pragmatism, moderation and civility of discourse are central values and beliefs" (1999, p. 104). It is more likely to persist if it grows incrementally and with the consent of predominant elites, rather than a sudden collapse of the former regime. Siaroff also points out that a young democracy needs to produce output legitimacy in order to even up the lack of a long-standing 'reserve' of ideological legitimacy (1999, p. 104).

It has long been disputed, whether *legitimacy* is also a determining factor for the stability of an autocratic regime, since the regime does not depend on the active consent of the public (Gerschewski 2013, p. 18). But Gerschewski points out that most of the current autocratic societies are characterized by growing interdependencies between the rulers and the ruled, as the access to resources is diversified in the course of modernization processes (2013, p. 18). Pickel provides an analysis of the academic dispute whether an autocratic regime needs legitimacy to persist or if it can rely on repressive means alone. He concludes that it is – especially in a modernizing global environment – indeed essential for the long-term stability of an autocratic regime to establish a broad public support (2010, p. 200).⁴

To rule out the assumption that an autocratic regime cannot be legitimate, Gerschewski follows Weber's understanding of legitimacy as the *belief* in the validity of the government by the governed. Thereby, it can be decoupled from the normative claim of democracies to be the inherently 'right' form of rule and therefore legitimate (Gerschewski 2013, p. 18). The issue is approached using Easton's distinction between 'specific' and 'diffuse' support for the system (Gerschewski et al. 2012, p. 9). The specific support for the system is triggered by a positive performance which satisfies certain public needs, which is often labeled 'output legitimacy'. Diffuse support for an autocratic system is created through the representation of specific values and images. It can be derived via ideology (political, religious, nationalist etc.), charisma of the leader or norms and values (Gerschewski et al. 2012, p. 9). The legitimacy of an autocratic regime suffers if it can no longer live up to its legitimizing claims or if the expectations of the public change (e.g. through the diffusion of democratic norms).

As a means to 'create' such legitimacy, Göbel and Lambach propose the concept of 'discursive power'. The 'discursive power' allows a regime to convince the individual citizen via propaganda or the like to "support state projects because they believe that this is the correct thing to do" (2009, p. 19). States that have such discursive power at their disposal rarely have to revert to violent means, or may even be able to justify the use of force against certain

⁴ Likewise Grauvogel, Soest 2013.

parts of society. But similarly, the use of repressive means may seriously harm the legitimacy of a regime. In the worst case, the use of repressive force could trigger a 'down-ward' spiral of violence (Gerschewski 2013, p. 28). Gerschewski therefore calls the link between the legitimacy- and the repression-pillar the "Achilles heel" of an autocracy. The example of the PR China used by Göbel and Lambach also shows that expansive resources are needed to exercise such mechanisms. An autocracy based on 'specific' support may be hit hard by an economic shock or the withdrawal of international support. Similarly the death of a leadership figure can severely harm the 'diffuse' support (Gerschewski et al. 2012, p. 14).

Besides legitimacy, Alan Siaroff (1999) identified three further factors that are conducive to democratic stability 1) a high level of socio-economic development, 2) a homogenous society, 3) international and regional factors.

A *high level of socio-economic development* describes a situation "of high and growing income, education, occupational diversity, urbanization, private property and autonomous social and economic organizations", and was characterized by Robert Dahl as 'a modern dynamic pluralist society' (Siaroff 1999, p. 103). Such a society is assumed to be conducive to democracy, as resources (knowledge, money, power) are distributed more or less evenly (Siaroff 1999, p. 103). The assumption is based on the Lipset thesis that certain factors of societal modernization (an open class system, literacy, a capitalist economy, economic wealth etc.) will benefit the development of a stable democracy through mutually correlated social processes (Lipset 1959, p. 105). A study by Miljkovic and Rinal confirmed that both a high initial GDP level, as well as GDP growth contribute to political stability in terms of reducing the risk of irregular regime change and social unrest (2008, p. 2461).

Siaroff furthermore asserts that a heterogeneous society will struggle more than a *homogenous society* to develop a conducive political culture of trust and tolerance. However, political will may overcome this problem by federalism or other sorts of compromise and balancing. If the political discourse is dominated by the fragmentation of society, though, it will be difficult to govern effectively by democratic means (Siaroff 1999, p. 105).

Regarding the stability of autocratic regimes, Gerschewski et al. identify two main reasons besides legitimacy for actors to support an autocratic regime; they either expect direct or indirect advantages from it or they fear serious repression if they fail to comply (2012, p. 7). This rationality is translated into the stabilizing factors *repression* and *cooptation*. According to Gerschewski et al., an autocratic regime is likely to persist, if the incumbent achieves an institutionalization of the three factors *legitimacy*, *repression* and *cooptation* in the regular interaction between the public and the regime, i.e. a situation in which the motivation for the support of the regime does not need to be reproduced and controlled all the time and becomes self-perpetuating (2012, p. 8). It is assumed that the three factors are mutually complementary, i.e. they

have the potential to reinforce and weaken one another, but they can also compensate one another to a certain degree (2012, pp. 12;15).

Repression is one of the most commonly cited mechanisms of an autocratic regime (Erdmann, Soest 2008, p. 4; Grauvogel, Soest 2013, p. 8). It is defined, following Davenport, as the use or threat of sanctions against an individual or an organization (Gerschewski et al. 2012, p. 10). Gerschewski points out that while repression is one of the central mechanisms of an autocratic regime, it is also only selectively applicable to "[channel] public demands *vis-à-vis* the political system in a way that these demands do not endanger the autocratic regime" (2013, p. 21). According to Levitsky and Way, the use of repression can either be 'hard' (highly visible, violent, observable, often towards bigger groups) or 'soft' (suppressive, subtle, unobserved, often towards individuals) (Gerschewski et al. 2012, p. 10). By using repressive means the regime can control threats to the system, outline which behavior is tolerated and which is not and direct political movements according to a political strategy (Gerschewski et al. 2012, p. 10). The repressive power of an autocratic regime can be harmed by a split in the political or military leadership or a mass mobilization that implies severe power shifts (Gerschewski et al. 2012, p. 14).

Cooptation is defined by Gerschewski as "the capacity to tie strategically-relevant actors (or a group of actors) to the regime elite" (2013, p. 22). It can solve one of the most pressing autocratic dilemmas. The dictator depends on the acceptance and the support of strong public actors (economic, military, ethnic, religious or the like) to sustain his position (Gerschewski et al. 2012, p. 6). Both sides are confronted with a substantial amount of insecurity about the other side's motives and both have the potential to undermine each other (Gerschewski et al. 2012, p. 4). Cooptation can integrate strategically-relevant actors into the elite of the regime and create "elite cohesion" (Gerschewski 2013, pp. 22f). It can use formal or informal channels. Formal institutions, such as institutionalized power sharing mechanism, for example parties and parliaments, can help to reduce uncertainty. They enhance the transparency for the partners, provide non-violent conflict resolution mechanisms and also have the potential to regulate the access to various material or immaterial advantages (Gerschewski et al. 2012, p. 5). Jörg Kemmerzell stresses the role of dominant parties to support the stabilization of autocratic power (2010, pp. 343ff). By appointing cabinet seats to powerful public figures and providing a distribution mechanism for political rents they institutionalize patrimonial and clientelist politics (Gerschewski et al. 2012). Such clientelist and patrimonial networks offer informal channels for cooptation and help the incumbent to strengthen its public support base (Gerschewski et al. 2012, p. 11; Erdmann, Soest 2008, p. 5).

The strategy of cooptation via patronage and clientelist networks is explored in more detail by the concept of neopatrimonialism. The concept combines Weber's concept of patrimonialism with features of legal-rational authority (Erdmann, Engel 2006, p. 18). According to Erdmann and Engel, both rationales, the traditional patrimonial (of personal relations between the ruler

and the ruled, without any distinction between the public and the private realm) and the modern legal-rational (of the bureaucracy, which clearly demarcates the public from the private) coexist (2006, p. 18). They "permeate" each other, and thereby "the patrimonial penetrates the legal-rational system and twists its logic, functions, and effects" (2006, p. 18). Clientelism and patronage, as defined previously, are essential aspects of neopatrimonial rule. Both mechanisms constitute a relationship between un-equals, in which political support is traded in exchange for material gain, access to public funds or services etc. (Erdmann, Engel 2006, p. 20). Erdmann and Engel point out that while the actual material benefit of patronage for a community may in fact be insignificant, it rather provides the comforting assumption that a member of one's own kin will care about the needs of the community much more than an anonymous politician (2006, p. 21). The stabilizing effect of patronage is based on the rationality of membership to a kin or group.

The stabilizing effect of clientelism on the other hand is 'uncertainty', as a client needs a patron for protection or assistance (Erdmann, Engel 2006, p. 21). Timm argues that the stability of neopatrimonial regimes can be improved by inducing 'institutionalized uncertainty', i.e. by constantly switching between a patrimonial and legal-rational logic of governance (2010, p. 104). Actors are left in the dark about how actions will be evaluated and what kind of consequences they will have to expect. An anti-corruption campaign can thus be used by neopatrimonial regimes to communicate the threat that actors could possibly get punished for actions which are against the legal-rational code, while they could also get away with it if the action is judged under the patrimonial code (Timm 2010, p. 111). Similarly, the reshuffling of political positions through clientelist channels can enhance the uncertainty, as the line between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' is constantly re-drawn (Timm 2010, p. 110). Thereby, the coopted elite remains fragmented and dependent on the central power. In an article on the patrimonial rule of presidents in Liberia, Reno points out that Doe's rule was more fragile than that of his predecessors, as he did not manage to keep them dependent effectively (Reno 2012, pp. 134ff). Gerschewski calls this destabilization of the cooptation mechanism a "change of transaction costs" between the parties. This may be caused by changing economic conditions which affect the availability of rents or by a changing social environment which rearranges loyalties (Gerschewski et al. 2012, p. 15).

The factor cooptation cannot be separated from the question of corruption. Based on the applied definition, cooptation through clientelism and patronage is a form of corruption, thus one can hardly ask how corruption affects cooptation. This problem shall be circumvented by integrating the two strategies of maintaining autocratic power *cooptation* and *repression* into the factor *autocratic stabilization mechanisms*, based on Huntington's assumption that corruption and violence are closely related and to a certain degree substitutive. He argues:

The functions, as well as the causes, of corruption are similar to those of violence. Both are encouraged by modernization; both are symptomatic of the weakness of

political institutions; both are characteristic of what we shall sub-sequently call praetorian societies; both are means by which individuals and groups relate themselves to the political system and, indeed, participate in the system in ways which violate the mores of the system. Hence the society which has a high capacity for corruption also has a high capacity for violence (1968, p. 63).

Huntington suggests that both phenomena are illicit ways to place demands upon a system, which is why they can substitute each other to a certain degree (1968, p. 64). He certainly regards them as means of the public to cope with the system, thus they are part of a relation between system and citizen. It is therefore not completely devious to assume that cooptation and repression, i.e. corruption and violence exerted by the state, are to a certain degree substitutable as well. Thus, a higher level of corruption – as manifested in cooptation – can imply a lesser need to revert to repressive means. The factor *autocratic stabilization mechanisms* can thus be examined with regard to the effect of corruption, with the underlying assumption that a higher level of corruption implies a higher level in cooptation, which is likely to result in a lower need for repression. In turn, a diminished capacity to coopt implies a higher need to repress.

The research on both democratic and autocratic stability also stresses external factors. Siaroff's *international and regional factors* imply that international actors may seek to affect national processes directly or can provide spillover or demonstration effects (1999, pp. 105f). Several authors also stress the importance of regional and international factors for autocratic consolidation in military, economic and political terms, similarly to models of democratic consolidation (Junk, Mayr 5/14/2009; Holthaus, Schrader 5/14/2009; Erdmann, Soest 2008; Erdmann et al. 2013). But international factors will not be of relevance for the following analysis, as they are not likely to be affected by national corruption. It is acknowledged that high corruption rates may affect donor behavior, but this effect will be taken into account under the aspect of economic performance.

In sum, the analysis thus provides the following factors of political stability in a democracy: 1) *legitimacy*, 2) *high level of socio-economic development*, 3) *low level of societal fragmentation*. For autocratic regimes the respective factors are: 1) *legitimacy* 2) *autocratic stabilization mechanisms*.

3.2.2. Political Stability in Post-Conflict States

Quantitative research assumes that the 'clean' types 'liberal democracy' and 'consolidated autocracy' are the most stable regimes, whereas hybrid regimes tend to be inherently instable (Hegre et al. 2001, p. 33). Furthermore, an assessment of the political stability of a post-conflict state needs to keep in mind that such a system is marked by an array of characteristics which additionally increase its susceptibility to political instability.

In his work on 'the conflict trap' Collier outlined that a post-conflict state is especially susceptible to political instability. Its society is marred by the legacy of atrocities and the economy usually weakened or destroyed. This increases socio-economic pressures. At the same time the state may have developed an infrastructure "useful for violence" and leading military or rebel figures may actually gain financially from the conflict. Sustaining the conflict may therefore become a rational interest (Collier et al. 2003, p. 4).

Low-income post-conflict states most certainly lack effective state institutions and are subject to considerable ODA influx and rampant poverty (Brown et al. 2011, p. 3; Rose-Ackerman 2008, p. 405). One can also assume that large parts of the infrastructure and production facilities have been destroyed, which hampers a quick economic recovery (Andvig 2007, p. 41). A common legacy of conflict, especially in the aftermath of intra-state wars, is the existence of deep societal divisions, as demobilized fighters struggle to find their place in society again, widowed households need to find new ways to make a living, refugees try to return to their old life and demands for revenge and land disputes complicate conciliation processes (Andvig 2007, p. 41; Collier et al. 2003, p. 4).

A post-conflict situation is also marked by competing and fluctuating sets of rules, authority and legitimacy (Heathershaw, Lambach 2008, pp. 269;271). The state may only exist in the capital region, whereas the remote areas of the country are subject to traditional forms of governance or under the control of militias (Boege et al. 2008, p. 6). Besides various national groups claiming power, there will also be a variety of international actors, such as IGOs and NGOs, military advisors, diaspora volunteers and reporters (Reychler, Langer 2006, p. 7). This variety of actors claiming power and providing services or security, results in parallel and competing structures of governance, a high level of informal politics and makes it impossible to clearly categorize actors as state, non-state, international and national. All in all, the political situation is dominated by a persistent level of uncertainty (Heathershaw, Lambach 2008, p. 272).

That said one can assume that the political stability of a post-conflict state is under a latent stress. The study will now turn to the assessment of the underlying factors of post-conflict stability. Due to the conceptualization of a post-conflict state as an HPO, the study assumes that the stabilizing factors of a post-conflict state will fluctuate between the previously aggregated factors for democratic and autocratic regimes. They will be discussed individually in the following, drawing from the literature on post-conflict states and HPOs. It is assumed that legitimacy is a valid factor as it is prominently outlined in the peacebuilding literature and has proven relevant for both autocracies and democracies. It stems, however, from different sources. The two factors 'socio-economic development' and 'political fragmentation' bear the risk of a circular logic, as they are also frequently cited as a reason for the diminished democratic quality. Both factors were most likely negatively affected by the conflict, but a stable hybrid regime may be able to apply different coping mechanisms than an embedded democracy. This leads to the intriguing

question; how far hybrid regimes make use of the autocratic strategies of 'repression' and 'cooptation', to stabilize their system?

Legitimacy in Post-Conflict States

According to Clements, the notion of legitimacy is the most striking deviation between the modern Weberian state and an HPO (2008, p. 12). The OECD identified four sources of legitimacy: input (or process) legitimacy, output (or performance) legitimacy, shared beliefs and international legitimacy. These four sources can support forms of authority in line with to Weber's threefold classification of legal-rational and traditional or charismatic authority (OECD 2010b, p. 23). Authority is understood as the "acceptance of the state as the highest (legitimate) authority in society, entitled to make and enforce binding decisions for society as a whole" (OECD 2010b, p. 19). Any source of legitimacy can support any form of authority, i.e. process legitimacy is not exclusively prevalent in legal-rational systems, as it can also be based on customary law in traditional systems (OECD 2010b, p. 23). As outlined above, a hybrid regime is marked by the coexistence and competition of both legal-rational and traditional/charismatic authority (OECD 2010b; Clements 2008; Boege et al. 2008).

Legal-rational authority shapes for example the institutional setup of the hybrid state and provides the state with international legitimacy. But for the population, especially in peripheral areas, it may seem "alien, difficult to understand and often perceived as being incompatible with traditional understanding of how legitimacy is generated" (Clements 2008, p. 13). *Traditional authority* is commonly very strong and present in everyday life of the public, which is why many politicians are also figures of traditional authority, such as chiefs (Clements 2008, pp. 14f). But although such traditional authority is hereditary, it can still be held accountable, as the leader can be delegitimized and removed if he fails to meet his obligations and responsibilities (Clements 2008, p. 15). *Charismatic authority* is commonly prevalent in situations of violence in which warlords are able to gain legitimacy based on their skills and success to provide benefits to their followers. It can also evolve on the basis of religious considerations and may challenge both legal-rational as well as traditional authority (Clements 2008, pp. 18f).

Input legitimacy in electoral democratic regimes derives largely from participation of the governed and the opportunity of holding the government accountable (OECD 2010b, p. 26). Although the electoral process in hybrid regimes may not always be free of fraud, it still provides a certain accountability of politicians towards the public and is an important narrative for the legitimacy of this type of regime (Ekman 2009, pp. 9;28). However, Clements points out that input legitimacy in hybrid regimes is often to a lesser degree created through the liberal act of voting, but by voting according to traditional patterns of authority, such as kin ship and patronage (2008, p. 13). Likewise, an OECD paper underlines the fact that patronage structures can also provide accountability as they build dense networks of exchange (2010b, p. 26). In

many traditional, rural communities, the 'sons of the soil' are rather expected to be held accountable to provide for their local community than 'bureaucrats' (Fanthorpe 2005, p. 40).

Output legitimacy is mostly connected to the ability of the state to provide security (OECD 2010b, p. 26, 2010a, p. 57). As pointed out above, post-conflict states are usually not the sole provider of security but supported (or challenged) by international and non-state actors (Lambach 2007, p. 7). Equally important is the provision of social services, infrastructural reconstruction and support for the economy (OECD 2010b, p. 27). In a weakened post-conflict state these services are massively supported by international donors. This bears the risk of undermining the state's legitimacy, if state structures are circumvented because of concerns for misallocation and wastage of funds. Furthermore, the provision of state funds is often organized along kinship lines. This enhances the public perception that the affiliation with a certain kin is of higher relevance than being a citizen of the state (Clements 2008, p. 14).

One of the strongest legitimacy-inducing *shared belief* is the perception of a 'collective identity' (OECD 2010b, p. 27). In post-conflict states such a shared 'collective identity', for example based on shared norms and values, is unlikely to be prevalent, as most current wars are intrastate wars which leave deep societal divisions (Collier et al. 2003, p. 1; Cheng, Zaum 2012b, p. 1). Other sources are religion, tradition and charisma. Tradition, religion and charisma may support competing centers of authority if the state is marred by deep societal divisions (Collier et al. 2003, p. 4; OECD 2010b, p. 28). There may be leaders, such as former warlords, who enjoy charismatic legitimacy in the eyes of parts of the public (OECD 2010b) even if they may be perceived as war criminals by international peacebuilders (Reno 2012, p. 137). Similarly, normative beliefs may vary considerably across different regions and different parts of society (OECD 2011, p. 37). A political culture conducive to the legitimacy of a democratic regime as put forward by Siaroff is not to be expected in a post-conflict state, especially in cases of an autocratic predecessor regime (Ekman 2009, p. 25).

International Legitimacy is a similarly two-edged sword for the stability of a post-conflict state. If a state is internationally recognized, because it adheres to international standards, but these standards are in contrast to prevailing national custom (e.g. Afghanistan), it might be less stable than a state which acts according to national norms which contradict international standards (e.g. Somaliland) (OECD 2010b, p. 29).

In conclusion it can be stated that the sources providing legitimacy to a post-conflict state are genuinely scarce, subject to competition by non-state actors and can vary between regions and societal groups (OECD 2010b, p. 32, 2011, p. 37). The state can neither claim authority based on the provision of security and services, nor base its power on a public consensus on fundamental norms and values.

Socio-Economic Development and Political Fragmentation

Research on the stability of post-conflict states largely agrees that a positive development of the socio-economic situation supports the stability of a state. Barbara Walter subsumes that the likelihood of renewed violence rises if the incentives for potential rebel groups increase. This might be the case if the group in question feels disadvantaged with regard to other parts of society, if the grievances originally leading to conflict have not been resolved or even aggravated or if the 'opportunity costs' favor war, i.e. if they have more to gain than to lose (Walter 2010, pp. 4f). Collier et al. could prove that the recruitment of rebels gets significantly easier if the per capita income and the secondary schooling rates are low (2004, p. 588). Higher income levels as well as economic growth on the other hand, have proven to significantly reduce the risk of a relapse into conflict (Collier et al. 2008, p. 469). Similarly, a high rate of infant mortality and a genuinely low life expectancy, used as indicators for individual distress could enhance the chances for rebel recruitment (Walter 2010, p. 7).

Political fragmentation, on the other hand, has not proven relevant to the stability of a post-conflict regime. Intuitively, one would assume that the motive of ethnic hatred would facilitate rebel recruitment. A common hypothesis also assumes that such conflict between "competing identity groups" are especially hard to resolve as renewed cooperation becomes more and more difficult after violence broke out (Walter 2010, p. 5). But Collier and Hoeffler could not prove a significant correlation between political fragmentation (e.g. ethnic diversity) and the likelihood of renewed civil war (2004, p. 576). Interestingly, they found that a more diverse society is even more stable than a less diverse society (2008, pp. 471f). They argue that the diversity limits the recruitment pool for rebel groups, as they rely on social cohesion (2004, p. 570).

Autocratic Stabilization Mechanisms

The academic discourse on the use of repressive measures by hybrid regimes is currently divided. Walter claims that a regime which does neither torture nor use repressive means, is less likely to relapse into conflict (2010, p. 3). Collier et al. on the other hand, observe that highly repressive regimes are indeed "very successful in maintaining post-conflict stability" (2008, p. 470). Hegre et al. found that basically both observations are right, as repression indeed increases the risk of conflict "unless it is severe" (2001, p. 33). To a certain extend the heightened risk of HPOs can therefore be explained by the fact, that they:

are partly open yet somewhat repressive, a combination that invites protest, rebellion, and other forms of civil violence. Repression leads to grievances that induce groups to take action, and openness allows for them to organize and engage in activities against the regime. Such institutional contradictions imply a level of political incoherence, which is linked to civil conflict (Hegre et al. 2001, p. 33).

That said, one can conclude that the recourse to repressive means does not work in favor of the political stability of a post-conflict state, at least not if it gets

strong enough to seriously trigger public discontent and at the same time not strong enough to effectively contain it.

A cooptation strategy may, on the other hand, work in favor of the stability of a post-conflict regime. As discussed above, the sources of legitimacy differ in modern and hybrid regimes. In a hybrid regime the legitimacy of a political leader is often based on his ability to provide for his kin (Clements 2008, p. 16; OECD 2010b, p. 38). The patronage logic grants him political support in return for the provision of state services (OECD 2010b, p. 38). Thereby, patron-client relationships establish reciprocity among actors (Le Billon 2003, p. 415). It is crucial though, that the practice of clientelism and patronage is not reduced to the mere exchange of material goods, but establishes social relationships and networks. Otherwise they might be perceived as socially discrediting (Heinemann-Grüder 2009, p. 8). Fjelde and Hegre argue that corrupt semi-democratic leaders, who disperse public resources to build informal political support "are able to substitute for concessions in the formal institutions, alleviate pressure for further liberalization, and thereby extend the longevity of their regimes" (2006b, p. 1). Médard puts it in a nutshell by stating: "The art of governing is not only the art of extracting resources, but also of redistribution: it is the only way of legitimizing power, in the absence of ideological legitimacy" (2005, p. 383). This implies however, that the state's stability is based on the access to rents for cooptive purposes. At this point, the close but nevertheless contradictory correlation between legitimacy and cooptation, as well as corruption and stability within a post-conflict state become visible. The following chapter will thus discuss this in more detail.

The factors favorable for the stability of a post-conflict state are accordingly; 1) *legitimacy of the state*, 2) *a high socio-economic development*, 3) *autocratic stabilization mechanisms (with a low level of repression)*. Table 1 gives a short overview about the aggregated factors. It is evident that the factors do not seem to fit into one level of analysis. Legitimacy is expectedly the most dominant factor, which is supported or undermined by the other factors. Correspondingly, the focal point of the following analysis shall be the effect of corruption on legitimacy, whereas the other three factors are taken into account as important conditions and mechanisms underlying the legitimacy of the state.

Table 2: Aggregated factors of political stability in democratic, hybrid and autocratic regimes

Democracies	Hybrid Political Orders	Autocracies
Legitimacy of the state	Legitimacy of the state	Legitimacy of the state
High socio-economic development	High socio-economic development	
Low level of societal fragmentation	Autocratic Stabilizations Mechanisms (Cooptation & low levels of repression)	Autocratic Stabilization Mechanisms (Cooptation & Repression)

3.3. The Effects of Corruption on Political Stability

Turning to the core question, the study will now examine to what extent the previously aggregated factors are affected by corruption. The following chapter will discuss why and how corruption has a differential impact on the stability of democratic, autocratic and hybrid regimes. Autocracy and democracy will be discussed briefly, summing up the main findings of current corruption research to frame the central discussion on post-conflict states. The findings of Fjelde and Hegre (2006b) will serve as a starting point for the discussion. Fjelde and Hegre conducted a quantitative analysis of 128 countries (identified as democratic, semi-democratic and autocratic regimes) between 1985 and 2004 and found that high levels of corruption had different effects on political stability depending on the respective regime type (2006b).

3.3.1. On Democratic and Autocratic Regimes

Fjelde and Hegre observed that high levels of political corruption indeed have a positive effect on the stability of autocratic regimes. Autocratic regimes with high corruption levels proved more stable than those with low corruption levels. Corruption is apparently increasing the power of the political elite (2006b, p. 1). The effect on democratic regimes is not as straightforward. They found that high corruption democracies are less stable than low corruption democracies, i.e. their risk to transition into semi-democracies or autocracies is higher (2006b, p. 22). In general, corruption is not expected to seriously jeopardize the stability of a consolidated democratic regime, as the electorate can check and punish corrupt politicians through constitutional means, i.e. there is no need for public unrest (2006b, p. 12). Also, the incidence of corruption in democratic regimes is lower than in other regime types (Czap, Nur-tegin 2012, p. 63). However, Fjelde and Hegre noticed a differentiation between high- and low-income democracies. High-income democracies are the only regimes able to curb corruption and gain stability through the successful process, whereas low-income democracies even seem to be stabilized by corruption (2006b, p. 1; 2006a, p. 29). This underlines the fact that corruption takes effect in interaction with contextual factors, such as 'scarcity' in the case of low-income democracies.

Democracy

A liberal democracy in the Weberian sense is based on legal-rational authority, i.e. the rule-based pursuit of bureaucratic processes and the clear distinction of the public and the private realm. The state is accepted as the highest authority, whereas its ruling is based on consent and *legitimacy*. An action is regarded as legitimate if it follows the agreed upon social rules (OECD 2010b, p. 16). The legitimacy of a democracy is thereby closely related to the correct course of bureaucratic processes. Corruption by definition implies the violation of the agreed upon rules. The trust of the public in the rightfulness of its government will therefore most likely be damaged by the perception of a high level of corruption (Rose-Ackerman 1997, p. 45; Amundsen 1999, p. 20; Heilbrunn 2012, p. 204). Regarding four Latin American countries (out of which at least El

Salvador is rated 'free' by Freedom House and thereby is regarded as democratic within this study), Seligson found that people who experience corruption "are less likely to believe in the legitimacy of their political system" (2002, p. 429). Thus, it can be assumed that the impact of corruption on the legitimacy of a democratic regime is negative.

The impact of corruption on the *socio-economic development* of a liberal democracy is also almost certainly negative, assuming that the liberal market structure grants all actors the same chance to access and participate in the market. In such cases, corrupt practices undermine the efficiency of market allocation, as the contract does not go to the most efficient bidder, but to the bidder who pays the highest bribe (Rose-Ackerman 1997, p. 42). Furthermore, processes may be artificially complicated and prolonged in order to extract bribes, whilst social and environmental standards may be subverted by the possibility to 'buy-in' inspectors (Rose-Ackerman 1997, p. 42). Likewise, bribery of officials to evade taxes drains public funds (Nye 2005, p. 287). On the macro-economic level, it also leads to a harmful diversion of funds into unproductive or illicit channels. Bribes by high-level officials will very likely end up in foreign bank accounts, be used for the consumption of foreign luxury goods or fund illegal activities (Rose-Ackerman 1997, pp. 43f). Thereby, they imply considerable costs on the national market. Furthermore, Mauro presented evidence that corruption hampers investment and thereby decreases economic growth (1995). It also lowers overall productivity and reduces the effectiveness of industrial policy (Rose-Ackermann 2012, p. 50).

Beyond these direct economic effects, corruption also has indirect effects on the socio-economic development of a state. A corrupt system will increase the marginalization of less affluent parts of society. First, this is because the actors with more financial or social capital will constantly trump less potent actors. The effect of this 'survival of the fittest' exponentiates over time, as for example the allocation of welfare is distorted by corruption and does not benefit the most needy (Rose-Ackerman 1997, p. 44). Second, Gupta et al. found that corruption diverts public expenditure into such sectors which allow more opportunities for corruption (e.g. construction) and thus drains the funding of the health and education sectors (1998). As a consequence, the state "under-invest[s] in human capital" (Rose-Ackermann 2012, p. 50). Especially vulnerable social groups, such as poor people, indigenous groups and women are more strongly affected by corruption, as paying bribes costs them a considerably higher share of their income. Additionally, they report being subject to corruption more often than other social groups and programs designed to help them are likely drained by corruption (Chêne 2010a; Rose-Ackermann 2012, p. 51; Afrobarometer 2013, p. 2). These processes accordingly increase the gap between income groups. Although corruption does not affect *societal fragmentation* in terms of ethnicity and religion, it indirectly fosters the polarization of society.

Autocracy

As discussed previously, even the incumbent of an autocratic regime needs some degree of popular support, i.e. *legitimacy*, although he is not dependent on the public vote. Autocratic legitimacy therefore rarely relies on legal-rational authority, but rather on economic performance and shared ideologies (Pickel 2010, p. 199; Gerschewski 2013, p. 20). The sources of legitimacy are accordingly output legitimacy and shared beliefs.

The question of how output legitimacy, defined in terms of economic performance, of an autocratic regime is affected by corruption, cannot be answered with certainty, as there is considerable dispute among economists on the issue. Certainly, most of the abovementioned adverse effects of corruption on the economy of democratic regimes, will also hold true for autocratic regimes. But it may also have beneficial effects and be the 'lesser evil'. Some researchers suggest that corruption helps break up inefficient closed systems. Leff argues that the chance to influence political decision-makers may actually reduce the uncertainty for investors. Political decisions are still subject to arbitrariness, but investors can provide incentives to influence the process (Leff 2005, p. 313). Similarly, authors argue that it can serve as a tool for marginalized groups, such as minorities that are politically discriminated against, to influence the political process in their favor (Nye 2005, p. 285). With regard to the Chinese market, Taube observes that certain corrupt practices helped to overcome problems, resulting from the mixture of plan- and market elements in the Chinese economy. He ascribes functional effects to corruption, as they support the transformation to a market economy (2013, p. 1). However, he also notes that corruption becomes increasingly dysfunctional if the economy liberalizes (2013, p. 22). Eventually, it remains subject to academic debate – and first and foremost dependent on contextual factors – how corruption affects the economic performance of an autocratic regime.

Similarly unclear and ambiguous is the potential effect of corruption on shared beliefs. If, for example, religious leaders support the perception that corruption is a sinful act, this might undermine the legitimacy of the state. Tradition, however, often allows for a less strict interpretation of what is corruption and may even legitimize corrupt actions as reciprocal relationships (Nye 2005, p. 290; Le Billon 2003, p. 415). Traditional authority is therefore not likely to be harmed by corrupt practices. As previously discussed in the context of 'institutionalized insecurity', the social acceptance of corruption can fluctuate throughout the parallel existence of modern and traditional norms. The central authority can – in a neopatrimonial setting – mount a public campaign against corruption and still continue to allow and apply corrupt practices. Through sporadic trials it can rid itself of potential political opponents and underscore its own moral supremacy (Timm 2010, p. 111). Thereby, the prevalence of corruption can under certain conditions even support the charismatic legitimacy of an incumbent.

But even if corruption may have a negative impact on the legitimacy of an autocratic regime, the incumbent can still revert to *autocratic stabilization mechanisms* to curb (or repress) public discontent. The centralization and control of corruption allows the autocratic incumbent to use it as a tool of governance (Amundsen 1999, p. 20). It provides him with the financial means to coopt political players to secure their support and thereby reinforces the stabilizing effect of "elite assimilation" (Amundsen 1999, p. 20; Fjelde, Hegre 2006b, p. 8). The 'income' generated via corrupt practices also grants him a financial advantage towards his political opponents, which further strengthens his position (Fjelde, Hegre 2006b, p. 7). Especially resource rich states, such as oil producers, can exploit the constant source of available rents to form powerful alliances through cooptation (Fjelde 2009, p. 214). Basedau and Richter postulate that while oil exporting states face a high risk of civil war, they can also effectively mitigate the risk if resources are abundant and the incumbent makes strategic use of the rents to 'buy' peace (2013, p. 23). Other sources of rent are for example bribes by transnational corporations in exchange for government contracts (Fjelde, Hegre 2006b, p. 7). Thereby, corruption used to alimnt patronage structures supports the political stability of an autocratic regime.

Corruption also benefits the cohesion of the political elite (Gerschewski 2013, p. 14). Thus, it can indirectly support the ability of an autocratic incumbent to exert repression (especially with regard to military actors). In addition to that, as has already been pointed out, well-funded patronage networks may (ideally) reduce the overall need for violent repression.

3.3.2. On Post-Conflict Regimes

Quantitative research by Fjelde and Hegre, as well as Arriola found that hybrid ("semi-democratic") regimes can indeed be stabilized by higher levels of corruption. Fjelde and Hegre explored the likelihood of institutional change (towards democracy or autocracy), whereas Arriola looked at the risk of an extra-constitutional change of incumbency in African regimes. Both aspects of political stability were supported by higher levels of corruption. Fjelde and Hegre assume that corruption helps to monopolize power in formal institutions and therefore supports regime stability, while simultaneously undermining the chances for a further democratization (2006b, p. 2). Arriola's research suggests that a broadening of the clientelist coalition of an incumbent (by appointing additional ministers) prolongs his term in office and reduces the risk of a military coup. He connects the growth of the cabinet size with the overall growth in population and assumes a direct link between a cabinet post and the inclusion of certain societal groups via clientelist connections, channeled through ministerial posts (2009, p. 1358).

Quantitative research thus confirms the assumption of current peacebuilding literature that corruption undermines the democratization process but it contradicts the accompanying assumption that it therefore also threatens the stability of a post-conflict regime. Thereby, it strengthens the notion of a

corruption-stability trade off. This situation shall be explored in more detail by first discussing the current literature on the topic and then assessing the effect of corruption on the aggregated factors of political stability in post-conflict states in more detail.

The Corruption-Stability Trade-Off

The notion of a trade-off between corruption and stability levels within a post-conflict society assumes that fierce anti-corruption measures may upset the fragile social peace after a conflict. This assumption is based on two logics; first, the possibility to 'buy-in' groups opposed to the peace process, and second, the functional logic of corruption as a "part of the fabric of social and political relationships" (Le Billon 2003, p. 414).

The first logic is about providing incentives; throughout a conflict, rebel groups may develop war economies to finance their combat, for example through the illicit trade of timber, gemstones, drugs etc. (Collier et al. 2003, p. 82). For many combatants it may turn out to be more lucrative to continue the conflict and preserve their sources of income and power, than to enter into a peace agreement (Le Billon 2003, p. 422). The chances for a sustainable peace depend crucially on the successful management of such spoilers (Stedman 1997). By offering access to state resources and rents, negotiators can shift the incentives in favor of a peace agreement. Material rewards can thereby create political cohesion (Le Billon 2003, p. 420; Médard 2005, p. 386). But a positive effect on political stability also depends on the inclusiveness of the bargain and the nature of corruption. A broad elite buy-in with a mostly centralized control over rents can help to sustain patronage ties and thereby support stability (as for example in Angola and Cambodia) (TI 2014a, p. 14). A non-inclusive bargain with fragmented and competitive corruption may rather fuel violence (as for example in Afghanistan and Iraq).

The second logic was discussed by Le Billon in more detail in 2003. He claims that if corruption is endogenous to local social relationships and contributes to political order, "conflict may be engendered more by *changes* in the pattern of corruption than by the existence of corruption itself" (2003, p. 413; emphasis original). A sharp disruption of established mechanisms of extraction and dispersion of rents can breed instability, when those who benefitted from the corrupt system struggle to maintain their position (Rose-Ackermann 2012, p. 46). The struggle and re-shuffling goes even beyond the level of high ranking officials and patrons, as also the members of their patronage networks are affected and forced to find new ways to sustain their living. The disabling of strategic political figures can lead to unforeseen shifts in power patterns (Cheng, Zaum 2012b, p. 9).

Cheng and Zaum therefore conclude: "Enabling corruption might be a price peacebuilders have to pay to ensure the participation of warring factions in a peace agreement and to end large-scale violence" (2012b, p. 5). But such a strategy would run contrary to the focus of peacebuilding strategies to

strengthen political and administrative structures and bolster economic development (2012b, p. 1). The possibility that a soft stance on corruption can benefit the short-term political stability of a post-conflict state is relatively undisputed. But whether a toleration of corruption is eventually conducive to post-conflict peacebuilding is subject to heated debate. It essentially revolves around the question how harmful the effects of corruption will be in the long run for the peaceful development of a state.

Transparency International and authors such as Susan Rose-Ackermann and Philippe Le Billon (in his later work) strongly reject the idea that a toleration of corrupt practices in liberal peacebuilding is in favor of the overall development of post-conflict states. Corruption is assumed to hamper a peaceful development by undermining the economic development, eroding the legitimacy and effectiveness of public institutions, re-fuelling the grievances that initially led to the conflict, jeopardizing foreign direct investment and ODA and promoting the unjust allocation of public resources (Cheng, Zaum 2012b, p. 2; Le Billon 2008, p. 344; TI 2014a, p. 13). A governance agreement crafted on the basis of a buy-in of parts of the elite, i.e. in Afghanistan, can increase volatility if it excludes others and thereby triggers the competition to access rents (TI 2014a, p. 14). It is assumed that corruption eventually generates a higher risk of a relapse into conflict (Le Billon 2008, p. 353; Bolongaita 2005, p. 11). Bolongaita therefore regards the fight against corruption as "one of the biggest challenges to the success of post-conflict agendas" and demands that the issue of corruption should already be tackled during peace negotiations (2005, pp. 2;11).

A key concern is that by tolerating corruption, old power structures and war economies will be transferred into the new system (Cheng, Zaum 2012b, p. 1). Zabyelina and Arsovska confirm this concern for the example of post-conflict Kosovo and Chechnya. Corruption contributed to the establishment of an unfortunate coalition of organized crime groups and the political elite (2013, p. 20). Rose-Ackermann accordingly makes the strong point that the 'stability' provided by patronage networks is in the end a strategy of "the powerful" to keep the mass of the population quiet, while accumulating more wealth and power in the hands of a small elite (2012, p. 46) – a strategy basically substituted by donors which allow the funds to be diverted in corrupt channels.

Other experts provide contradicting views on the timing and prioritization of peacebuilding efforts and put more emphasis on the immediate beneficial effects. Taking into account that in most peacebuilding situations, different understandings of corruption, authority and legitimacy will clash (Cheng, Zaum 2012b, p. 4), tackling corruption right from the start of a peacebuilding process could mean trying to do the second step before the first. Philp points out that in a situation of chaos, people lack an alternative to actions internationally regarded as corrupt. Hence, a peacebuilding mission first needs to establish "a coherent set of reasonable alternatives", i.e. people need the chance to go over their business in non-corrupt ways, before corrupt actions can be fought (2008, p. 321).

Some researchers also disagree on the deterministic assumption that an initially high level of corruption will destroy any chances for a gradual democratization process. Reno states that the "rule over the networks of strongmen often precedes the rule of law", implying that the initial toleration of corrupt practices does not necessarily block the later evolution of effective democratic institutions (2012, p. 127). Similarly, Philp argues in favor of quick impact measures despite a high risk of corruption and suggests that "getting a state moving on the path to reconstruction is also one major factor in equipping it to deal with both its humanitarian and its corruption problems" (2008, p. 318).

Also, a pragmatic peacebuilding strategy may simply be forced to coopt traditional institutions and may therefore sometimes be impelled to tolerate certain actions deemed illegal by international standards. Partly because it may simply be inevitable to rely on existing structures of social organization, in the absence of formal state institutions (Cheng, Zaum 2012b, p. 14) and partly because it is by now a widely acknowledged fact that effective peacebuilding needs to take local perceptions of authority and legitimacy into account (Clements 2008).

The argumentation that the stabilizing effect of corruption goes beyond a mere short-term buy-off of greedy spoilers, refers to the social dimension of corruption. Traditional patron-client relations can induce political stability in the absence of functioning legal institutions, as political leaders can effectively control their clientele by providing economic incentives as well as disciplinary threats for compliance (Le Billon 2003, pp. 415f). Reno and Fanthorpe underline that these networks also provide a certain capacity for participation of the clientele, as the patron as a "stationary bandit" (a term coined by Mancur Olson) is reciprocally bound by his obligations to his followers (Reno 2012, p. 137; Fanthorpe 2005, pp. 40ff). Patronage can also benefit the stability in terms of national reconciliation. Le Billon argues that cooptation can create networks which stretch beyond the traditional borders of ethnicity and kinship (2003, p. 416). With regard to petty corruption of low level officials, Nye points out that corruption can help to bridge the gap between modern and traditional parts of society, by combining the traditional logic of gift-giving with the legal-rational logic of the bureaucracy:

The vast gap between literate official and illiterate peasant which is often characteristic of the countryside may be bridged if the peasant approaches the official bearing traditional gifts or their (marginally corrupt) money equivalent. For the new urban resident, a political machine based on corruption may provide a comprehensible point at which to relate to government by other than purely ethnic or tribal means (2005, p. 286).

Whereas opponents fear that the long-term goal of peaceful development will be harmed by an initially soft stance on corruption in post-conflict peacebuilding, it is questionable if the former can be realized without the latter. If the security-situation deteriorates because of an overly ambitious good governance agenda, it will be hard to achieve even the minimum goal to end violence. But as the peacebuilding activities and the associated ODA influx increase the

opportunities for corruption, it is also viable to demand donors to curb an increase in corruption in order to 'do no harm'. Eventually, it is a question of competing priorities and some experts suggest that, although the fight against corruption may be beneficial for a post-conflict state, it may not pass off as an overriding priority on the already overburdened peacebuilding agenda (Cheng, Zaum 2012b, p. 5; Philp 2012, p. 42). The current debate is, however, primarily shaped by rather general and ideological assumptions on what is beneficial or contra-productive for the peaceful development of a state. To shed some light on how corrupt activities may actually affect the political stability of a post-conflict situation, the prevalence of corruption in post-conflict states and the effect of it on the single factors constituting political stability shall be discussed.

Contextualization of Corruption in a Post-Conflict State

As formerly outlined, it is crucial to properly contextualize the issue of corruption in post-conflict regimes to avoid a one-dimensional approach. Huntington observes that corruption is especially endemic in situations of "rapid social and economic modernization" (1968, p. 59). Post-conflict regimes are as previously outlined subject to "multiple transitions" and their socio-economic situation offers extraordinarily high stakes and low punitive risk (Bolongaita 2005, p. 2; Billerbeck 2012, p. 82).

Andvig provides a comprehensive overview of the socio-economic circumstances in a post-conflict state that facilitate corruption and enhance the risk of renewed conflict (2007, pp. 41f). Most certainly, the situation after a conflict is marked by a slump in the production rate, a rising poverty level and a severe scarcity of goods and services (Andvig 2007, p. 41; Billerbeck 2012, p. 82). Tax revenues and accordingly wages of public employees are low, which increases incentives to skim rents whenever possible, to ensure their living. Public expenditure will focus on the reconstruction of infrastructure, a sector offering high opportunities and stakes for bribery (Andvig 2007, p. 41). Also, a large influx of ODA funds and the wish of the donors to manage quick results will increase the availability of rents (Cheng, Zaum 2012b, p. 1). It will also increase the corrupt struggle for 'valuable' offices, as positions funded by international donors will receive considerably higher wages and increase the access to rents (Andvig 2007, pp. 41f). The demobilization of combatants will lead to high unemployment which cannot be completely absorbed by the agricultural sector. Those ex-combatants are likely to form criminal groups, which affect corruption levels in two ways. First, they may bribe police officials to conduct their business, or they may be bribed to dissuade a coalition with rebel movements. The incentives to bribe courts and the police to decide in one's favor are also extraordinarily high in the face of land disputes, due to returning refugees, and calls for revenge and punishment of war crimes (Andvig 2007, pp. 41f).

Additionally, the mechanisms of civil monitoring and transparency, such as the judiciary and public administration lack the capacity to thoroughly investigate and punish corrupt behavior (Andvig 2007, p. 41; Cheng, Zaum 2012b, p. 1).

But Cheng and Zaum claim that the lack of a public consensus of what constitutes the public good, due to the societal divisions, may undermine the containment of corruption even more (2012b, p. 1). Philp observes "the existence of multiple, competing sets of rules, norms and expectations of public office" (2012, p. 23). This points to the second important contextual dimension, which needs to be taken into account; the socio-cultural embedment of corrupt activities. Corruption does not happen in a social vacuum. It is embedded in a complex network of social dynamics that facilitate and trigger corrupt behavior. Substantial efforts have yet been made to uncover the social mechanisms that sustain corruption within a society.

First of all, the described socio-economic situation triggers a reactive behavior. Mark Philp describes it as a situation which "is replete with deep divisions, opportunism and self-protective strategies" (2012, p. 42). He characterizes the politics in a post-war context as a situation of "multiple stable but suboptimal Nash equilibria" (2012, p. 35) – meaning a situation in which a person A's behavior is the best response to a person B's behavior and vice versa. The general outcome is lower than the optimal outcome, but it is the best achievable outcome under the given circumstances, as the society lacks a sense of trust and actors are keen to limit their exposure to uncertainty (2012, p. 35). Philp stresses that the goal of statebuilding, "[t]he reign of procedures, rules and due process is a complex achievement that is unsustainable when people face life and death decisions, impoverishment, or persecution" (2008, p. 318). Le Billon likewise claims that corruption may be the most rational and efficient mean for individuals or groups to cope with economic and political environments marked by scarcity, uncertainty and disorder (2003, p. 424).

Nicholas Shaxson develops the pictographic metaphor of a society as a queue (in the context of corruption as part of the resource curse). In a society in which wealth arises from a point-source (such as natural resources, but similarly large ODA influx) people need to "queue" patiently to gain their share (Shaxson 2007, p. 1126). But this system depends largely on the faith of all participants that nobody is going to cut the line and that everybody is getting their fair share. This faith needs strong institutions which regulate access to the resource (as practiced in Norway). If the trust in the queue is disrupted, it breaks down and chaos and uncertainty arise in which "the strongest get to the front" (Shaxson 2007, p. 1126). But besides the economic context, Philp also underlines the psychological legacy of a post-conflict society with regard to corruption: "in war the future is cheap, the present is everything, and rules and norms are either non-existent or are treated wholly opportunistically" (2008, p. 324). These examinations underline that corruption can by no means be reduced to the greedy action of criminals, but are coping mechanisms to the challenging environment of a post-conflict society.

Olivier de Sardan explores the ambiguous attitude towards corruption in the African context and coins the term of a "moral economy of corruption" in Africa (1999). According to Sardan the exchange of personal favors is based both on a "functional necessity" (i.e. scarcity) as well as a "normative necessity" (i.e.

sociality) (1999, p. 41). He observes that corruption is "socially embedded in 'logics' of negotiation, gift-giving, solidarity, predatory authority and redistributive accumulation" which "permit a justification of corruption by those who practice it [...] and to anchor corruption in ordinary everyday practice" (1999, p. 1). These justifications lead to a 'fluctuating borderline' of what is perceived as corrupt (1999, p. 34). Since the corruptee always has 'good reasons' for his actions, he is not likely to perceive his action as corrupt. It is however likely to be regarded as corrupt by outsiders or people who lose from the transaction.

From a quantitative point of view the 'functional necessity' is counterintuitive, as the resources available to the public are necessarily diminished by corruption. 'The public' should therefore have a genuine interest to fight corruption. Teorell et al. examine the failure of current anti-corruption measures and find that they wrongly assume a will of the public to take action against corruption (2010, p. 3). Current anti-corruption research is misled in the assumption that corruption is a principal-agent problem. Instead they find that corrupt behavior resembles a collective action problem (2010, p. 1). In their study they explored the motivation of Kenyan and Tanzanian citizens, guiding their choice between corrupt and non-corrupt behavior. They concluded that "we cannot assume the existence of "principled principals", willing to hold corrupt officials accountable" (2010, p. 3). Modeled as a collective action problem, the gains from corrupt behavior outweigh the costs, if corruption is expected to be the dominant behavior (2010, p. 3). They conclude that as soon as corrupt behavior is perceived to be the norm, nobody has an incentive to fight corruption in fear of losing economically, even if any single individual is morally opposed to corruption and aware of its harmful economic effects (2010, p. 3). This perspective helps to understand the apparent contradiction that people condemn corruption morally and at the same time actively take part. Following Teorell's conceptualization of corruption as a collective action model, it would be indeed crucial to prevent the spread of corruption as the dominant form of behavior, as the fight against corruption would get increasingly more difficult. Postponing anti-corruption measures to a later point of the peacebuilding process would be fatal as corruption gets more and more entrenched. But this logic works only on the premise that at the beginning of the peacebuilding process the society in question is mostly free of corruption – which will hardly be the case, following the previously outlined conditions of a post-conflict situation.

The 'normative necessity' of corruption is explored in more detail by cultural relativist and neopatrimonial approaches. They stress the different underlying cultural concepts of corrupt behavior and legitimacy. Actions which would be considered corrupt by international standards might only mean to abide by the informal codes of conduct of a certain society (Le Billon 2003, p. 415). Belloni refers to Peter Ekeh's concept of the 'two publics' to explain the diverging public attitudes in Western and Non-Western countries towards corruption (2012, p. 221). According to Ekeh, the colonial history of African states has led to the existence of a 'civic public', the formal institutions of the state, operating decoupled from popular perceptions of morality, and a 'primordial public', which "is moral and operates on the same moral imperatives as the private realm"

(1975, p. 92). Sardan similarly points out the "schizophrenic" nature of the African system. Whereas the formal law and institutional setup are derived from the Western model, they are in practice distorted by local norms (1999, p. 47). Assuming that the 'primordial public' still has considerable influence, Belloni claims that the state is still widely regarded as "a resource to plunder in order to benefit one's own ethnic supporters" (2012, p. 221).

Philp states "the challenge for peacebuilders is to develop and enforce standards for public office that link with local norms and expectations" (2012, p. 32). But the challenge for peacebuilders is even more complex, as it has to be taken into account that the socio-cultural perception of corruption may vary considerably throughout a nation. People of different social groups regarding their age, level of income, education or their rural or urban environment, are likely to differ in their moral orientation on traditional and modern norms (Nye 2005, p. 286).

Discussion of the Factors

In the following, the impact of corruption on the aggregated factors for the political stability of post-conflict states (modeled as HPOs) *legitimacy*, *a high level of socio-economic development* and *autocratic stabilization mechanisms* will be discussed.

Legitimacy

As discussed previously, corruption has a corrosive effect on the legal-rational state authority, by undermining its capacity and legitimacy (Cheng, Zaum 2012b, p. 11). It distorts institutions and impedes equal and fair access to state resources and jurisdiction, and if it goes unchallenged it will unfold a self-sustaining dynamic (Cheng, Zaum 2012b, p. 11). Public opinion polls show that most citizens are highly critical of corruption and do not place much trust in governments, if perceived levels of corruption are high (Seligson 2002; Soni 2013). But the legitimacy of a hybrid regime is not exclusively based on legal-rational authority. From a cultural relativist point of view, the effect of corruption on the stability of a system depends to a large degree on the local perceptions of corrupt actions as just or scandalous. Le Billon puts it in a nutshell and states: "The point is not whether corruption is illegal but whether or not it is interpreted as legitimate; that is, within the boundaries of acceptable behavior for the elite, the military, the business community, or the general population." (2003, p. 416). If the legitimacy of the regime is harmed in the eyes of a powerful group, such as the military, corruption may lead to a coup, and therefore to the direct collapse of the existing regime. It is however doubtful whether corruption really contributes to military takeovers, or is simply often used for "post-coup rationalization" (Nye 2005, p. 289).

But as the legitimacy of an HPO arises from different sources, it cannot be assumed that corruption will *per se* undermine the overall level of legitimacy to an extent that will threaten political stability. The input legitimacy of a hybrid

regime is not merely based on electoral processes. Arriola suggests that the assignment of ministerial posts to 'big men' serves the function to represent the social groups which are associated via clientelist networks with the person in question (2009, p. 1358). The traditional-personalist and modern-representative elements are combined to secure inclusion. The neopatrimonial logic, that 'sons of the soil' are obligated to benefit their community, furthermore implies a variant of input legitimacy, as the members of the community in question can hold the officeholder accountable via social pressure (Fanthorpe 2005, p. 40).

The output legitimacy is crucially defined by the ability of the regime to provide security. The chances for a lasting peace are to a large degree defined by the peace agreement demarcating the beginning of the post-conflict phase. The primary objective of the negotiators in the face of fighting is the immediate end of violence. Power-sharing agreements often include agreements on the access to resources to provide rents for patronage and clientelism (Cheng, Zaum 2012b, p. 8). They often grant access to state resources and the authority to grant public contracts and concessions, and often tolerate the continuation of illegal economic activities and the extraction of bribes (Cheng, Zaum 2012b, pp. 8f). This access to rents is often crucial to convince potential 'spoilers' because they keep the ability to provide for their followers and clients and thus preserve their power base (Reno 2012, p. 137). In this situation a pragmatic stance on corruption by the international community is about shifting incentives of the parties involved, to put an end to violence.

Critics argue that a strategy to buy-in spoilers, may create the perception that it 'pays' to obstruct the peace process and lead to increasing numbers of violent groups trying to gain their share (Cheng, Zaum 2012b, p. 10). Another criticism is that such a strategy allows for a continuation of old power structures or the use of corrupt funds to finance a new insurgency or criminal activities that destabilize the region (Arsovska, Zabyelina 2013, p. 20). But the continuation of old power structures may not be as unambiguously negative for the political stability as some experts assume. Reno points out that actors, such as commanders and strongmen, which are known to the peacebuilders as war criminals and human rights abusers may still enjoy legitimacy and support by local communities as protectors, mediators and well-connected businessmen (2012, p. 141). For the peacebuilding process they can therefore still represent a "social asset" (2012, p. 143). Reno pleads for a very context sensitive and "nuanced" reform agenda that takes the potential of established societal and economic networks into consideration, in order to serve the establishment of legitimate power best (2012, p. 143).

Cheng and Zaum cite an example of a governor in Afghanistan, who was dismissed for the illegal trade of opium. But Sher Muhammad Akhunzada was not only governor of Helmand, he was also the leader of over 3,000 armed followers. The deprivation of his post meant that he could no longer pay their wages and directed them to join the Taliban. Eventually the pursuit of good governance goals led to a significant deterioration of the security situation in the province (2012b, p. 9). The example illustrates that in a post-conflict state, the

transition from traditional to legal-rational patterns of authority and power is an incremental progress, likely to resist abrupt crackdowns. The loyalty of the combatants was not yet tied to the office of the governor, but to the person. It is by now a well-known fact in peacebuilding that local perceptions of authority and legitimacy need to be taken into account to uphold stability. This requires the cooptation and persistence of traditional modes of governance, which often implies a greater tolerance of local corruption, even if this runs contrary to the democratization efforts (Cheng, Zaum 2012b, p. 14; Reno 2012, p. 140). Likewise, even if corruption is not embedded in traditional institutions, a crackdown on corruption may trigger a backsliding into violence by provoking a violent fight of criminal groups for the maintenance of their power base (Arsovska, Zabyelina 2013, p. 21)

Similar to Huntington's "substitution-argument", Andvig furthermore suggests that violence and corruption can both function as alternative strategies to each other – for example regarding land disputes or questions of revenge (2007, p. 42). This would support the argument that corruption might simply be the "lesser evil" or "not the worst that can happen" (Philp, 2012, p. 36). But by this, corruption still impedes a 'positive peace', that creates an equal and just society, free of exploitation and individual grievance, as corrupt and patronage-based security institutions impede a free and fair jurisdiction (Arsovska, Zabyelina 2013, pp. 3f). The judgment of courts and the work of the police is distorted by corruption and opens up spaces for the development of "criminal hubs" in post-conflict states (Le Billon 2008, p. 353). Guinea-Bissau, for example, is gradually turning into a narco-state, establishing new and violent patronage systems which deliberately aim to annul the law (TI 2014a, p. 27). Corruption can thus likewise feed into the erosion of security.

Another dimension of the output-legitimacy of a state is the perception of economic performance in terms of infrastructure, growth and service delivery. Whereas the negative effects of corruption on the economy are well-known, the effect of corruption on the public perception of the economic output of the state may actually profit from corrupt practices. In a neopatrimonial logic, a distributive effect of corruption is secured through social pressure, which requires an official to share parts of his fortune with his community and regards generosity as a central social value. A refusal to extract rents from a public office would show "ingratitude, egoism, pride, naiveté and even stupidity" (Sardan 1999, p. 43). Cheng and Zaum claim that the stabilizing function of patronage networks depends to a large degree on the distributive effect of corruption and the local expectations towards a public office, that means, if the society is accustomed to a certain level of patronage politics and if the corrupt benefits are distributed broadly (2012b, p. 10). If the reaps of corruption are not shared or if the behavior of the corruptee contradicts local norms, it may as well trigger violent reactions.

But this functional economic aspect of corruption is not necessarily bound to socio-cultural norms, it can also follow rational market mechanisms (Bodruzic 2011, p. 16). In overall regard of the cases of Kosovo and Chechnya Zabyelina

and Arsovska, for example, underline that – despite severe harmful effects – corruption nowadays functions as a form of social organization, which enables citizens safety and their ability to gain access to public services (2013, p. 21). Bako Arifari revealed (according to Bodruzic) surprising mechanisms of corruption in the transport and customs sector in West Africa. He found that the corrupt exchange between the drivers and the officials is subject to fixed rules and prices which define who is 'allowed' to collect and what price to demand (Bodruzic 2011, p. 15). While the regular bribery is accepted as a normal aspect of doing business by the drivers, as it is perceived to improve the efficiency, attempts to collect bribes outside of the regular frame is deemed unacceptable (Bodruzic 2011, p. 15). Arifari observed that funds are even used to deliver services, i.e. by buying paper to print reports. In this example corruption works as a privatization of public services, which are not provided by the state (Bodruzic 2011, p. 15). The extraction of bribes has become institutionalized as a part of the political economy (Bodruzic 2011, p. 15).

Mircea Popa conducted a quantitative study on the distributive effects of corruption and found that a large part of society of a corrupt state is in favor of corruption. Such people are 'insiders', i.e. people who are able to participate in corrupt transactions (2014, p. 21). She concludes that corruption offers net gains to a larger share of society than just the corrupt official (2014, p. 1). This is closely related to Teorell's finding of a general reluctance to fight corruption, but shifts the focus more towards a problem between classes of 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. This means that the insiders assume they would be worse off in a non-corrupt system, in which they would have to compete with the outsiders as well. At the same time it implies that the 'outsiders' are actively and constantly disadvantaged. A corrupt system can therefore only remain stable if the insiders form a majority. The reliance of distribution through patronage can of course backfire in the long run, as inequalities are likely to increase, which may trigger renewed public unrest (Cheng, Zaum 2012b, p. 11). Le Billon also warns that the acceptance of such patronage structures may eventually impede the development of democratic institutions of resource allocation and service provision, as the patrimonial elites will retain the power to oppose it (2012, p. 72).

Socio-Economic Development

Whereas the factor economic output-legitimacy asks how corruption affects the perception of the economic performance of the state, the factor *socio-economic development* looks at the effect of corruption on the actual economic performance of the state. It has been previously outlined that the effect of corruption on the socio-economic development of a liberal democracy is outright bad, whereas it may have potentially positive effects on an autocratic system. In terms of economic policy, a post-conflict state under liberal peacebuilding will likely resemble a democracy, as the international donors will push for liberal reforms. The effects of corruption as previously outlined for a democracy, in terms of hampered growth and investment, draining of public funds and tax evasion, increased social inequality and a distortion of public investment, will

most certainly also apply to a post-conflict state. But at the same time the bureaucracy is likely to be inefficient and the high incidence of corruption is an indicator that it is indeed needed. Therefore, it may 'grease the wheel' and help to get things going.

Amundsen observed that corruption had very different effects in the highly corrupt countries of Southeast Asia and Africa. She concluded that the effect on foreign direct investment and growth depends mostly on how controlled and predictable corruption is (1999, p. 19). If a business can calculate the price of a bribe and the benefit it will gain from it, it may well be willing to pay the price. If bribes are continuously demanded while the service is effectively not improved, entrepreneurs will refrain from the investment (1999, p. 19). The wider socio-economic effects depend of the further use of funds. If the funds are used for productive means, they will support the economy, if they are transferred out of the country they are simply drained from the economy (1999, p. 20).

A post-conflict state as characterized is not likely to resemble a well organized Southeast Asian state, but rather the chaotic unpredictable context of many African states. Therefore, it can be assumed that corruption will not have significant positive effects on the socio-economic development. With regard to the specific context of a post-conflict state researchers were accordingly not very optimistic. It may for example reduce the willingness of donors to fund reconstruction and thus considerably reduce the funds which are eventually deployed (Bolongaita 2005, p. 3). Looney additionally points out that corruption in post-conflict Iraq seriously affected the reconstruction of the business sector as the notion of trust was destroyed (2012, p. 170). People tended to ascribe trust only to people of their kin and family, or maybe to people who proved their trust-worthiness over a long period of time. But a modern economic system depends on "extended trust", i.e. trust despite limited information and anonymity (Looney 2012, p. 170). The development of a modern market economy may thus be hampered.

The effects of corruption on the socio-economic development of a post-conflict state may thus at best be mixed, but will likely be negative. In a worst case scenario, corruption indeed may trigger social revolution, as it did for example in Ghana where it "reached an extent where it contributed to an economic situation in which real wages had fallen" (Nye 2005, p. 289).

Autocratic Stabilization Mechanisms

Cooptation is defined by Gerschewski as "the capacity to tie strategically-relevant actors (or a group of actors) to the regime elite" (2013, p. 22). Corruption, especially in the form of patronage and clientelism is the most commonly used instrument to exert cooptation (2013, p. 22). It was previously outlined that in an autocratic regime, a higher level of corruption has a positive effect on the ability of an autocratic incumbent to exert cooptation. An HPO may lack the capacity to monopolize corruption as effectively as an autocratic regime, and it is due to the electoral mechanism more exposed to the public

evaluation. The corrupt mechanisms underlying the cooptation strategy of a hybrid regime therefore need to adhere to public standards and be embedded into social exchange relationships. But a high level of corruption should enhance the ability of the incumbent to alimnt his clientelist networks and exert an effective cooptation strategy.

As argued previously, corruption may enhance the capacity of an autocratic regime to exert repressive force, as it strengthens elite cohesion. It has been pointed out that repression needs to be either so low as to not trigger public dissent, or high enough to effectively intimidate political opposition. But as a post-conflict state under liberal peacebuilding will face sanctions by the international community, if levels of repression soar, it should seek to keep repression levels as low as possible to not trigger public unrest. In the light of Huntington's substitution-argument, higher levels of corruption used to fund cooptive channels may offer an alternative channel to manipulate the public.

In sum, the question of the effects of corruption on the political stability of a regime is connected to a lot of 'ifs', depending on the nature and structure of the corrupt activities as well as on the socio-economic context. It may or may not be regarded as illicit depending on the type of authority and the support or opposition by cultural factors such as tradition and religion. It may or may not support the economy depending on market structures and the 'governance' of corruption and rents. It may or may not trigger public outrage, depending on the perception of clients to profit from the current system. It may or may not support cohesion in the political elite. It thus seems hardly possible to make generalized predictions on the effects of corruption such as 'corruption harms state legitimacy' or 'corruption supports market liberalization'. Any single case needs to be regarded against the backdrop of socio-cultural and socio-economic conditions, the type of corruption and the stakes and actors involved (Johnston 1986; Amundsen 1999; Nye 2005).

3.4. Tentative Conclusion

The study at hand seeks to assess if there is really a trade-off between corruption levels and levels of political stability in a post-conflict situation. The academic debate on the subject is mostly divided on the issue of long-term effects and how a strategy allowing for initially high levels of corruption will affect the development prospects of the post-conflict state. While some experts argue that it would be irresponsible to let corrupt practices take root again, others call for a more pragmatic approach and rank the fight against corruption a minor priority in the face of bigger challenges. This discussion is closely correlated with other discourses on the overall capacity of international peacebuilding to affect the post-conflict process and the complexity and pitfalls of the fight against corruption.

Regarded from a rather practical angle, the chances to evaluate immediate threats and opportunities in the peacebuilding process are fair, but it seems hardly possible to make predictions, how specific peacebuilding activities to

counter corruption will eventually support the goal of a 'clean' state. Confronted with the decision whether to jeopardize a current fragile stability for the sake of the very hypothetical goal of a 'clean' state, through potentially unsuccessful anti-corruption policies, or to accept a certain level of corruption, probably no peacebuilder would ever take the risk to make anti-corruption campaigns a priority.

The analysis of current peacebuilding strategies encourages this view. Although the international community is genuinely in favor of anti-corruption measures, it has developed an enhanced sensitivity for the danger of side-effects, when intruding in complex social systems. The review of literature on corruption and political power supports this cautious stance. It showed that corruption has the potential to be both, stabilizing and de-stabilizing, redistributive and accumulative, efficient and inefficient etc. The effects of corruption are crucially dependent on the type of corruption and on several contextual factors, ranging from market structures to the individual behavior of key actors (Johnston 1986; Chêne 2012; Philp 2008). While a buy-in of spoilers can soothe the immediate danger of a relapse into violent conflict, a creeping autocratization and an uneven distribution of corrupt rents can in the long run lead to a destabilization.

Beyond doubt, corruption has far-reaching negative consequences, especially with regard to the establishment of pro-poor growth. But the previous discussion of the literature showed that the prominently postulated mantra of anti-corruption research 'corruption undermines legitimacy', which is the basis of most argumentations in favor of an expansion of anti-corruption measures in peacebuilding, is simply not a given fact.

4. Case Study: Sierra Leone

In the following, the theoretical assumptions aggregated above are tested on the case of post-conflict Sierra Leone. The small West African nation offers an especially interesting case, as its perceived corruption levels quickly rose after the civil war and remained high ever since (Le Billon 2008, p. 348). TI's Global Corruption Barometer (GCB) stated that 84 per cent of all Sierra Leonean participants (1,000 Households) of the study reported to have paid a bribe in one out of eight services (Hardoon, Heinrich 2013, p. 34). Thus, Sierra Leone is the currently most corrupt country in the ranking. But counter-intuitively, levels of political stability are incrementally improving, although corruption was identified as a major triggering factor for the initiation of the civil war.

Was there a trade-off in Sierra Leone between corruption levels and political stability? The development of the small West African nation in the decade after the civil war indeed offers some indications of such a dynamic. On the one hand, the peace process was initiated by a power-sharing agreement between the conflicting parties – on the other hand it eventually needed a British military agreement to end the fighting. And while there is a constant media coverage of

cases of political corruption, the public displays a rather high level of tolerance for corrupt practices and little motivation to engage in the fight against corruption.

As a starting point to approach the question, the study assesses the current situation of corruption and political stability in Sierra Leone. Socio-economic factors that shape the embedment of corruption, as well as a short historical account of the course and the nature of the civil war are presented to allow a proper assessment of current corruption and stability levels. Subsequently, the peacebuilding process is briefly reviewed to evaluate to what extent corruption was a prioritized issue in the strategy of international donors. Afterwards the study proceeds to analyze how corruption affected the factors of political stability in post-conflict Sierra Leone.

4.1. Corruption and Political Stability in Sierra Leone

In a first step the study presents the current levels of corruption and political stability in Sierra Leone, as this paradox situation provides the point of departure for the analysis. As the previous discussion underlined the importance of the various contextual factors for the assessment of corruption, the study then gives an overview over basic socio-economic and socio-cultural data on Sierra Leone. To properly assess the current situation of political stability and underlying cleavages, a brief review of the conflict and the peacebuilding process is given.

4.1.1. Current Levels of Political Stability and Corruption

Since the end of the civil war in 2002, Sierra Leone did not experience a recurrence of violence⁵ and constitutional power has been confirmed by three democratic elections since the end of the civil war that ravaged the country from 1991 to 2002. Country-wide security levels have improved and by now Sierra Leone is even a net-contributor to UN peacekeeping missions in other conflict affected countries (AfDB 2013, p. 1). Sierra Leone still remains a fragile state, but experts are optimistic that the country will be one of the few fragile African countries to move towards more resilience (Cilliers, Sisk 2013, p. 3). The AfDB, the UNDP and the World Bank are optimistic about the development of the growth, debt and inflation rates and compliment the government's focus on good governance, transport and public health issues (World Bank 2013; AfDB 2014; UNDP 2012). Yet, despite the overall positive findings, some socio-economic drivers of conflict still persist. Youth unemployment of 60 per cent remains a major challenge, as well as a poor infrastructure regarding

⁵ With selective exceptions in advance of elections and affiliated with party politics. APC and SLPP members clashed violently on several occasions. But the situations did not escalate. In March 2009, for example, the ignorance of the APC government towards attacks on the SLPP sparked public outrage, but a youth-coalition of several parties was formed and managed to calm the situation and prevent further escalation (Denney, 2009). All elections could eventually take place in a mostly peaceful manner.

transportation and energy (World Bank 2013). The marginalization of the youth and the rural population are still a serious issue. Corruption is systemic and poses a severe problem to society, politics and the economy (Chêne 2010b, p. 1). It permeates all levels of society and all sectors and is literally rather the norm than the exception (Burchert, Walker 2013, p. 168; Konteh et al. 2003, p. 65).

Public officials report that paying bribes is a precondition for the delivery of services and the issuing of contracts and documents, that corruption influences legal decisions as well as the awarding of contracts and that corruption is frequently used to access certain positions (Konteh et al. 2003, p. 66; Chêne 2010b, p. 2). As political funding is severely in-transparent, posts or privileges are routinely expected in return for campaign donations or the like (UNDP 2010, p. 126). Usually free government services (especially in health and education) need to be paid and ODA is diverted into private pockets (UNDP 2010, p. 125; Jabbi, Kpaka 2007, p. 19). In 2007, five years after the conflict ended, about half of the country's potential revenues from mining were lost through illegal mining, significantly weakening the financial capacity of the state (Jabbi, Kpaka 2007, p. 29).

The corruption levels as measured by Transparency International describe Sierra Leone as one of the most corrupt nations in the world. The CPI covers the period 2004–2012 of the post-conflict decade. In this period the sample number of countries changed from initially 145 up to 182 in 2011 and 178 in 2012, which is why the ranking over time is not as significant as the score. CPI scores ranged from 0 (completely corrupt) to 10 (free of corruption) until 2012, when it was changed to a 0 to 100 scale. Sierra Leone's scores in the post-conflict period resemble a flat U-shape. They started out from 2,3 in 2004 and deteriorated towards a low point of 1,9 in 2008, from which they steadily emerged up to 31 (translatable into a 3,1) in 2012 (TI 2014b). The WGI does not support CPI's positive trend. The factor 'Control of Corruption' has been steadily deteriorating with several minor ups and downs from 30 per cent in 2002 to 20 per cent in 2012 (Kaufmann et al. 2013). But even following the more optimistic CPI, the corruption levels still range in the bottom third of the world, indicating a serious problem.

Concerning the political stability, however, the SFI observes a rather positive development of declining fragility levels in Sierra Leone (for detailed scores cf. annexure 1). In 2002 Sierra Leone scored 22 points on the scale – in the company of Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, Rwanda, Somalia and only surpassed by Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo scoring 24 points. It could lower its score to 17 in 2012 (0 points meaning no fragility at all – a score exclusively achieved by OECD countries) (Marshall, Cole 2013). On the 2012 index Sierra Leone thus ranked place 18, still remaining in the sphere of high fragility, but having left the sphere of extremely high danger of fragility (Marshall, Cole 2012). The index examines the four dimensions "security", "political", "economic" and "social" regarding their effectiveness and legitimacy. The overall score has been sinking continuously and the factors 'security

effectiveness', 'security legitimacy', 'political effectiveness' and 'political legitimacy' could even achieve the status of 'low fragility' (see annexure 1). What keeps the overall score high are the devastating scores for the economic and social development, which remain at levels of high fragility. But especially the good scores for 'political legitimacy' and 'security effectiveness' nevertheless outline a very encouraging development regarding the likelihood of violent political change. The WGI 1996-2012 confirms the previous observations. The indicator 'Absence of Violence' has increased from 20 per cent in 2002 to 40 per cent in 2007 and since then remained relatively stable (Kaufmann et al. 2013). Thus, although Sierra Leone's socio-economic situation remains daunting, its political stability has continuously improved.

Sierra Leonean citizens neither display much concern about the risk of political instability. A 2003 World Bank poll of Sierra Leonean households on which problems they would regard as serious, showed that over 90 per cent responded corruption in the public and the private sector, thus ranking it the third and fourth most serious problem, whereas only about 35 per cent regarded political instability as a serious problem (and thus the least pressing out of 18 problems) (Konteh et al. 2003, p. 53). The 2012 Afrobarometer on Sierra Leone likewise conveys a low level of perceived insecurity by Sierra Leoneans. A broad majority states they do not feel unsafe in their neighborhood and display a low motivation to apply violent means to support a political cause (Idriss 2012, pp. 7;13). Party competition however still gives reason for concern, as 50 per cent of the population assume that it always or at least often leads to violent conflict, reflecting the experiences of the last elections (Idriss 2012, p. 23). All in all, data and public opinion confirm the observation that although Sierra Leone has suffered from devastating corruption levels in its post-conflict decade, its levels of political stability have developed fairly well.

4.1.2. Contextual Factors of Corruption in Sierra Leone

To provide further information on the nature and social embedment of corruption in Sierra Leone for the subsequent analysis, the following paragraph will give a brief overview on the current socio-economic situation in Sierra Leone, its system of governance and the role of patronage, perceptions of authority and legitimacy, as well as the historical roots of corruption.

Sierra Leone gained independence in 1961 and is nowadays a constitutional democracy. The country is situated in West Africa within the Mano River Union sub-region and shares borders with Guinea and Liberia (Larrabure 2011, p. 10; Burchert, Walker 2013, p. 166). Its population was estimated to count 5.7 million people in 2014 and consists of 20 different African tribes, Creoles, and refugees as well as migrants from Liberia, Lebanon, India, Pakistan, and Europe (CIA 2014). Out of the African tribes the Temne (35 per cent) and the Mende (31 per cent) form significant majorities. The South and the East are mostly populated by Mende, whereas the Temne populate the north (CIA 2014). Islam is the majority religion with about 60 per cent (mostly in the northern region), followed by various indigenous beliefs and a smaller Christian minority (CIA 2014).

Despite its outstanding natural wealth, Sierra Leone is one of the least developed countries in the world. In 2011 it ranked 177 out of 187 countries on the Human Development Index by the UNDP. The current life expectancy averages only 48.1 years (Malik 2013, p. 146). With a median age of 19 years and about 60 per cent of the population younger than 25 the Sierra Leonean population is extremely young (CIA 2014). Median years of schooling are only 3.3 years (Malik 2013, p. 146). About 57 per cent of the population are illiterate and 48 per cent of all children between 5 and 14 years engage in child labor. The last available data of 2004 located 70 per cent of the population below the poverty line (CIA 2014). The majority of the population lives in the countryside, and only about 40 per cent live in urban environments (CIA 2014).

The Sierra Leonean economy currently experiences the worldwide second highest growth rate with about 13.3 per cent in 2013. It is dominated by the agricultural sector and the export of mineral resources (CIA 2014). The agricultural sector makes up for about 48 per cent of the GDP, and employs 52 per cent of the population (whereas many engage in subsistence farming and technologic advances are low) (Larrabure 2011, p. 10; CIA 2014). Mineral resources including diamonds, gold, bauxite, rutile (basis for titanium) and iron ore account for most of the foreign exchange (Larrabure 2011, p. 10). Low wages, institutional weakness, inefficient government procedures and the high stakes offered by extractive industries offer huge incentives to revert to corrupt means (Brown et al. 2005, p. 6; OECD 2012, p. 57). And although the 'shadow economy' declined in the post-war era, the informal sector (especially illegal mining) still remains the main opportunity for employment, as the formal sector is currently merely absorbing a fraction of 10 per cent of the working population (Brown et al. 2005, p. 6; TI Sierra Leone 2013, p. 18).

Sierra Leone is marked by an intense urban-rural divide, which can be traced back to the British colonial system. The colonial power created Sierra Leone as a dual structure: 'the colony' (i.e. Freetown) and 'the protectorate' (i.e. the rest of the country). Thereby, they effectively established two states which developed at considerably different speed and followed different modes of governance and jurisdiction. In Freetown the colonial rulers established the common law, whereas the traditional law prevailed in the protectorate (TRC 2004, p. 5). The protectorate was divided into twelve districts, but the socially most important level of governance was and still is the basic entity of the chiefdom (Bøås 2001, p. 706; Manning 2009). The chiefdom was the "foundation of civil society as the main unit of social solidarity, with the paramount chief as the political head and the 'father of his people', but with numerous civil society checks to ensure that he acted in the interests of his people" (Bøås 2001, p. 706). The colonial rulers governed indirectly through traditional chiefs and the chiefs had to combine the bureaucratic governance of the colony with the patrimonial rule of the chiefdom (Bøås 2001, p. 706).

Governance

The constitution of 1947 created Sierra Leone as a unified entity, which is divided into four administrative areas (Northern, Eastern and Southern Province and the Western Area) (CIA 2014). But the political system was from independence on deeply divided along regional lines. Political parties initially lacked a national agenda and factionalism reflected the wish to serve the regional interests of one's support group (TRC 2004, p. 5). Thus, in the long run "[p]arty politics became the greatest obstacle to national cohesion and identity" (TRC 2004, p. 5). Until today, there are usually strong majorities of 70-90 per cent for certain candidates differing from region to region (NEC 2012). The two dominant parties are the All People's Congress (APC) and the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), the former being strongly associated with Temne, and the latter with the Mende (TRC 2004, p. 5; NEC 2012). The current president Ernest Bai Koroma was elected in 2012 and is the candidate of the APC (CIA 2014).

Due to the lack of outreach and effectiveness of the central government, the 149 chieftaincies remain an important political and social entity, collecting revenues, monitoring migration and providing customary jurisdiction (Manning 2009, p. 5; Jackson 2005, p. 53). The Local Government Act 2004 established local governance as a hybrid between modern and traditional forms; locally elected councils cooperate with the chiefs to raise taxes⁶ and provide services⁷ (Jackson 2005, p. 1; Fanthorpe 2005, p. 35; Manning 2009, p. 2). Every chiefdom elects one councilor, who represents the chiefdom in the local council and every chieftaincy has its own local court. In addition to these formal institutions, every chiefdom has a paramount chief and several further subordinated leaders, speakers, chiefs and headmen, as well as religious leaders and local "big men" (Manning 2009, p. 4). A chief can be elected by his peers from a circle of ruling families. The traditional authority of the ruling families is often connected with land (their ancestors found and cultivated the area) or with colonial rule (their ancestors signed treaties with the colonial rulers) (Manning 2009, p. 10). The 'formality' of formal institutions *vis-à-vis* informal institutions should not be overstated though, as they are not really independent from traditional authorities. Candidates for the council are often hand-picked by the paramount chief and the members of the courts are often illiterate and rarely aware of the constitutional boundaries and regulations regarding their mandate (Manning 2009, p. 5; Jackson 2005, p. 53).

The chief is in practice the primary representative of his community. This implies that NGOs, government representatives, mining companies and other commercial actors have to approach the region through the figure of the chief (Manning 2009, p. 5; OECD 2012, p. 52). Thereby, the chief gains access to

⁶ The taxes are, however, collected by the chiefs and shared between the traditional authorities and the council. Both are thus tightly intertwined (Manning, 2009, p.18).

⁷ This was an element of the post-conflict decentralization strategy of the Kabbah government (Jackson, 2005, p.52).

several sources of rents, such as natural resource licensing and tax collection, and the ability to present government services as his doing to sustain his patronage networks and his social standing.

Patronage Structures

Patronage was omnipresent in pre-war Sierra Leone and one of the triggering reasons for the outbreak of the conflict. The grievances of the rural youth were intensified by the predatory behavior by some chiefs and the distribution of power based on an exclusionary patronage system (Manning 2009, p. 1). Traditional rule was used to exploit and marginalize young men from less powerful families or strangers. By controlling access to land and the right to marriage traditional authorities were also highly intrusive in personal lives. Through customary law they could also impose disproportional and arbitrary penalties (Manning 2009, p. 1). Accordingly, chiefs have been a main target of the RUF rebels. But while many chiefs were subject to hatred and revenge, others remained popular and even served as "civil-military liaison" figures between RUF rebels and local communities (Burchert, Walker 2013, p. 170; Fanthorpe 2005, p. 31). Individual behavior and the inclusiveness of structures were crucial. The patronage system was not per se rejected, but the way it had been used to exploit and exclude the youth.

This illustrates a common paradox of anti-corruption research; although the patronage system basically cements and deepens societal divisions and prevents a fair distribution of public assets, it is nevertheless upheld by the lower classes as well, and many forms of corruption are tolerated as they appear to benefit one's own kin. The TRC described a genuine passivity of the population towards corruption before the conflict: "There were no significant acts of resistance to the excesses of the system. Civil society was largely coopted into the very same system" (TRC 2004, p. 31). Today, corruption and patronage are regarded as normal and necessary (Jabbi, Kpaka 2007, p. 37). Corruption in the form of patronage and clientelism is, however, not limited to politics within the chiefdom, but happens on every level in party politics (Jabbi, Kpaka 2007, p. 38).

Politics are mostly associated with "power and the benefits it conferred" (TRC 2004, p. 6), and the state, its assets and positions are regarded as means for personal ascent and the benefit of the personal network (Brown et al. 2005, p. 2). This facilitated the ascent of a relatively narrow group of elites, coming from different linguistic and religious groups, which dominate Sierra Leonean politics (Brown et al. 2005, p. 3). This elite network, consisting of politicians, civil servants, entrepreneurs and traditional leaders, provides a scarce sense of trust to conduct business, fundraising and government contracting (OECD 2012, p. 51). The elite is in return closely linked to networks in the regions and neighborhoods, the central node of political affiliation (Brown et al. 2005, p. 5). The central elite depends on their support for political survival and rewards support through preferential treatment in terms of state funds and services (OECD 2012, p. 51). The patronage channels are mostly fed by the rents from

the mining sector and tax revenues, as well as the misappropriation of foreign aid (Burchert, Walker 2013, p. 168). In sum, the patronage networks are still central to the mode of governance in Sierra Leone. Brown et al claim that "[t]he stability of the state has always depended on the political balancing skills of its leaders and their ability to build and sustain a coalition of elites and their patronage networks" (Brown et al. 2005, p. 2).

Accordingly, depending on which party is in power, the regional strongholds of the respective party enjoy prioritized access to public funds, while the regions affiliated with the opposing party are literally 'starved'. But issue-based political affiliation, which would allow the public to push for a more pro-poor development, is not likely to develop soon in Sierra Leone as the people do not place trust in public institutions and bureaucratic procedures to support their personal advancement (Brown et al. 2005, pp. 4f). And they rightly do so, as formal state institutions are still limited to the urban areas. Therefore, patronage networks and informal institutions still have a higher importance to political stability than formal institutions (Brown et al. 2005, p. 2).

Authority and Legitimacy

In the pre-war era, the authority of the state was mostly secured through a mixture of repressive and coercive elements. Legitimacy for the oppressive state apparatus was created within a distinct support base through the provision of goods and services through patronage and clientelist relationships (Zack-Williams 1999, p. 144). This led to an alienation of the people in the marginalized rural areas from the central state, which were only subjected to extraction but not to distribution by the state (Zack-Williams 1999, p. 144). The rural nodes of authority were traditional modes of governance (Manning 2009, p. 10).

This reliance on traditional modes of governance persists until today, which is why authority is still largely associated with kin. The chiefs remain central figures of authority and the chieftaincy serves as a mechanism to uphold order and peace in the rural hinterland (Manning 2009, p. 10). They continue to 'fill in' for the absent state in the countryside, for example through the provision of customary law in the absence of constitutional institutions (Chêne 2010b, p. 3). But traditional authority is also widely accepted as legitimate, as chiefs are perceived as responsible and responsive to people's needs (Manning 2009, p. 10). "The average Sierra Leonean" still has greater trust in a chief than in an elected local or national official (Manning 2009, p. 19). Due to the legacy of rural marginalization, anything coming from Freetown is subject to substantial distrust – such as the locally elected councils (Jackson 2005, p. 53). Acemoglu et al. additionally made the startling observation that chiefs in Sierra Leone who rule relatively unchecked by other families ('despotic' chiefs) enjoy greater authority while simultaneously providing fewer overall community development. This is explained by the fact that people invested in this particular client-patron relationship and have an interest in maintaining the power of the chief to 'secure their investment' (Acemoglu et al. 2012, pp. 27;31).

Besides negative experiences, traditional modes of governance and justice systems are better accessible and comprehensible to rural, probably illiterate citizen, who have no connection to the central or regional government and can be regarded as a bridging element during the transitional phase (Manning 2009, p. 2).

Public Attitudes towards Corruption

Attitudes towards corruption are highly ambiguous in Sierra Leone and broadly confirm Olivier de Sardan's observations on how corruption is always a bad thing if somebody else is engaging in it, but justifiable if it serves one's own purpose. Within the national discourse, corruption is widely known as a severe social, political and economic problem. Government statements as well as media reports refer to it and politicians and other public figures frequently condemn corruption. But there is apparently a massive gap between anti-corruption rhetoric and daily action – both on high and low public levels, and within the population. The Reconstruction National Integrity System Survey (RNISS) report 2007 asserted that corruption is regarded as normal and that most Sierra Leoneans are "ignorant of the dangers of corruption and even the need to stamp it out" (Jabbi, Kpaka 2007, p. 37).

Furthermore, tradition still plays a big role in most citizens' lives and encourages behavior that is corrupt by constitutional standards. Over two-thirds of the Sierra Leonean populace is affected by the traditional "extended family system", which implies strong social obligations to provide help and resources to family members. It is also mandatory to present gifts when meeting traditional rulers (Jabbi, Kpaka 2007, p. 37). The state is mostly insignificant to most people's daily life (TRC 2004, p. 8).

The modernization process in the urban areas slowly leads to a decline of traditional patrimonial influences. Voting patterns show that the urban higher income classes do not vote based on ethnic or regional affiliation but issue-based. The urban voters responded positive to the APCs reform agenda and indicate a wish for improved governance (ICG 2008, p. 6). This is a good indication that incremental modernization is probably the best cure to at least some sorts of corruption. Nevertheless, urbanization does not imply a sudden rise of good governance attitudes, but rather a weakening of patronage in the sense of a declining respect for figures of authority. A 2008 International Crisis Group Report notes: "For [the urban youth], the governing elite is not corrupt because it embezzles state money, but because it refuses to share its wealth" (ICG 2008, p. 24).

This rather accepting attitude of corruption in Sierra Leone also stems from a long history of patrimonial authority. The British colonial rule effectively established clientelist relations by using local strongmen as their local representation and as a channel to collect taxes (previously paid as a 'tribute' in exchange for protection by the strongmen) (Reno 1997, p. 4). Notions of cronyism have also been part of the newly independent Sierra Leonean state

(TRC 2004, p. 6). In the decades following independence, the central government sustained itself through corruption and the plundering of state assets (TRC 2004, p. 6; Zack-Williams 1999, p. 144). Especially during the one party rule of Siaka Stevens in the 1970s and 1980s, public officials on all levels colluded with entrepreneurs to skim rents of the mineral sector (Burchert, Walker 2013, p. 163). On the regional and local level the chiefs similarly defined their power through the control of resources and patronage structures (TRC 2004, p. 6). When the public wages dropped in the 1990's due to the Structural Adjustment Programs any remaining moral restraint diminished and public officials resorted to illegal coping mechanisms (UNDP 2010, p. 126). Also during the war, the people in charge – basically all fighting groups – resorted to the exploitation of local labor and natural resources to sustain their combat, in the absence of formal funding (Reno 1997, p. 4). Thus, corrupt practices were basically inherent to the post-conflict state.

In sum, it can be stated that corruption is deeply entrenched in the Sierra Leonean state. Both Sardan's "functional necessity" as well as his "normative necessity" for corruption are apparently given in Sierra Leone. Corrupt practices are rooted in the social memory, broadly accepted as a necessity to survive by large parts of the population and forced by a situation of severe scarcity and competition.

4.1.3. The Conflict and the Lomé Peace Agreement

The following subsection provides a basic overview of the civil war, to outline societal cleavages and potential risk factors for renewed conflict.

Sierra Leone experienced an exceptionally brutal civil war from 1991 to 2002, which displaced about two thirds of the population and the estimated casualties rank from 30,000 to 75,000 victims (Larrabure 2011, p. 5). On March 23rd, 1991 rebels of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) entered the country crossing the eastern Liberian border into the town of Bomaru and challenged the government of the APC president Momoh (TRC 2004, p. 3). After eleven years of civil war, it formally ended in 2002 in an official ceremony, after a UN-supervised disarmament of the rebels (Gberie 2002, p. 1). Besides the shocking human atrocities committed by all parties to the conflict, the war caused a massive destruction of infrastructure which also resulted in a massive loss of human capital as especially schools and hospitals had been destroyed (Larrabure 2011, p. 10; Gberie 2002, p. 2).

Reasons for the conflict are a mix of bad governance and a bad neighborhood. The revolution was carried largely by a mass of impoverished and desperate youth (TRC 2004, p. 17). Decades of over-centralization, political exclusion of the rural population and especially unrestrained corruption had undermined the faith in state structures (Larrabure 2011, p. 10). The massive inequality between the urban and the rural population regarding access to resources had triggered mutual resentment (TRC 2004, p. 5). In the early 1990's the state was in economic decline due to excessive corruption and not able to deliver neither

services nor security (TRC 2004, p. 27). Structural adjustment programs further undermined the livelihood of the majority and triggered public discontent (Zack-Williams 1999, pp. 144f). Pervasive corruption on the one hand fueled grievances and on the other hand provided an incentive to revert to violence to gain access to public rents for survival (TI 2014a, p. 25).

The escalation of violence in Liberia 1989 and the active support by Charles Taylor for the RUF movement played a crucial role in the outbreak and course of the conflict in Sierra Leone. Taylor trained RUF fighters and ordered 2,000 of his own National Patriotic Front Liberia (NPFL) fighters to join the fight in Sierra Leone (TRC 2004, p. 9). Additionally, Liberia facilitated the arms trade and smuggling of illicit diamonds to sustain the fight of the rebels (TRC 2004, p. 86).

Whereas the diamond fields are an often cited and important aspect of the war, they did not initially cause the violence (TRC 2004, p. 29). Both soldiers and rebels hardly earned an income and thus 'lived off the land' (robbing and even enslaving the local population). The diamond areas offered them especially valuable chances for self-enrichment (Richards 2003, p. 32). The illegal diamond trade fed into a war economy that enhanced the economic sustainability of fighting groups, facilitated the proliferation of weapons and thus significantly prolonged the war (Meyer 2007, p. 8; TRC 2004, p. 107).

The peace process took root in 1999 with the Lomé Peace Agreement, after two peace agreements in 1996 and 1997 had failed. It was a power sharing agreement signed between the government of Sierra Leone and the RUF as the major conflicting parties (Fayemi 2004, p. 187). Power sharing is a common tool to manage spoilers in a peace process by inducing them to cooperate (Hutchful 2009, p. 20). The Lomé Peace Agreement granted amnesty to fighters, four cabinet positions, as well as chairmanship of the Strategic Minerals Commission to the RUF, which should be turned into a political party, and offered Foday Sankoh the status of the vice presidency (Larrabure 2011, p. 11; Fayemi 2004, p. 187).⁸ But Sankoh and the RUF refused to be disarmed. Eventually, military defeat of the rebels by British troops ended the civil war (Woods, Reese 2008, pp. 60f).

4.1.4. The Peacebuilding Process

In the following the study briefly summarizes the international peacebuilding efforts, in order to assess if corruption has been a strategic issue in peacebuilding or not.

The Sierra Leonean peacebuilding process is widely regarded as a success, although many critical issues have remained until today. The 2002, 2007 and 2012 elections were internationally deemed free and fair and despite considerable tensions did not trigger violent conflict. Besides a successful DDR

⁸ The RUF has participated in all three elections but failed to win a single seat yet (Lupick 2012).

process, local government was re-installed to advance the decentralization process, a poverty reduction strategy paper was adopted and democratic institutions have been set up (UN Peacebuilding Support Office 2011, p. 11). Postwar peacebuilding and reconstruction activities were mostly arranged within a triangle of the UN missions, the British Department for International Development (DFID) and the Sierra Leonean government (ICG 2008, p. 27).

The mandates of the subsequent UN missions reflect an early focus on security and stability. Good governance issues such as anti-corruption measures entered the agenda relatively late. Peacekeeping started in 1998, when the UN Security Council decided to deploy the small United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) to monitor disarmament processes and elicit further options (UN Security Council 1998). In October 1999 it established the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), thus moving from monitoring to active peacekeeping. The mission included considerably more manpower and was mandated to assist the implementation of the Lomé Peace Agreement (UNIPSIL 2014). In 2000, when the security situation was still further deteriorating, the mission was expanded in terms of personnel and of its mandate, to facilitate humanitarian assistance and provide security in selected locations (UN Security Council 2000). UNAMSIL lasted from 1999 to 2005 and helped to disarm and demobilize more than 75,000 ex-fighters. It assisted with restoring government authority after the conflict and reforming the security sector and facilitated the return of half a million refugees. The mission supported the first presidential and parliamentary elections as well as the set up of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) (UNIPSIL 2014).

In 2005 the mandate moved from peacekeeping to peacebuilding and established the UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) to assist the government in consolidating peace and stability. UNIOSIL was operational from 2006 to 2008 and assisted the government in strengthening human rights and human development, as well as the preparation of secure and democratic presidential elections in 2007 (UNDP 2012; UNIPSIL 2014). The subsequent and last UN mission to Sierra Leone was the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL), established in 2008 and completed in 2014 (UNIPSIL 2014). UNIPSIL was in first line mandated to coordinate the strategy and programs of the different UN agencies, funds and programs. It should contribute to sustained political stability and good governance reforms, regarding democratic institutions, decentralization, rule of law, respect for human rights and anti-corruption measures (UN Security Council 2008). UNIPSIL was a distinctly civilian political mission (DPA 2014). UN peacebuilding focused for a long time almost exclusively on sustaining political stability. Good governance elements were first introduced with UNIPSIL after six years of sustained political stability.

DFID was the largest contributor to governance reform and especially covered the field of corruption prevention (UNDP 2010, pp. 130;132; Radecke 2009, p. 22). After the end of the conflict in 2002 DFID started conveying budget

support and funded reform and reconstruction programs focusing on decentralization, transparent public procurement, budgetary oversight and the fight against corruption (UNDP 2010, p. 130). Regarding the latter, the main tools were the establishment of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and a reform to decentralize local governance (Fanthorpe 2005, p. 2).

The ACC was established in February 2000 as a cooperative effort between DFID and the Kabbah government (ICG 2008, p. 18). Based on the DFID-sponsored study "National Perceptions and Attitudes Towards Corruption in Sierra Leone" released in 2000, a national anti-corruption strategy was launched in 2005 (UNDP 2010, p. 127). It followed the two-tiered approach of prevention (via education and awareness raising) as well as prosecution (UNDP 2010, p. 128). But this early attempt turned out as a mere facade, as most activities were not covered in the national budget, no efforts were made to collect objective data on corrupt activities and the 'integrity officers' had no mandate to effectively implement the strategy in the bureaucracy (UNDP 2010, p. 128). The ACC likewise failed to deliver credible results and allegations were made that politicians would abuse the commission to get rid of political opponents (UNDP 2010, p. 128; ICG 2002, p. 16). DFID withdrew its support to the commission in 2007 and underlined that the mandate of the ACC and the Sierra Leonean ownership of the commission needed to be enhanced (ICG 2008, p. 18). In 2008 a technical working group, constituted in 2006, published a report on a new national strategy to fight corruption. This working group was more diverse, including actors from CSOs, private- and public sector institutions and representatives of the international community (UNDP 2010, p. 128). As a reaction to the report, the newly elected Koroma government enacted a law which considerably strengthened the ACC. It was now able to investigate and prosecute without the consent of the attorney general and better protect its witnesses (UNDP 2010, p. 129).

The parallel decentralization strategy turned out as a two-edged sword, regarding the combat of corruption. On the one hand, the centralization of power within the Freetown area needed to be disrupted to reduce the socio-economic gap between the urban and the rural population. On the other hand, the re-empowered chiefs were widely regarded as one of the main reasons for the marginalization of the rural population and accused of inhibiting a modernization of the country-side (Brown et al. 2005, p. 4). And as previously pointed out relying on means of traditional governance also implies a tacit acceptance of corrupt practices. But in the absence of independent formal state institutions there were not many options to organize local governance in the countryside. Social and demographic developments in the course of modernization, such as urbanization, will probably create demand and opportunities for further reform and a formalization of governance (Brown et al. 2005, p. 12).

Whether the slightly decreasing corruption levels as measured by the CPI can be ascribed to anti-corruption peacebuilding measures remains unclear. But the timing (2008) suggests that the success of (high-level) anti-corruption measures

in Sierra Leone was supported by increased political will and the credibility of the donor's determination to react to non-compliance. In 2008, the new Koroma (APC) government was elected after a campaign based on the promise to fight corruption, and the government has frequently expressed its commitment to do so (UNDP 2010, p. 129; ICG 2008, p. 27). Also the reform of the ACC became effective after DFID had withdrawn its funding, thus strengthening the credibility of threats to punish non-compliance. Additionally, the UN mission took a distinct turn towards good governance goals.

But regardless of the actual effectiveness of the anti-corruption peacebuilding measures, it seems worthwhile to notice that even after a prolonged deterioration of corruption levels and after six years of relative political neglect for the topic, it was still possible to change the trend. The corruption levels are beyond doubt still devastating, but yet the trend challenges the hypothesis that an initially soft stance on corruption impedes any chances for anti-corruption measures at a later point of time.

4.2. Effect of Corruption on Political Stability

The following section will discuss the four factors of political stability in Sierra Leone and how they were affected by the high corruption levels.

Legitimacy

As previously pointed out, the negative relation of corruption on the legitimacy of a post-conflict regime is not as straightforward as popularly assumed. This also holds for Sierra Leone where traditional and legal-rational authority nowadays coexists.

The *input legitimacy* as provided by the democratic process is clearly defective in Sierra Leone. For once, the social contract is generally undermined, as state capacity and tax revenues are hardly relatable, because of the natural resource revenues and the large share of ODA in the national budget (OECD 2012, p. 55). Corrupt practices additionally undermine the democratic process, as both active and passive suffrage are impaired. Due to the massive inequality, only a small elite is actually able to access posts (Brown et al. 2005, p. 4). And although elections are free and fair, people do not vote according to their interest, but according to their regional affiliation in the hope to secure access to state funds (Brown et al. 2005, pp. 5f). Additionally, the elected officials are less accountable towards their electorate than to their local patron (Manning 2009, p. 16).

But the 'quality' of the democratic election is eventually of less importance for the legitimacy of the Sierra Leonean governance system than the functioning of traditional structures. Studies showed that people have higher hopes to hold their traditional chiefs and local strongmen accountable, than authorities that are appointed centrally or by 'bureaucrats' as they are feared to be nothing but predatory, without any connection to the community (Fanthorpe 2005, p. 45).

The patronage system thus offers a little amount of downward accountability, throughout the extended family system. "Sons of the soil" who succeed in acquiring wealth and political office at the centre are expected to bring development investment to their home communities and to intervene in other ways in local affairs to the advantage of the groups that sponsored their education and/or supported their election" (Fanthorpe 2005, p. 40). Thus, chiefs are regarded as more legitimate and enjoy higher trust levels regarding their ability and willingness to handle funds in the interest of the community (Manning 2009, p. 13).

Regarding the normative 'weight' of input and *output legitimacy* in Sierra Leone, Manning observed that "consultation, it seems, is valued much less than delivery" (Manning 2009, p. 15). According to the Afrobarometer 2012, still 50 per cent of the interviewed agreed that an elected leader, once in office, should help his community or home first (with no significant deviation between urban and rural interviewees) (Idriss 2012, p. 10). In the Sierra Leonean post-conflict context of scarcity and insecurity, the reliance on patrimonial distribution mechanisms eventually appears to be a matter of pragmatism, as the state is simply not capable to deliver services. The ICG observed: "No amount of civic education and human rights sensitisation will prevent people there from returning to patronage networks if post-war democracy fails to deliver resources" (ICG 2008, p. 25). It was and is patronage that actually has *delivered* to the people. Thus, unless a serious alternative is in place, chances are high that cutting such lines of distribution by targeted anti-corruption measures will upset the local order.

Nevertheless, one can argue that the economic output legitimacy of a regime should still suffer, as overall funds are drained by corrupt activities. But, as pointed out before, for the perception of output legitimacy, it is eventually not important what is *de facto* delivered, but how the delivery 'feels' (Erdmann, Engel 2006, p. 21). To support the system, it is decisive that people eventually believe it will provide them with an advantage towards other competitors for state resources. This counterintuitive finding is supported by the aforementioned findings of Acemoglu et al. that despotic chiefs, who delivered worse development outcomes enjoyed greater respect and authority.

As pointed out before, one of the most crucial elements of post-conflict output legitimacy is security. One crucial element of post-conflict security was naturally the Lomé Peace Agreement. The power-sharing agreement was supposed to buy-in the rebel groups and turn military power into political power (TI 2014a, p. 14). This would have been a picture-perfect example of the corruption-stability trade-off – if it had worked. Eventually, the promises of the peace agreement were not fulfilled or severely diminished and the faith of the rebels in the peace agreement was undermined. Combatants refused to be disarmed and new fighting broke out in 2000. Peace could eventually only be reached through a military victory (TRC 2004, p. 10). Thus, the example of Sierra Leone suggests that a buy-in of spoilers needs to provide sufficient and credible

incentives to deliver immediate security, but it offers few insights on the long-term effects of a buy-in.

But according to the SFI (cf. annexure 1) the general levels of security have quickly improved after the end of the conflict in 2002, despite the soaring corruption levels. There has apparently not been a negative effect on the overall security levels, although corruption clearly affects judicial institutions and the police.

Another security concern is the entrenchment of organized crime through corruption. Although West Africa is currently turning into a hub of organized crime networks and the drug trade, Sierra Leone is relatively little affected by this development. Criminal activities, especially concerning gem stones, timber and drugs, exist and are facilitated by the rampant corruption of the public sector. But all in all the state managed to contain the extent of organized crime (Burchert, Walker 2013, p. 187).

Another aspect of regime legitimacy are *shared beliefs* such as the national identity, religion, political culture etc. Regarding the effect of corruption on a sense of a national identity, concern was uttered that the allocation of resources along kinship lines may promote the respective identification along such kinship lines and thus support a fragmentation of society. This cannot be stated for certain in Sierra Leone. On the one hand, the political division between Temne and Mende is still considerable. On the other hand, the Afrobarometer observed that 59 per cent of the interviewees stated they felt rather Sierr Leonean than as a member of their ethnic group and even 92 per cent expressed patriotic sentiments (Idriss 2012, pp. 48f). There are also few suggestions that the corrupt regime is scolded by spiritual or religious leaders, which could negatively affect the perceived legitimacy of the regime. Although corruption is certainly not endorsed, most public figures who should provide a role model are themselves entrenched in corruption (Jabbi, Kpaka 2007, p. 37). There was no or limited and less credible 'moral' attack on corrupt activities. On the contrary, in 2012 the ACC urged religious leaders to make anti-corruption messages a part of their preaching to support their cause (ACC 2012).

In general, people largely accept corruption as a necessary evil (Irin News 2005). Although stupefying stories of corrupt activities by high-level politicians frequently make the headlines, it hardly ever sparks public outrage to a destabilizing extent. People adopted a rather cynical stance on the issue and accept corruption as "a way of life" (Burchert, Walker 2013, p. 169; Jabbi, Kpaka 2007, p. 37). It has to be taken into account, however, that the current president came into office with a campaign based on the fight against corruption, successfully convincing the swing voters of the Freetown area (ICG 2008, p. i). It is thus not valid either, to suppose that the Sierr Leonean people are ignorant of the effects of corruption.

But in sum, it cannot be assumed that a more decisive stance on corruption by the international community would have supported the legitimacy of the regime,

as corruption serves a range of functions in the current social order and is firmly rooted in the political culture.

Socio-Economic Development

Although the current growth rates are very impressive⁹, the overall socio-economic situation of Sierra Leone as previously described remains daunting. Experts list youth unemployment, the transparent management of natural resources and inclusive growth as the central challenges for the future socio-economic development of Sierra Leone (AfDB 2013, p. 2; World Bank 2013). Factors which contributed to the outbreak of the war – poverty, inequality and the exclusion of the rural population – remain until today. The SFI accordingly identifies social and economic factors (in terms of effectiveness and legitimacy) as the major drivers for instability in Sierra Leone today (cf. annexure 1).

Corruption, which is prominently named as one of the reasons for the outbreak of the conflict, has clearly taken its toll on the socio-economic development of Sierra Leone. It has weakened the financial base of the state and led to a massive neglect of the social sector (Jabbi, Kpaka 2007, p. 39). The lack of funding for the health and education sector has also resulted in a loss of human resources in terms of skilled labor. Funds to rebuilt the infrastructure are diverted to private ends and undermine pro poor growth (Jabbi, Kpaka 2007, p. 19). Corruption is also regarded as a serious constraint on doing business and negatively affects foreign direct investment (Chêne 2010b, p. 2).¹⁰ The according national concern for the negative socio-economic effects of corruption on pro-poor growth is reflected in the "Agenda for Prosperity", the poverty reduction strategy paper of the government to reach middle-income status, which promotes anti-corruption measures.

In terms of functional effects of corruption, Sierra Leonean corruption follows a certain rationality. Tax rates and bureaucratic obstacles are comparatively high, tempting many entrepreneurs to resort to illicit channels to lower their costs of doing business (UNDP 2010, p. 126). Thus corruption may have the previously discussed potentially positive effects on the development and liberalization of the Sierra Leonean market. Brown also points out that patronage networks are central to the way Sierra Leone works (Brown et al. 2005, p. 4). Intra-elite networks provide a critical reserve of trust within the post-conflict context, which is crucial to conduct business and political deals (OECD 2012, p. 52). Thus, it seems as if corruption serves certain allocative functions, besides its obvious negative effects.

Additionally, the effect of corruption on the (massive) social inequality in Sierra Leone might have been not as extreme as predicted by many experts, as the

⁹ In 2012 they soared from 6 per cent (2011) to 15,2 per cent and remained high since (World Bank Group 2014).

¹⁰ However, foreign business activities are also restrained by the overall small private sector and insufficient infrastructure (UNDP 2012).

income share held by the highest 10 per cent of the population has indeed sunken from 33,6 percent in 2003 to 28,7 percent in 2011 (World Bank Group 2014). Nevertheless, the effect of corruption on the socio-economic development of Sierra Leone is the clearest correlation of how corruption may undermine the stability of a post-conflict state.

Autocratic Stabilization Mechanisms

Sierra Leone has a legacy of decade-long authoritarian rule, based on an oppressive state and an extensive network of client-patron relationships (Zack-Williams 1999, p. 144; TRC 2004). Since a post-conflict state does not represent a blank sheet it has to be assumed that certain practices may prevail.

Cooptation is in large parts congruent with political corruption. It was already broadly discussed how corrupt practices, such as patronage networks, still heavily influence everyday life as well as the various levels of the political process in Sierra Leone. Based on that, it can be stated that corruption is not restricted to petty or economic corruption but extensively used for political buy-ins and therefore widely used for cooptive purposes (Konteh et al. 2003, p. 66).

In terms of *political repression* Sierra Leone scores fairly well. Sierra Leone has a National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) which "has gained international standing" and is no longer exclusively donor-funded (UN Peacebuilding Commission 2013, p. 5). It no longer has political prisoners and no mistreatment of prisoners has been lately reported (UN Peacebuilding Commission 2013, p. 6). Besides sporadic incidents of police brutality or harassment of journalists, civil rights such as the freedom of expression,¹¹ association and religion are by and large respected (Freedom House 2014b). Amnesty International criticized the judiciary process in general and insufficient corporate accountability towards local stakeholders (2012).

Thus, Sierra Leone corresponds with the previous assumption that high levels of cooptation, along with low-levels of political repression, are favorable conditions for the stability of a hybrid regime. It is yet far from clear if there is any substitutive relation between the use of cooptive and repressive means in Sierra Leone. And while cooptation may offer some 'breathing space' in situations of immediate tension, it also contains severe potential for future conflict. Besides undermining the further democratization and professionalization of politics, it also directly feeds into the intensity of political competition, as political competition implies the access to scarce resources. This 'winner takes all-mentality' explains the fear of exclusion and the sporadic violence ahead of elections (TI Sierra Leone 2013, p. 17; UN Peacebuilding Commission 2013, p. 1). For the sake of prospective stability, cooptive practices should be restricted in the future.

¹¹ The media themselves are also subject to heavy bribery though (TI Sierra Leone 2013, p. 14).

4.3. Tentative Conclusion

With the last UN mission having left in March, after three successive peaceful elections, the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone is hailed as a success. Levels of political stability are constantly improving despite daunting corruption levels. Was there a corruption-stability trade-off in Sierra Leone? The previous discussion suggests so.

In post-conflict Sierra Leone many political and economic structures and codes of conduct of the pre-conflict period persisted (Brown et al. 2005, p. 12). Thus, peacebuilding could not 'start from scratch'. Corruption, especially in the form of patronage was already deeply entrenched and for large parts of the population familiar and basically without an alternative (ICG 2002, p. 15). The peacebuilding mission by the UN apparently took this into account, as it focused in the immediate aftermath on a rather pragmatic agenda and postponed good governance issues to a later phase, starting six years after the conflict had ended.

Corruption levels accordingly worsened until 2008. As corruption contributed to the initial outbreak of the conflict, experts feared that this might fuel renewed conflict by fostering exactly the same grievances that originally contributed to the conflict. It was assumed that political fractionalization would increase, especially along ethnic and regional lines, due to the continuation of patronage structures (ICG 2008, p. 3; Denney 2009). But on the contrary, Sierra Leone is in terms of political pluralism hailed by the UN "for its culture of tolerance across ethnic and religious divides" (Freedom House 2014b).

The paradigmatic case study offered the chance to test some assumptions of the academic debate on the issue of corruption in post-conflict peacebuilding. In review neither a deterministic path dependency, nor a necessarily corrosive effect of corruption can be confirmed for Sierra Leone.

Contrary to popular assumptions, the legitimacy of the political system was not impaired, because of the parallel existence of traditional and legal-rational modes of governance and their respective sources of legitimacy. However, the draining of funds and unjust allocation of resources are definitely affecting the socio-economic situation. Thus, corruption definitely needs to be tackled more forcefully, to secure a sustainable, inclusive development. But the decline in corruption levels since 2008, the year when UNAMSIL started and the Koroma government was in office for a year, is a hint that it is not impossible to start a tougher anti-corruption strategy at a later point of the peacebuilding process. It also underlines that for the combat of corruption the local political will is the absolutely crucial factor. This backs the position of those experts who opt for a cautious prioritization and timing of anti-corruption measures. With regard to the application of autocratic stabilization mechanisms, the case of Sierra Leone supports the assumption that higher levels of political cooptation may lead to lower levels of political repression.

Concerning the contextual factors of corruption, the case of Sierra Leone highlights the importance of the social embedment of corrupt practices. Corruption is an element of the social fabric and serves a range of societal functions. It is an informal institution. This kind of social institutions may not be particularly desirable, but it may initially be better to accept certain flaws than to upset social structures, as societal cohesion is a crucial factor for the chances of post-conflict peace. The ICG observed in Sierra Leone: "Indeed, the durability of this [social] fabric may have been as important in the rapid post-war recovery as international aid and security interventions" (ICG 2008, p. 25). Monty Marshall pointed out that one key to the stability of systems is to focus on subsystems that are functional and built upon them, so that they equally raise other subsystems (Marshall 2008, p. 6). Both observations suggest that in the case of Sierra Leone it was probably wise to not upset the 'social fabric' and focus on priority areas of security and institution-building, before moving to the socially more challenging task of good governance.

5. Conclusion

The study at hand aims to assess to what extent corruption affects the political stability of a post-conflict regime. The assumption of a trade-off between the levels of corruption and political stability in a post-conflict situation is not new to the peacebuilding debate, but expert opinions deviate significantly on the desirability of such a trade-off. While some experts caution to upset the local system with fierce anti-corruption measures, others fear that a lax stance on corruption in early peacebuilding may undermine the long-term goal of a sustainable development.

The discussion of the different strands of literature and the case of Sierra Leone suggests that an initial toleration of corruption can indeed be favorable for political stability. The analysis supports the position that the combat against corruption should not be the first priority of a peacebuilding mission. For once, the initial post-conflict agenda is already very challenging and recent experiences such as the case of Sierra Leone show that a rather pragmatic approach may deliver better results. Also, some of the apprehensions by opponents of the trade-off approach could not be confirmed. Especially the often quoted corrosive effect of corruption on legitimacy is not as straightforward as intuitively assumed.

The study of corruption in post-conflict peacebuilding is only lately gaining momentum. Donors are under pressure to demonstrate that their post-conflict related ODA funds are not diverted into corrupt channels or aliment dysfunctional political regimes. Corruption is often regarded as a threat to the fragile political stability of a post-conflict situation, as it may fuel inequality and public grievances, and facilitate the persistence of criminal war-time networks. Accordingly, international donors agree that post-conflict corruption should be

avoided in order to secure the best possible peacebuilding outcome. Meanwhile, the possibility to appease critical political actors in a conflict by offering material and political incentives is widely accepted in the academic debate. The awareness is also increasing that corruption is a quite complex social phenomenon, often deeply entrenched in social institutions and traditional power relations. Thus, active measures against corruption may have unsettling societal effects. Some experts therefore warn against fierce anti-corruption campaigns, as they may eventually do more harm than good.

The controversial academic debate eventually revolves around the issue of long-term and short-term effects. While higher levels of corruption may serve the immediate goal of political stability in terms of an absence of violence, it may undermine the underlying goal of post-conflict peacebuilding to support the creation of clean, effective and legitimate democratic institutions. Democratization efforts in a post-conflict intervention pursue the goal of a long-term sustainable peace, but they also put a country at risk of considerable turmoil and upheaval as established power structures are uprooted and the creation of new democratic forces and a democratic culture are not a natural, self-perpetuating process. Thereby, it may likely contradict the pursuit of immediate political stability. This poses a dilemma for the donors and has been mostly assessed from a normative angle.

The study at hand therefore intended to shed some light on the underlying dynamics of the corruption-stability trade-off. An initial review of recent peacebuilding strategies showed that current approaches are sensitized through peacebuilding concepts such as the 'Do No Harm' prerogative and the demand for a 'Light Footprint'. They take the complexities associated with the issue of corruption into account. In tendency they suggest high context-sensitivity and give priorities to stability matters. The recent claims to step up anti-corruption in the earlier peacebuilding phases are thus not in line with the basic strategies.

To approach the question how corruption affects the political stability in post-conflict regimes, factors needed to be identified to operationalize political stability in a first analytical step. This posed the initial challenge to assign a distinct regime type to the quite diverse group of states labeled 'post-conflict state'. It was argued that a post-conflict regime under international peacebuilding is neither likely to resemble a consolidated democracy nor an autocracy. The analysis suggests that they can be best captured by the HPO concept. Current research on the stability of hybrid regimes is primarily occupied with the chances of regime transformation and offers little insight on the determinants of political stability understood as the absence of violent political change. The study therefore had to approach the issue by approximation, assuming that the factors of political stability of a hybrid regime will most likely oscillate between those of democratic and autocratic regimes. This implies that post-conflict states under international peacebuilding may need to revert to autocratic means to secure their stability. This puts international peacebuilding into a dilemma. Pushing prematurely towards good

governance goals, i.e. by combating corrupt practices, may eventually undercut the fragile political stability peacebuilding seeks to bolster.

The analysis found that the factors underlying the political stability of a post-conflict regime are: legitimacy, a high level of socio-economic development and autocratic stabilization mechanisms (i.e. cooptation and repression). These factors were individually discussed with regard to the question how corruption may affect them. The analysis showed that an overall negative impact of corruption on political stability as constituted by the single factors could be confirmed. It is likely that corruption will have a negative impact on the socio-economic development of the state, as public investments will be distorted. At the same time, the post-conflict market faces a myriad of problems, of which some may be mitigated by corrupt means. Thus, the effect of corruption on the socio-economic development of a post-conflict state is far from determined. The analysis furthermore showed that high levels of corruption benefit cooptation. Thereby it may reduce the need for repression, which would be a favorable balancing of autocratic practices with regard to political stability, whereas the desirability of such practices is of course debatable.

Above all, the analysis challenged the assumption that corruption harms the legitimacy of a post-conflict regime. This assumption is based on the concept of legal-rational authority. Thus, corruption will in fact very probably harm the legitimacy in a democratic regime. But a post-conflict state under liberal peacebuilding, which is likely to be a hybrid regime, will most certainly be marked by parallel sets of authority and will accordingly draw from different sources of legitimacy. Corruption, especially in the form of patronage in situations of scarcity, often helps to induce legitimacy. It constitutes a direct relationship and delivers material results, as opposed to legal-rational structures, which are often based on rather abstract ideas, and produces less visible indirect results on a macro-level.

Besides this very straightforward finding, the study of corruption in post-conflict situation remains subject to a lot of influencing factors. The study therefore especially highlighted the importance of a proper contextualization. The way in which corruption will eventually affect the different factors of political stability is highly dependent on a variety of contextual factors. The economic context, for example, shapes the rationality and 'demand' for corrupt activities. In situations of scarcity or excessive red tape, corruption may appear as the best strategy to reach a certain goal – be it survival or entrepreneurial success. The socio-cultural embedment of corrupt practices and local modes of accountability on the other hand determine if corruption causes public outrage or not. The way corruption is 'governed', i.e. if corrupt rents are put to productive use or not and how far corrupt practices are subject to certain informal rules, crucially affects the eventual impact of corrupt activities. Thereby, the effect of corruption eventually also depends on the behavior of individual actors. Thus, its effects can vary greatly due to contextual factors.

Similar to the theoretical findings, the case study also supported the notion that an initially cautious stance on anti-corruption measures can pay off in terms of political stability. Sierra Leone provides a showcase that initially high levels of corruption may at least not harm political stability. The rather successful development of Sierra Leone within the decade after the civil war underscores the assumptions by some experts that it is worthwhile to pay primary attention to basic reconstruction and security matters, in order to enable the state first, to then fight corruption at a later stage.

The legitimacy of the Sierra Leonean political system was not severely hampered by the high levels of corruption because of the strong socio-cultural embedment of corrupt actions in the Sierra Leonean society. Corrupt and patrimonial rule has a sadly long history in Sierra Leone. The assumption that peacebuilding needs to make sure that corruption cannot take hold after a conflict, however, is based on the doubtful assumption that there is no corruption at the starting point of the peacebuilding mission – basically starting from a 'point zero'. But the legacy of corruption within the pre-war regime on current power structures needs to be taken into account when assessing potential risks of anti-corruption measures.

The case study also disclaimed the apprehension of some experts that an initially higher tolerance for corruption triggers a deterministic path dependency, which will make the fight against corruption successively more difficult. The case of Sierra Leone shows that a turn in the trend is indeed possible. It cannot be said that the peacebuilding mission by the UN actively or consciously tolerated or supported corruption. But the mission set different priorities and introduced good governance issues six years after the end of conflict. DFID on the other hand early on engaged in the fight against corruption and indeed built important foundations. But the early efforts were unsuccessful, as there was no or not sufficient political will to effectively combat corruption. The example of Sierra Leone thus once again underlines the importance of local ownership in order to step up efficiency in development cooperation. While reform was – and still is – urgently needed to create a more issue-based political landscape and governance favorable to development, it cannot work in antagonism to most of the political elite and the traded understandings of authority of a considerable part of society.

Eventually, the study supports the premise that a harmful effect of corruption on legitimacy cannot be regarded as a fact. It is very likely to harm democratic legitimacy. But there is no set-in-stone causation between the two for all regime types. Calls for a tougher stance on corruption are usually based on this shortened assumption. In Sierra Leone, people do complain about incidences of corruption and decry high-profile cases of corruption made public by the media, but that does not necessarily increase their motivation to report instances of corruption. It has been pointed out that 'the public' itself may have a quite complex relation towards corruption and that it cannot be assumed that citizens will support anti-corruption efforts. As long as enough people assume that they

profit from the current system, corruption will not necessarily reduce the legitimacy of a post-conflict regime.

The study of corruption is full of apparent contradictions – nobody wants it, but it still persists and people participate. Approaches blaming 'culture' or religion are under-complex and euro-centric. Behavioral theory has shown that corruption is an extremely complex and distinctly social phenomenon. Approaches to deal with corruption in a peacebuilding situation thus need to take a lot of different aspects of corruption into account. The study showed that corrupt activities in a post-conflict society – and thus in the absence of effective state services – often serve a distinct social function. Thus, one central observation of the study at hand is that the combat of corruption needs to be preceded by the creation of viable legal alternatives to replace the current corrupt strategies.

The study was conducted as an initial plausibility probe in order to fathom areas of future research and it indeed outlines a broad spectrum of further fields of research. As pointed out, more in-depth knowledge is necessary to make clearer predictions on the effects of corruption. Case-based research may offer further valuable insights – for example on the long-term effects of the 'buy-in' of spoilers through power sharing agreements. The recent Sierra Leonean successes in lowering the corruption levels would yet offer an interesting case to assess what caused this turn and to what extent it can be related to international peacebuilding.

It also appears worthwhile to explore which types of corruption dominate post-conflict situations and what social consequences it would have to root them out – i.e. to what extent do they form social relationships and serve social functions, that need to be replaced if the corrupt organization ceases to exist? Also, a more structured set of contextual factors with which corruption interacts could help to inform and fine-tune the prioritization process of post-conflict peacebuilding, beyond normative assumptions.

Based on the review of recent literature on corruption, political power and peace-building, as well as the case of post-conflict Sierra Leone, the study comes to the conclusion that the often cited political credo that it is mandatory to fight corruption early in peacebuilding to secure a peaceful development, is rather based on normative concerns than theoretical or practical evidence.

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Annexure

1:

State Fragility Index: Results for Sierra Leone 1995-1996

Source: Own compilation of data provided by the Center for Systemic Peace <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html> (last access 9.6.20)

country	year	fragility index	effect - effectiveness score	legit - legitimacy score	seceff - security effectiveness	secleg - security legitimacy	poleff - political effectiveness	polleg - political legitimacy	ecoeff - economic effectiveness	ecoleg - economic legitimacy	soceff - social effectiveness	socleg - social legitimacy
Sierra Leone	1995	23	11	12	2	3	2	3	4	3	3	3
Sierra Leone	1996	24	12	12	2	3	3	3	4	3	3	3
Sierra Leone	1997	24	12	12	2	3	3	3	4	3	3	3
Sierra Leone	1998	24	12	12	2	3	3	3	4	3	3	3
Sierra Leone	1999	24	12	12	2	3	3	3	4	3	3	3
Sierra Leone	2000	24	12	12	2	3	3	3	4	3	3	3
Sierra Leone	2001	24	12	12	2	3	3	3	4	3	3	3
Sierra Leone	2002	22	12	10	2	1	3	3	4	3	3	3
Sierra Leone	2003	23	12	11	2	2	3	3	4	3	3	3
Sierra Leone	2004	22	12	10	2	1	3	3	4	3	3	3
Sierra Leone	2005	22	12	10	2	1	3	3	4	3	3	3
Sierra Leone	2006	22	12	10	2	1	3	3	4	3	3	3
Sierra Leone	2007	20	12	8	2	1	3	1	4	3	3	3
Sierra Leone	2008	20	12	8	2	1	3	1	4	3	3	3
Sierra Leone	2009	19	11	8	1	1	3	1	4	3	3	3
Sierra Leone	2010	19	11	8	1	1	3	1	4	3	3	3
Sierra Leone	2011	19	11	8	1	1	3	1	4	3	3	3
Sierra Leone	2012	17	9	8	1	1	1	1	4	3	3	3

0 = no fragility

1 = low fragility

2 = medium fragility

3 = high fragility

4 = extreme fragility (only for economic effectiveness)

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